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MCM511

Theories of Communication

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COMMUNICATION**Defining communication**

Communication is seen as central to our everyday ideas about what makes life worth living. It is not surprising that academicians have attempted to unravel the secrets of the communication process. In this section of the study we will examine the theorizing and theories of this discipline of communication. To understand communication theory we need to understand the nature of communication.

Nature of communication

People define terms in different ways, and those differences in definition can have a profound impact on the extent to which we understand each other and the way we move forward with both academic and everyday pursuits.

Given the variety of ways in which words are used and understood, we are often ill-served to search for the single, so-called correct definition of a term.

In other words, it is better to evaluate definition in terms of their utility rather than in terms of their correctness. So we should not assume that there is always a single right way to define a concept. There is a great deal of variation in the definitions. Some are very abstract and some are extremely specific. Few definitions are cited below.

Communication is the process by which an individual (the communicator) transmits stimuli (usually verbal) to modify the behavior of other individuals (the audience). (Hovland Janis and Kelly in 1953)

Communication is the process by which we understand others and in turn endeavor to be understood by them. It is dynamic, constantly changing and shifting in response to the total situation (Anderson, 1959)

Communication is all of the procedures by which one mind can affect another (W. Weaver, 1949)

Communication means that information is passed from one place to another. (Miller, 1951)

These definitions are incomplete in the sense that Weaver's definition is incredibly broad; it includes all the procedures by which one "mind" could have an effect on another, whereas the other definitions excludes too many activities that we normally think of as communication. However through this definitional turmoil many conceptual features have emerged as important points of discussion.

Conceptualizing communication: points of convergence**Communication is a process:**

Process-oriented conceptualization of communication suggests that it is continuous and complex and cannot be arbitrarily isolated. David Berlo in 1960 popularized this idea in these words.

"If we accept the concept of process, we view events and relationships as dynamic, on-going, ever-changing, continuous. When we label something as a process we also mean that it does not have a beginning, an end, a fixed sequence of events. It is not static at rest. It is moving. The ingredients within a process interact; each affects all others."

So when we look at communication as a process, we see that even simple interactions are influenced in complex ways by the past and will also have important implication for the future. In early conceptualizations of communication this process was seen as a primarily linear one, in which communication moved from a source to a receiver. As we can see in the Lasswell's classical model of communication:

Who?

Says what?

To whom?

Through what channel?

With what effect?

Lasswell's linear model of communication is not accepted for it does not incorporate a feedback loop from receiver to source. Rather most communication researchers now take a *transactional approach* to communication.

Transactional approach

Communication is transactional and hence highly complex. The concept of transaction is useful to contrast it with the related ideas of action and interaction.

If we consider communication to strictly action, a source presenting a message to a receiver or an audience, we would not consider the reaction of the audience or feedback from it. This is a one way linear model of communication which is also labeled the hypodermic needle model or magic bullet model of communication.

It suggests that communication is a simple process of injecting our messages into receivers.

In contrast, if we communicate from an interaction perspective, we move from beyond the hypodermic needle to consider the importance of feedback from the receiver. This is the interaction model; we look at not only the message of the source but also the reaction of the receiver.

Burgoon and Ruffner in 1978 said:

“People are simultaneously acting as a source and receiver in many communication situations. A person is giving feedback, talking, responding, acting and reacting continually through a communication event. Each person is constantly participating in the communication activity; all of these things can alter the other elements in the process and create a completely different communication event. This is what we mean by transaction”.

A view of communication as transactional also emphasizes the importance of context. That is, not only do participant constantly influence each other, they are also influenced by the context in which they interact, e.g. comment made in an organization can take on a very different meaning depending on whether it is heard in a formal performance appraisal meeting or in casual conversation in the cafeteria..

Communication is symbolic:

A third area of convergence in conceptualizations of communication is the belief that communication is symbolic. To explore this concept, it is useful to talk briefly about the more general concept of sign, investigated by the field of semiotics.

Semioticians see a sign as consisting of two inextricably linked parts - signifier and the signified. Consider the word book and the object made of paper and glue that you hold in your hand right now. In this case, the signifier is the word book and the signified is the concept of the book and the referent is the physical object you are holding. This relationship is obviously not a perfect one-to one correspondence and is often an arbitrary relationship in that there is no natural correspondence, for instance, between the letters b-o-o-k and the object to which they refer.

Thus, symbols hold an arbitrary, rather than natural, relationship to what is symbolized, and a symbol has no inherent meaning.

Other semioticians have also tried to understand these notions more or less in the same manner. For example theorists, Ogden and Richards in 1946 explained this relationship in terms of a semantic triangle in which the three points of the triangle are the symbol (the word book) the referent (the physical object) and the reference (what you mean by book when you use the symbol). In this triangle, the link between the symbol and the referent is arbitrary. That is, you might be quite clear about what

you mean when you use the term book, but that symbol might have different meanings for different people.

However, with most symbols, some degree of shared meaning exists between interactants. As symbols are developed through shared social experience and exist within a system of other symbols. However gaps in communication occur if the shared meaning is not the same which happens when there are different cultures or different social experiences.

So when theorists say that communication is symbolic, they mean that it requires signs and symbols that have relationships to referents that are to some extent arbitrary.

Conceptualizing communication: points of divergence

1. Communication as a social activity.
2. Communication and intention.

Communication as a social activity

The first point of divergence is whether communication necessarily involves two or more people (e.g., is a social or interpersonal activity) or whether communication can occur within one individual (i.e. intrapersonal communication-you communicate with yourself.) that is can you talk to yourself. One group of scholars say that it is cognition or thinking and says that communication is in which two or more people are involved. The more important point in conceptualizing communication as a social process is in the function that communication serves as a social vehicle. That is when we see communication as something that occurs between people the question arises of what communication is doing in that relationship.

So when we are looking at the language as a social activity we are then looking primarily at the pragmatic level. The pragmatic level of language study looks at language use. That is, a pragmatic view looks at the ways in which we do things with words. That is communication, in this social sense, is a vehicle through which we are trying to do something- we are trying to get others to understand or appreciate our internal thoughts or emotion, or we might be trying to understand those internal states in others.

Communication and Intention

One group of scholars say that “you cannot not communicate”. Suggesting that meaning is inherent in all human behavior, E.g. wearing an old jeans.

So this group makes communication synonymous or nearly synonymous with BEHAVIOR.

Whereas the other group disregard this idea that “you cannot not communicate”, arguing that only intentional behaviors should count as communication. In their view, communication occurs only when there is clear intention the part of the source to communicate.

“Communication occurs in those situations in which a source transmits a message to a receiver with conscious intent to affect the latter’s behavior” (Miller, 1966)

Summary

In this chapter we have explored the terrain surrounding the concept of communication. We did number of definitions. We did conceptualizations of communication- points of convergence: Communication as a process; Communication is transactional; Communication is symbolic. Points of divergence: Communication as a social activity and Communication and intention.

THEORY, PARADIGM AND MODEL (I)**Paradigm**

In general, paradigm is a whole system of thinking. Paradigm is a set of propositions that explain how the world is perceived it contains a world view a way of breaking down the complexity of the real world.

Paradigms are broad theoretical formulations. They set forth sets of postulates-assumptions that one can choose to regard as descriptions of reality for the purpose of obtaining derived hypothesis. Such hypotheses can then guide research on specific process and effects.

“A paradigm is a set of beliefs, values techniques which are shared by members of a scientific community, and which acts as a guide or map dictating the kinds of problems scientist should address and the types of explanation that are acceptable”. (Kuhn, 1970)

So paradigms includes *basic assumptions*, the important questions to be answered or puzzles to be solved , the research techniques to be used and examples of what good scientific research looks like. In other words we can say paradigms are different ways of looking at world- the way ways to observe measure and understand social reality.

There are three major paradigms

Positivistic perspective

Interpretive perspective

Critical perspective

Positivistic Perspective

It is the oldest paradigm. Linked with the work of A.Comte and E.Durkeim

It defines reality as everything that can be perceived through the senses; other sources of knowledge are unreliable. Reality is out there, independent of human consciousness. Reality is objective, rests on order and is governed by strict, natural and unchangeable laws. It can be realized through experience. ll members of society define reality in the same way, because they all share the same meanings.

Science is based on strict rules and procedures. Science is deductive, proceeding from general /abstract to specific/ concrete. Science is based on universal causal laws which are used to explain concrete social events and relationships.

Interpretive Perspective

Interpretative social science relates to the works of Vico, Dilthey, and Weber.

Interpretive theorists believe that reality is not ‘out there’ but in the minds of the people. Reality is internally experienced is socially constructed through interaction and interpreted through the actors and is based on the definition people attach to it. Reality is not objective but subjective. The approach employed is inductive-proceeding from the specific to the general and from the concrete to the abstract. It is ideographic- it presents reality symbolically in a descriptive form

Critical Perspective

This was developed out of the work of Karl Marx and the critical, theorists and feminists. Critical theorists see reality in a different manner. Reality is created not by nature but by the powerful people who manipulate condition and brainwash others to perceive things the way they want them to, to serve the needs of the powerful. They claim that reality is not what it appears to be, for it often does not reflect the conflicts, tensions and contradictions that are eminent in society. The interest of the critical theorists is to uncover these myths and illusion, to expose real structures and present reality as it is.

They propose that human beings have a great potential for creativity and adjustments. They are however restricted and oppressed by social factors and conditions and exploited by their fellow men, who convince them that their fate is correct and acceptable. Belief in such illusions creates a false

consciousness and prevents people from fully realizing their potential. Critical theorists fight illusions and the structures. It is not value-free.

What is a theory?

Sir Karl Popper, a philosopher instrumental in shaping 20th century views of knowledge, says :
“Theories are nets cast to catch what we call the world.”

Popper was primarily interested in investigating the way in which we come to understand the natural and physical world, but his view are also highly appropriate in a consideration of how we come to know about the human and social world in which we live.

Nature of theory

Understanding the nature of theory in the scholarly world involves a consideration of two issues:

1. To develop a shared understanding of what a theory is. Although there is no one definition of theory, but we will consider issues regarding the conceptualization of theory.
2. How theory functions as a vehicle toward enhancing our understanding of the social world.

Conceptualizing theory

As discussed earlier theories help us understand or explain phenomena we observe in the social world. Theory is necessarily an abstraction of the social world. Theory is not the communicative behavior itself but an abstract (*a general idea not based on any particular real physical reality*) set of ideas that help us make sense of behavior. Everyone tries to make sense of their lives by developing and testing these common sense theories. However people who make sense of communication as part of an academic career are communication researchers and theorists.

We will explore the nature of theory looking at what we mean by theory in the scholarly world and by looking at the foundation we bring to the development and use of theory. Theory must go beyond or ‘look behind’ phenomena in the social world.

There are two approaches to theory building:

Deductive approach

Inductive approach

Deductive Approach

From the general to particular; the process by which theory is tested

Deductive approach to theory building tends to give primacy to theory’. That is, abstract theories are developed early after initial sensitizing observation, and then empirical observations are used to test those theories. The researcher begins with a general idea or theory and asks a specific statement or hypothesis, then tests the hypothesis with the collection of data. The movement is from the general proposition to the specific instances seen in the research.

Inductive Approach

Inductive approach to theory building gives primacy to observation. FROM THE PARTICULAR TO THE GENERAL; THE PROCESS BY WHICH THEORY IS GENERATED. In this approach, theoretical abstractions are based on- or grounded in empirical observation. The scholars immerse themselves in the situations and then come up to any conclusions. The researcher begins with a simple research question and collects data that describe a particular case, and then develops a theory based upon findings.

THEORY, PARADIGM AND MODEL (II)

Theory is more than a cataloging of the social world: it is an attempt to provide an abstract understanding or explanation of the social world. Theories are a set of logically interrelated propositions, presented in a systematic way which describe and explain social phenomena. They are logically constructed statements that summarize and organize knowledge in a particular area and are open to testing, reformulation modification and revision.

Functions of Theories

Bernard Cohen in 1994 drawing from the work of Larry Laudan in 1982 proposes that the central function of theory is to solve problems. Laudan notes that:

“The first and essential acid test for any theory is whether it provides acceptable answers to interesting questions.”

Theories can be used to address a number of types of problems. According to Laudan it can begin with three types of problems:

- Empirical problems
- Conceptual problems
- Practical problems

Empirical problems

An empirical problem is “any thing about the world which strikes us as odd or otherwise in need of explanation”.

Conceptual problems

Conceptual problem exists when a particular theory exhibits inconsistencies that need to be clarified

Practical problems

The utility in solving practical problems has historically played major role in both assessing and promoting theory construction. Within the field of communication, the role of theory in dealing with practical or applied problems is particularly important. Communication scholars often confront applied issues such as how to improve the provisions of health care how to enhance the effectiveness of problem solving organizational groups.

Assessing the quality of theory

So in assessing the quality of theory three related questions should be answered:

1. Does the theory solve the problem, regardless of whether that problem is empirical conceptual or practical?
2. Does the solution compare favorably with alternative solutions?
3. Is the solution progressive in that it represents an improvement over its predecessor and opens up new avenues for solving new problems?

Models in communication research**What are models?**

Models are a theoretical and simplified representation of the real world. A model is not an explanatory device by itself, but it helps to formulate theory. It suggests relationships, and it is often confused with theory because the relationship between a model and a theory is so close.

Definitions

“A model is a consciously simplified description in graphic form of a piece of reality. A model seeks to show the main elements of any structure or process and the relationships between these elements”. (McQuail).

Deutsch in 1952 pointed out that:

1. Model is a structure of symbols and operating rules which is supposed to match a set of relevant points in an existing structure or process.
2. Models are indispensable for understanding the more complex processes.
3. This is a form of selection and abstraction.

So a successful pictorial model offers three major advantages:

1. They organize concepts
2. They explain processes and
3. They predict outcomes

They organize concepts

Models organize concepts by ordering and relating systems to each other and by providing us with images of wholes that we might not otherwise perceive.

A model gives a general picture of a range of different particular circumstances.

They explain processes

Models explain processes by providing in simplified way information which would otherwise be complicated or ambiguous. This gives a model a heuristic function, since it can guide the student or researcher to key points of a process or system 

They predict outcomes or the course of events

Models can at least be a basis for assigning probabilities to various alternative outcomes, and hence for formulating hypotheses in research.

KINDS OF MODELS

Structural model

Functional models

Structural model

Some models claim only to describe the structure of a phenomenon.

In this sense, a diagram of the components of a radio set or diagram of a digestive system etc, could be described as “structural”.

Functional models

Functional models, describe systems in terms of energy, forces and their direction, the relations between parts and the influence of one part on another. The communication models fall into this category, simply all communication is in some degree dynamic and involves some elements of process or change

Before we study the communication models let's first look into the most general terms what communication implies. It implies

- Sender (encoder)
- A channel
- A message
- A receiver (decoder)
- A receiver between sender and receiver
- An effect
- A context in which communication occurs and

- A range of things to which messages refer
- Feedback – any process by which the communicator obtains information about whether and how the intended receiver has indeed received the message

Three different ways of viewing communication processes

1. Linear model
2. Interactive model
3. Transactional

LINEAR MODELS

Linear models are based on the principles of stimulus-response psychology, in which a receiver is affected (response) by a message (stimulus) that emanates from a communication source. These models depict the communication process as a series of progressive, linear steps in the transmission of ideas from one person to another.

Lasswell formula

Who says (communicator)

What to (message)

In which channel (channel)

To whom (receiver)

With what effect (effect)

Lasswell formula corresponding with communication research

Who says (content studies)

What to (content analysis)

In which channel (media analysis)

To whom (audience analysis)

With what effect (effect analysis)

Boaddock's extension of the Lasswell formula

Who Says

What to

In which channel

To whom

Under what circumstances?

For what purpose?

With what effect)

Shannon-Weaver model

One of the first linear models of communication, known as the Shannon-Weaver model, (developed in 1940's) described the process of telecommunication.

They developed a model that depicts a message emanating from an information source, which becomes a signal after passing through a transmitter, depending upon the amount of noise or interference present, the signal passes through to a receiver, where it is decoded as a message.

Westley - MacLean model

This model (originated in 1950s) differs from the Shannon-Weaver model in that they include mechanism for FEEDBACK or return flow of information from a receiver to the original source, and gate keeping, a mechanism (usually a person) that has the power to control information and even prevent it from reaching a destination .

The gatekeeper was thought to be an important new dimension of communication models to many in mass communication, because it serves as an analog for **editors** ,e.g. who control and select the messages that ultimately get to readers of newspapers or viewers of news programs.

INTERACTIVE MODELS

This model which depicts communication as an interactive process originated in the 1950's. The Osgood and Schramm interactive model emphasizes the sharing of information between communicator, who gives and receives information interactively.

Osgood and Schramm interactive model

The circular model describes communication as interactive and interpretive, with communicators almost simultaneously sending and receiving messages. Each person alternates in his or her role as encoder, interpreter, and decoder of shared messages.

TRANSACTIONAL MODELS

This model takes into consideration the character of the message and the psychological orientation of the audience member as factors influencing the power of media effects.

OTA transactional model

The OTA (**US office of technology assessment**) transactional model **separates** communication into **three distinct processes**:

1. Message formulation
2. Message interpretation
3. Message exchange

And emphasizes the interdependencies of the processes.

FROM COMMUNICATION TO MASS COMMUNICATION MODELS

Many communication terms take different meanings when they refer to mass communication. The term mass communication emerged in late 1930s.

Nature of the communicator

Organized and complex organization e.g. production and distribution.
Extensive division of labor and a lot of professional communicators.

Nature of audience

Mass communication is directed toward a relatively large, heterogeneous and anonymous audience.

- Large- millions, too many people for the communicator to interact with personally during reasonable period of time.
- Heterogeneous- audiences employ a variety of positions within a society.
- Anonymous- individuals in the audience are personally unknown to the communicator.

Nature of communication experience

- Public- messages are not addressed to no one in particular, content is open from public.
- Rapid- reaches a large audience with relatively short time or space.
- Transient- messages made to be consumed immediately- here today, gone tomorrow. A most frequently cited definition of mass communication is

“Mass communications comprise the institutions and techniques by which specialized groups employ technological devices (press, radio, films etc) to disseminate symbolic content to large , heterogeneous and widely dispersed audiences.”(Janowitz 1968)

Then mass communication is always part of an organized group and often a member of an institution which has functions other than communication

The receiver is always an individual but may often be seen by the sending organization as a group or collectively with certain general attributes.

Channel

Channel includes large scale technologically based distribution devices and systems. The message in mass communication is not a unique and transitory phenomenon but a mass produced and infinitely repeatable symbolic structure, often of great complexity.

Of particular significance in mass communication are:-

1. The public and open nature of all communication.
2. The limited and controlled access to sending facilities.
3. The impersonality of the relationship between sender and receiver.
4. The imbalance of the relationship between them.
5. The intervention of institutionalized arrangements between sender and receiver.

The process of **mass communication** is **not synonymous** with the **mass media**.
It is the **organized** technologies which make mass communication possible.

Development in the history of mass communication

DeFleur and Ball Rokeach in 1989 point out to a number o important developments in the history of mass communication

1. Age of signs and signals
2. Age of speech and language
3. Age of writing- papyrus

4. Age of printing – after 15th century-Gutenberg's invention of moveable type and printing press in 1456
5. Age of Mass Communication was ushered by widespread distribution of newspapers (1920 radio; 1940 TV)

It eroded the barrier of isolation among people in the world and produce significant changes in the organization and functioning of a society – in commerce politics education in mere sociability gossip.

Mass media includes:

Print media

1. Books
2. Newspapers
 - i) In the beginning adversary of established power.
 - ii) Political press –for party advantage and political propaganda.
 - ii) Prestige press- high bourgeois capitalist class.

Electronic media

1. Film
2. Broadcasting
3. Recorded music VCR

New media - Telematix media

They combine telecommunication and information. It includes

- Video games
- Virtual reality
- CD- ROMs

They represent a challenge.

Decentralization – supply and choice are not longer predominantly in the hands of supplier of communication.

High capacity- cable and satellite deliver overcomes the former restriction of cost distance and capacity

Interactivity- receiver can select answer back, exchange and linked to other receivers directly

Why study mass communication?

It is the major source of acquiring about the world knowledge -a cognitive approach a mental reality about the world based on our experience with the media

This mental attitude become the basis for all sorts of attitudes and behavior and has numerous effects on our lives.

Media is also a place where many affairs of public life are played out both nationally and internationally. The conducts of democratic or undemocratic politics significant social issues are addressed.

Media is also a place where changing culture and values of societies and groups are constructed stored and most visibly expressed. Primary key to fame and celebrity status.

Media has become the reality against which the real world is compared. The media view of the world has become more real to many people than the real world itself.

Media are the single largest focus of leisure-time activity and means of entertainment. They help organize and interrelate the rest of leisure. As a result a media has become a major and expanding industry providing employment and wide range of political economic benefits.

That is why mass media is of wide interest and is subject to so much scrutiny and regulation as well as theorizing. And we need to consider theories that deal primarily with the ways individual access and process media content and the ways with which mass media sources influences those individuals.

Some sort of theory was needed to guide this task of media reform. The theory should answer questions such as these:

1. Should media do something more than merely distribute whatever content will earn them the greatest profits in the shortest time?

2. Are there some essential public services that media should provide even if no immediate profits can be earned?
3. Should media become involved in identifying and solving social problems?
4. Is it necessary or advisable for media to serve as watchdogs and protect consumers against business fraud and corrupt bureaucrats?
5. What should we expect media to do for us in times of crisis?

These broad questions about the role of media are linked to issues concerning the day-to-day operation of media.

1. How should media management and production jobs be structured?
2. What moral and ethical standards should guide media professionals?
3. Exactly what constitutes being a “journalist”?
4. Are there any circumstances when it is appropriate or even necessary to invade people’s privacy or risk running their reputation?
5. Should television networks broadcast highly rated program even if it routinely contains high levels of violence?

Answers to questions like these are found in **NORMATIVE THEORY** - a type of theory that describes an ideal way for a media system to be structured and operated

Normative theories are different from most of the theories we will study. They don’t **describe things as they are nor** do they **provide scientific explanations or predictions**.

Instead they describe the way things should be if some ideal values or principles are to be realized. Normative theories come from many sources. Sometimes they are developed by media practitioners themselves. Sometimes they are developed by social critics or academics. Sometimes it is the synthesis of ideas developed over the past centuries.

A SHORT EXERCISE

Take a few minutes off, before we proceed, to think about your views concerning the role of media for yourself, about your community and your state, your nation and your world.

- What are the most important things that media should and shouldn’t do?
- What standards of behavior should media practitioners follow as they perform these tasks?
- What about the high percentage of entertainment programming on television?
- Should there be less entertainment and more content that informs and educate?

NORMATIVE THEORIES

Our attention will be on the normative theory SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY THEORY. As this is predominantly used to guide and legitimize most large media in the world.

Social responsibility theory has emerged as seemingly as an **ideal standard** for media that further was considered unnecessary. In the past 30 years although there has been an unprecedented growth and consolidation of control in the media industries, and as a result, gigantic conglomerates dominate the production and distribution of media content, they have found that SR theory provides practical guidelines for their operations and legitimizes what they do.

We will contrast it with theories popular in different parts of the world. We will speculate about its future, as new industries based on new media technologies emerge will social responsibility theory continue to guide them or will alternative develop?

The origin of Normative Theories of Media

Before we go into details of SR theory first we will discuss other theories which ultimately led to SR theory.

We will discuss

- Authoritarian Theory
- Libertarian Theory
- Chicago School
- Totalitarian media Theory.
- Civic or public journalism

Authoritarian Theory

Libertarian theory arose in opposition to Authoritarian theory- an idea that placed all forms of communication under the control of a governing elite or authorities. Authorities justified their control as a means to protect and preserve a divinely ordained social order.

In most of countries, this control rested in the hands of king who, in turn, granted royal charters or licenses to media practitioners. These practitioners could be jailed for violating charters and charters or licenses could be revoked. Censorship of all types, therefore, was easily possible.

Authoritarian control tended to be exercised in arbitrary, erratic ways.

Sometimes, considerable freedom might exist to publicize minority viewpoints and culture as long as authorities didn't perceive a direct threat to their power.

Unlike Totalitarianism, authoritarian theory doesn't prioritize cultivation of a homogeneous, national culture. it only requires acquiescence (compliance) to a governing elite.

Libertarian Theory

In rebelling against authoritarian theory early libertarians argued that there should be no laws governing media operations. Free press means that all forms of media must be totally unregulated. Early Libertarian argued that if individuals could be freed from arbitrary limits on communication imposed by church and state, they would “naturally” follow the dictates of their conscience, seek truth, engage in public debate, and ultimately create a better life for themselves and others. They believed strongly in the power of unrestricted public debate and discussion to create more natural way of structuring society. In AEROPAGETICA, a powerful libertarian published in 1644 by John Milton asserted that:

“In a fair debate good and truthful arguments will always win out over lies and deceit. If this is true it followed , then a new and better social order could be forged using public debate.”

This idea came to be referred to as MILTON’S SELF-RIGHTING PRINCIPLE, and is still cited by contemporary media professionals. However, the author of Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson believed in the Self-righting principle so strongly that he once said:

“Were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without government, I should not hesitate to prefer the latter.”

The writing of Milton was developed in the North American colonies the support was found in writings of John Stuart Mill who argued in *ON LIBERTY*, that

“The peculiar evil of silencing the expression of an opinion is, that it is robbing the human race, posterity as well as the existing generation, those who dissent from the opinion, even more than who hold it. If the opinion is right, they are deprived of the opportunity of exchanging error for truth; if wrong, they lose what is almost as great a benefit, the clearer perception and livelier impression of truth produced by its collision with error.”

These libertarian ideals are also seen as the heart of the United States long-term experiment with democratic self-government. The American Revolution against Britain was legitimized by libertarian ideals. Patrick Henry’s famous comment

“Give me liberty or Give me Death.”

These libertarian principles were also adopted in the “Bill of Rights”. (First 10 amendments to U.S. constitution). It asserted that all individuals have natural rights no government, community, or group can unduly infringe upon or take away. The ability to exercise dissent, to band together with others to resist laws that people find to be wrong, to print or broadcast ideas, opinions and beliefs- all of these rights are proclaimed as central to democratic self government.

Unfortunately, most early libertarians had a unrealistic view of how long it would take to find the “truth” and establish an ideal social order. In the 18th century it became clear that “truth” couldn’t be quickly or easily established, some libertarians became discouraged. They drifted between libertarian and authoritarian views. But despite the priority given to communication freedom, one sees number of restrictions on communication, accepted by media practitioners and media consumers. Examples, Libel laws to check the publication of information that will damage reputations. Laws against offensive language, pornography, information that would interfere with a defendant’s right to a fair trial. Whenever new media technologies are invented, it is necessary to decide how they should be regulated. The debate over communication freedom never ends, sometimes the balance shifts toward expanding freedom and other times, freedom is curtailed.

The question is why it is necessary to place limits on communication freedom. The common reason could be, where do the rights guaranteed to you by the constitution end and those of another begins? What happens when groups attempt to stir up hatred and resentment against racial or ethnic minorities? Should media practitioners be allowed to invade our homes, publish erroneous information about us, or deceive us with false advertising? Do media professionals have the right to produce and distribute anything that will earn profits, or should some limits be placed on them?

If so, who should place and enforce those limits? If laws are written to protect individuals from irresponsible media, can these laws become a means of censoring the media?

These feelings were particularly developed in the United States in the 1800s, during the penny press and yellow journalism eras. Public confidence in both business and government was shaken by recurring depressions, widespread corruption and injustice. Public respect for newspapers also receded as publishers pursued profits and created news to sell papers. Social movement sprang up to call for new laws and greater government regulation. A group who believed in direct regulation of media, most often by a government agency or commission. These include advocates of *TECHNORATIC CONTROL*, people like Harold Lasswell and Walter Lippmann.

They argued that media practitioners can’t be trusted to communicate responsibly or to use media to serve vital public needs. Some sought of oversight or control is necessary to ensure that important needs are satisfied. The views of these advocates were considered most seriously during times of crisis when we need media to serve specific needs



Anti-trust legislation was enacted. Libertarians feared that these laws and regulations would go too far, they sought to rekindle public support for liberation ideals. So they developed an idea of SELF REGULATING MARKETPLACE OF IDEAS. And hence, formed a NEW FORM OF RADICAL LIBERTARIANISM.

Self-regulating marketplace of ideas

In libertarianism, the notion that ideas should be put before the public, and from that “marketplace” the public will choose the best. This idea is a variation of a fundamental principle of capitalism- the notion of self-regulating market. In classical capitalist theory as formulated by Adam Smith, there is little need for the government to regulate markets. An open and competitive marketplace should regulate itself. If a product is in high demand, prices will “naturally” rise as consumers compete to buy it. This encourages other manufacturers to produce the product. Once demand is met by increased manufacturing, the price falls. If one manufacturer charges too much for a product, then competitors will cut their prices to attract buyers. No government interference is necessary to protect consumers or to force manufacturers to meet consumer needs. Another term used to refer to these ideas is the *Laissez-faire doctrine*.

Laissez-faire doctrine

The idea that government shall allow business to operate freely and without official intrusion. The same idea of ‘free marketplace of ideas’ when applied to mass media it meant that if ideas are ‘traded’ freely among people, the correct or best ideas will prevail. The ideas compete and the best will be ‘bought’. So in the media system the marketplace of ideas meant that if someone comes up with a good idea and then transmits it through some form of mass communication. And people like the message. Then people buy the message, pay for its production and distribution costs.

Once these costs are covered, the message producer earns a profit. If people are wise message consumers, then the producers of the best and most useful messages will become rich and develop large media enterprises while the producers of bad messages will fail. If good ideas succeed these ideas should become more easily available at lower cost. Similarly bad ideas cost should rise and access to them should lessen.

And eventually truth should triumph as envisioned by the early libertarians.

Limitations

But there are some difficulties in applying logic. As media content is far less tangible than other consumer products. The meaning of individual messages can vary tremendously from one person to the next. Just what is being traded *when* news stories or television dramas are bought and sold? When we buy newspapers we don’t buy individual stories we also buy other features which we might find offensive but others might not.

Advertisers buy time on the TV shows; they do not necessarily buy the rightness or correctness of the program’s ideas. Sponsors pay more to advertise on programs with large audiences. If the advertiser support permits bad messages to be distributed for free-maybe people are less discriminating if they don’t have to directly pay to receive these messages? So the media market place is a bit more complicated than the marketplace for toothpaste, and shampoos.

**HUTCHINS COMMISSION ON FREEDOM, CHICAGO SCHOOL & BASIC
PRINCIPLES OF SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY THEORY**

So during the 1920s and 1930s a new normative theory of mass communication began to emerge that rejected both radical libertarian and ideas of technocratic control. As pressure for government regulation of media mounted, industry leaders responded with efforts to professionalize. Rather than cede control of media to a government agency, media managers went on record with pledges to serve public needs. Industry codes of ethics began to formalize another important conception about the role of media-that of a watchdog guarding the welfare of the public. It assumed that media should continually scan the social world and alert the public to problems.

Investigations of corruption proved so popular that the media was envisioned as an independent social institution, a FOURTH ESTATE of government, business, religion, education and family-serve the public. This perspective assumed that once people are informed about wrong-doing, incompetence, or inefficiencies, they will take action against it, the masthead of an a paper said that
“Give light and the People will find their way.”

Despite moves toward professionalization and self-regulation, pressure for greater government regulation of media mounted throughout World War II and continued during the anti-communist agitation that followed.

So Henry Luce, CEO of Time Inc., provided funding for an independent commission to make recommendations concerning the role of the press.

The Hutchins Commission on Freedom of the press was established in 1942 and released a major report of its findings in 1947. The Commission members were sharply divided between those who held strongly libertarian views and those who thought some form of press regulation was necessary. Those who favored regulation were fearful that the marketplace of ideas was much too vulnerable to subversion by antidemocratic forces; most of them were impressed by the Chicago School.

Chicago School

Chicago School envisioned modern cities as “Great Communities” comprising hundreds of small social groups- everything from neighborhood social organizations to citywide associations. For these Great Communities to develop, all the constituent groups had to work together and contribute. These were referred to as pluralistic groups in recognition of their cultural and racial diversity.

The Chicago School Opposed marketplace of ideas notions and argued that unregulated mass media inevitably served the interests and tastes of large or socially dominant groups. Small, weak, pluralistic groups would be either neglected or degraded.

This perspective also held that ruthless elites could use media as a means of gaining personal political power. These demagogues could manipulate media to transmit propaganda to fuel hatred and fear among a majority unite them against minorities, e.g. as Hitler used the media to arouse hatred against the Jews. Although majority of the Hutchins commission members had some sympathy for Chicago School ideas, they opposed any direct form of press regulation.

The Commission members faced a serious dilemma. On the one hand they recognized that marketplace of ideas was not self-regulating and the media were doing less than they could to provide services to minority groups. The members also feared that any form of press regulation would open the door to official control of media – the very thing they were trying to prevent. Without some form of regulation, a ruthless and cunning demagogue might be able to use hate propaganda to gain power in the United States. But establishing a national press council might put too much control in the hands of existing elites and they might abuse it.

Ultimately the Hutchins Commission members decided to place their faith in media practitioners and call on them to redouble their efforts to serve the public.

The synthesis of ideas put forward in the Hutchins Commission report has become known as the Social Responsibility Theory of the Press. It emphasized the need for an independent press that scrutinizes other social institutions and provides objective, accurate, news reports.

The most innovative feature of SR theory was its call for media to be responsible for fostering productive and creative “Great Communities”. It said that media should do this by prioritizing cultural pluralism- by becoming the voice of all the people- not just elite groups or groups that had dominated national, regional or local culture in the past.

Dennis McQuail in 1987 summarized the basic principles of social responsibility theory as the following:-

1. Media should accept and fulfill certain obligations to society.
2. These obligations are mainly to be met by setting high or professional standards of informativeness, truth, accuracy, objectivity and balance.
3. In accepting and applying these obligations, media should be self-regulating within the framework of law and established institutions.
4. The media should avoid whatever might lead to crime, violence or civil disorder or give offense to minority groups.
5. The media as a whole should be pluralist and reflect the diversity of their society, giving access to various points of view and to rights of reply.
6. Society and the public have a right to expect high standards of performance, and intervention can be justified to secure the public good.
7. Journalists and media professionals should be accountable to society as well as to employers and the market

SR theory has proved quite durable. Most journalists take seriously the central values of social responsibility theory such as pluralism and cultural diversity. An example of a comprehensive code, which also has an international reference, is the International Principles of professional Ethics in Journalism, drawn up under the auspices of UNESCO. Unlike most industry codes, it does not use the word ‘freedom’ but refers frequently to rights and responsibilities, there are ten clauses headed and summarized as follows:

1. People’s right to true information- the right of people to express themselves freely through the media of communication
2. The journalistic dedication to objective reality;- this aims to provide public with adequate material to facilitate the formation of an accurate and comprehensive picture of the world.
3. The journalist's social responsibility.- this emphasizes the fact that journalistic information is social good not just a commodity
4. The Journalist's Professional integrity. This deals especially with rights not to work against personal conviction and other matters of personal ethics.
5. Public access and participation. This includes the right of rectification and reply.
6. Respect for privacy and Human Dignity
7. Respect for the Public interest. This relates to respect for the national community, its democratic institutions and public morals
8. Respect of Universal Values and diversity of cultures. This calls for respect for human rights, social progress, national liberation, peace, democracy.
9. Elimination of War and Other Great Evils confronting humanity. This calls for abstention from justifying aggression, arms proliferation, violence, hatred, discrimination.
10. Promotion of a New World information and communication order. This is directed especially at the need for decolonization and democratization of information and communication.

However there is little evidence that have developed an effective means of promoting these values through their work. E.g. journalists continue to define the routine work of community and minority groups as non-newsworthy, inflammatory remarks made by militant group leaders are widely publicized with no information about the social conditions that prompt the remarks.

Before we proceed to discuss a contemporary media movement designed to breathe new life into social responsibility theory, let's first discuss the Totalitarian media Theory.

Totalitarian Media Theory

Totalitarian media Theory is a normative theory calling for suppression of pluralistic groups and the use of media under the control of the dominant political party to propagate a strong centralized political culture. Just as libertarianism arose as an alternative to authoritarian ideas, social responsibility theory is a response to totalitarian ideas. Totalitarian media theories, such as those developed by the Nazis or by former Soviet communists, called for suppression of Pluralistic groups and exalted the necessity for propagating a strong centralized political culture. Direct control of the media by the dominant political party was seen as essential to prevent deviant, disruptive views from being expressed by enemies of the people. The party whether it is National Socialist or Soviet Communist, must be trusted with total control over media so that it can educate the masses and lead them into a utopian future.

So in contrast to totalitarianism theory, SR theory encouraged media practitioners to see themselves as front-line participants in the battle to preserve democracy in a world drifting inexorably toward totalitarianism.

CIVIC JOURNALISM, DEVELOPMENT MEDIA THEORY & DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPANT THEORY

Civic or Public Journalism

Keeping the spirit of the SR theory in view many newspapers began practicing *civic journalism*, actively engaging the members of their areas in reporting important civic issues. It is a form of interactive journalism, where the newspaper actively enlists and engages people from all walks of life in the creation of the stories and reports it develops.

According to Gunaratne in 1998 civic or public journalism may be defined as:

An effort by print and broadcast journalists to reach out to the public more aggressively in the reporting process, to listen to how citizens frame their problems and what citizens see as solutions to those problems, and then use that information to enrich their newspaper or broadcast report.

OR

A movement to create a more active and engaged public by self-consciously giving voice to the people's agenda.

OR

A movement to steer journalism towards reinvigorating public life, which many see as excluding ordinary citizens and devaluing the need to inform them.

Forms of civic journalism

So civic journalism can happen in a variety of ways:

1. By giving a detailed and long-running coverage of important or controversial community issues, employing citizens as part of the coverage and inviting response and debate through devices such as hotlines and open forums. E.g. issues like state of public schools, sanitation problems, problems in public hospitals etc. In these reports local people and groups, local problems and local solutions are highlighted rather than, national data on minority unemployment or how schools in another state meet the challenges.

2. Another form of civic journalism is the assembly of citizen panels, composed of diverse people and interests that meet at regular intervals throughout the life of an ongoing news event, e.g. legislative budget hearings or a political campaign.

The reactions of the citizens to developments are reported as news.

3. Or developing citizen roundtables, inviting people from different constituencies to hash out their differences and attempt to find some common ground. These interactions are then reported as news. Proponents of civic journalism see it as the embodiment of social responsibility theory and a solid form of community service.

The criticisms on civic journalism are:

1. Competition for advertising revenues from other more national news media like television and the Web.
2. Too much concern and interests of citizens with personal or narrow agendas.

McQuail in 1987 cites several normative theories that have been developed in other parts of the world. These include

- Development media theory and
- Democratic-participant theory

Development Media Theory

Development media theory was intended to recognize the fact that societies undergoing a transition from underdevelopment and colonialism to independence and better material conditions often lack the infrastructure, the money, the traditions, the professional skills and even the audiences needed to sustain

media institutions comparable to those of the First world or Second world , in which the four theories could take root.

Goals of development media theory

It emphasizes the following goals:

1. The primacy of the national development task
2. The pursuit of cultural and informational autonomy
3. Support for democracy
4. Solidarity with other developing countries.

This theory advocates media support for an existing political regime and its efforts to bring about national economic development. By supporting government development efforts , media aid society at large. This theory argues that unless a nation is well-established and its economic development well underway, media must be supportive *rather* than critical of government. Journalists must not pick apart government efforts to promote development but rather assist government in implementing such policies. This theory recognizes the need for some form of government intervention into the operation of media. It envisions setting up:

- o Government agencies.
- o Monitor training and licensing of media practitioners;
- o Control development of media institutions;
- o Regularly censor-media content before distribution.
- o Issue regular guidelines for day-to-day operation of media

Although different degree of self-regulation are encouraged, media practitioners are not trusted by government officials to carry out their responsibilities without guidance and constant monitoring.

Criticism

An updated version of authoritarian theory and that media should never surrender the power to criticize government policies even if it risks causing the policies to fail.

Democratic-Participant Theory

Democratic-participant theory was proposed in recognition of new media developments and of increasing criticism of the dominance of the main mass media by private or public monopolies.

From the 1960's onwards call could be heard for alternative, grass-roots media, expressing the needs of citizens. The theory supports the right to relevant local information, the right to answer back and the right to use the new means of communication for interaction and social action in small-scale settings of community, interest groups or subculture. This theory challenged the necessity for and desirability of uniform, centralized, high-cost, commercialized, professionalized or state-controlled media.

In their place should be encouraged multiple, small-scale, local, non-institutional, committed media which link senders to receivers and also favor horizontal patterns of interaction.

Practical expressions of the theory

The practical expressions of the theory are many and varied, including the underground or alternative press, community cable television, micro-media in rural settings, wall posters Media for women and ethnic minorities. The theory reflects the market as a suitable institutional form, as well as all top-down professional provision and control. Participation and interaction are key concepts.

Democratic-participant theory advocates media support for cultural pluralism at a grass-root level. Media are to be used to stimulate and empower pluralistic groups. Unlike social responsibility theory, which assumes that mass media can perform this function, democratic-participant theory call for development of innovative, 'small' media that can be directly controlled by group members.

If they cannot afford such media, then government subsidies should be provided to them existing small media should be identified and funded. Training programs should be established to teach group members how to operate small media.

This theory argues that surviving remnants of ethnic groups be given access to media and allowed to revive or stabilize their culture. This theory has been most fully developed in western Europe and is part of a grass-roots revival of historically significant cultural and ethnic groups. In Yugoslavia and Kosovo In Wales e.g. welsh language programming has been successfully aired.

Democratic participant theory is a reaction. The term democratic-participant expresses a sense of disillusionment with established political parties and with media system, which are seen as having broken faith with the people.

There is also an element of reaction against the mass society, which is over-organized and alienating. Free press theory is seen to fail because of its subversion by the forces of capitalism, while social responsibility ends up as just another form of complicity with the bureaucratic state or a mere self-serving by entrenched media professional.

Both freedom and self-regulation are seen to have failed

LIMITATIONS OF THE PRESS THEORY

Although the ideas discussed about the role of the media in society are still relevant, the attempt to formulate consistent theories of the press is bound to breakdown:

1. Due to underlying interest and political ideology which are present in any society
 2. Due to outdated notion of the press as providing mainly only political news and information. As for instance realistically speaking there is cinema and music industry video market or good deal of sport, fiction and entertainment on television which is much more than the political information and news.
- It is unsatisfactory to leave it outside the scope of social-normative thinking
These theories were also formulated in very general terms and did not describe or underlie any actual media system.

The framework of theory was formulated largely from a north American perspective at one point in history taking little note of the distinctive features of public service broadcasting in other countries. Media change: new normative theory needed for new times.

Apart from the relative decline of print media and rise of electronic media, other changes are under way in the media .The media are proliferating in their technical and institutional forms as much as in the volume of content produced and disseminated. This abundance of media is making it difficult to judge what counts as an indispensable service and what the respective roles of different media in society might be.

Then there is the phenomenon of convergence between media, referring to fading of once clear boundaries between print-, broadcast and telecommunication-based media.

Media is also becoming Transnational- in ownership, financing organization productions, distribution, content, reception and even regulation. A related trend is Conglomeration and the formation of large multi-media enterprises which not only cross nation boundaries but also lead to vertical and horizontal concentration.

Conglomeration leads to fears of loss of creative independence and of cultural diversity. Due to this there has been a general decline of public regulation of media and an increased role for the market in shaping the media. This trend is only partly a result of greater commercialization since it also reflects a general decline in normative certainties and an increase in libertarian thinking.

A revised framework of normative principles for media structure and performance which follows is still based on the presumption that the media are widely expected to serve the 'public interest' or 'general welfare' whether by design or not Concept of 'public interest' in media. This means , in practice that mass media are not the same as any other business or service industry, but often carry out some tasks, which contribute to the wider and longer-term benefit of society as a whole, especially in cultural and political matters, over and above their own obvious goals. But this does not imply that media can legitimately be obliged to conform to some version of the popular will or alternative be directed to carry out some particular mission as determined by the state or politicians. Sometimes the view of the majority has been viewed as public interest .Due to public debate there is never a fixed version of public interest, but always changing.

Media issues of normative concern on which controversy has centered

1. Concentration and monopoly
2. News and information quality
3. Security and social order
4. Morals and decency
5. Cultural quality and commercialism
6. Cultural autonomy and integrity

Concentration and monopoly

The new industrialized media order endangers democracy and freedom contained in the concentrations of power in the hands of press ‘barons’, especially in the USA and Britain. This trend has continued and spread worldwide.

The phenomenon of one-news-paper cities and the formation of large chains, provoked a fear of reduce freedom and independence of news and views.

It is also threatened the balance representation of opposed political views,

And so a loss of political choice for the reader reduced opportunities for access to media channels and generally reduced media diversity.

News and information quality

Second concern is a long-standing theme of debate is the concern for the general quality of the news about events of the day and of the world as supplied to the average citizen, who depends on the media in order to reach informed choices and judgments. The press is often accused of sensationalism and superficiality of omissions inaccuracy and even falsification and lying and Failure to cover international news in comprehensive and balanced way. So the need resist warlike, nationalist and racist propaganda.

Security and social order

The most controversial issue is also that of relationship of media to security and authority of the state the authorities everywhere have shown a consistent inclination to want to manage the news even if they stop short of censorship

This is more in the case of broadcasting than with the printed press.

Morals and decency

Another issue of concern is the issue of Morals Decency and portrayals of matter to do with pornographic sex, crime and violence. The protection of minors from undesirable influences or the portrayal of women in degrading manner.

Commercialism

The term commercialism has many meanings, but in one influential view it stands opposed to number of key social –cultural values. Commercialization has been associated with manipulation, consumerism lack of originality and creativity lead to homogeneity and neglect of minorities who do not provide profitable audience or advertising markets media should contribute to education culture and the arts

Cultural issues

Media is ceasing to reflect the culture and the circumstances of their intended publics and may undermine the local language and cultural identity as a result of the transnational flow of content. It is a potential problem for countries which are under the influence of a foreign media flow for other reasons for instance India and Pakistan.

Response to these issues:

So what is required is:

1. Media freedom
2. Media equality
3. Media diversity
4. Information quality-objectivity concept- means adopting
5. Social order and solidarity
6. Cultural order

Media Freedom

There are many version of freedom.

Freedom is a condition, rather than a criterion of performance. It refers primarily to rights of free expression and free formation of opinion. However for these rights to be realized there must also be access to channels and opportunities to receive diverse kinds of information. So what freedom of communication calls for is absence of censorship, license or other controls by government – unhindered

right to publish and disseminate news and opinions, equal rights of free reception and access to news, views, education.

Freedom for news media to obtain news media to obtain information from relevant sources.

Absence of concealed influence from media owners or advertisers on news selection and on opinions expressed

An active and critical editorial policy in presenting news and opinion and a creative, innovative and independent publishing policy in respect of art and culture.

Benefits of communication freedom

- i) Systematic and independent public scrutiny of those in power and an adequate supply of reliable information about their activities- watchdog or critical role of media.
- ii) Stimulation of an active and informed democratic system and social life.
- iii) The chance to express idea, beliefs and views about the world
- iv) Continued renewal and change of culture and society
- v) Increase in the amount and variety of freedom

Media equality

Equality requires that no special favour be given to power-holders and that access to media should be given to contenders for office and in general, to oppositional or deviant opinions, perspectives or claims. In relation to business clients of the media, equality requires that all legitimate advertisers be treated on the same basis the same rates and conditions. It also implies that the normal principles of the market should operate freely and fairly. Equality supports policies of universal provision in broadcasting and telecommunication and of sharing out the costs of basic services.

Media diversity

The diversity principle applied to actual media system and content have the following main elements.

1. Media should reflect in their structure and content the various social, economic and cultural realities of the societies and communities in which they operate in a more or less proportional.
2. Media should offer more or less equal chances of access to the voices of various social cultural minorities which make up the society.
3. Media should serve as a forum for different interests and points of views in a society
4. Media should offer relevant choices of content at one point in time and also variety over time of a kind which corresponds to the needs and interests of their audiences.

Information quality

The concept of Objectivity contains the following elements:-

- A position of detachment and neutrality towards the object of reporting
- Lack of partisanship
- Attachments to accuracy and other truth criteria
- Lack of ulterior motive or service to third party

Main information quality requirements

- Media should provide comprehensive supply of relevant news and background information about events in the society and the world around.
- Information should be objective in the sense of being accurate, honest, sufficiently complete, true to reality, reliable, and separating facts from opinion.
- Information should be balanced and fair impartial-reporting alternative perspectives in a non-sensational , unbiased way

Social order and solidarity

1. In respect of the relevant public which they serve at national or local level, media should provide channels of inter communication and support.
2. The media may contribute to social integration by paying concerned attention to socially disadvantaged or injured groups

3. The media should not undermine the forces of law order by encouraging or symbolically rewarding crime or social disorder.
4. In matters of social security such as war or threat of war or terrorism may be limited by consideration of national interest.
5. On questions of morals, decency and tastes especially in matters of the portrayals of sex, and violence and the use of language the media should in some degree observe the reigning norms or what is broadly publicly acceptable and avoid causing grave public offence.

Cultural order

1. Media content should reflect and express the language and contemporary culture of the people which the media serve; it should be relevant of current and typical social experience.
 2. Some priority should be given to the educational role of the media and to the expression and continuity of the best in the cultural heritage of a country.
- Media should encourage cultural creativity and originality and the production of work of high quality according aesthetic, moral intellectual and occupational criteria

MCQUAIL'S FOUR KINDS OF THEORIES

Social science is controversial because it suggests causal relationships between things in the environment people's attitudes, values and behaviors. Society and media relationship is a causal relationship.

Theory is any set of ideas which can help make sense of a phenomenon, guide action or predict a consequence.

Theories help us understand or explain phenomena we observe in social world. They are the net with which we catch the world or the way in which we sense of the social life.

Theories are stories about how and why events occur... Scientific theories begin with the assumption that the universe, including the social universe created by acting human beings, reveals certain basic and fundamental properties that explain the ebb and flow of events in specific process. Theory is also defined as scholars' best representation of some state of affairs based on systematic observation.

According to McQuail there are four kinds of theories

1. Social scientific theory
2. Normative theory
3. Operational theory
4. Everyday theory

Social scientific theory

- These theories are based on and guide empirical research
- Permit statements about nature, workings and effects of mass communication
- These statements or hypothesis are tested by making systematic and objective observations regarding mass media, media use and media influence.
- E.g. TV and aggression link.

Normative theory

- This form of theories explains how ideal media ought to operate within a specific system of social values.
- Such theory usually stems from the broader social philosophy or ideology of a given society.
- E.g. theories of the press's role in a democracy would most likely fit here as would theories of media in an Islamic republic or an authoritarian.

Operational theory

- This kind of theory is normative but with a practical bent.
- It involves not only HOW media should ideally operate but how they CAN operate to meet specific ends.
- Such as how to select news, please audience, effective advertising keep within the limits of what society permits and relate effectively to sources and audiences

Everyday or common-sense theory

- This refers to the knowledge we all have from our long experience with media which enables us to understand what is going on,
- How a medium might fit into our daily lives,
- How its content is intended to be read, how we like to read it
- What are differences in different media (genre in content).
- On the basis of such theory we make consistent choices from tastes and make judgments.
- This affects the media influence on the individuals
- This causes public debate about the media

Other commentators on mass communication have suggested other means of understanding about mediated communication.

Critical theory

- A loose confederation of ideas held together by a common interest in the quality of communication and human life
- Concerned with inequality and oppression
- They not only observe they also criticize
- Concerned with the conflict of interest in the society and the
- Ways communication perpetuates domination of one group over another
- Media effects a historical perspective
- History of the scientific study of Media effects.

Media effects - a historical perspective

- Examine the concern for media effects in historical perspective and the historical evidence for actual media effects on opinions and behaviors since the invention of the printing press.
- The society's elite which recognized potential societal influences from exposure to the printed word. Such as the religious and the government elites that is why:
 1. used the press to for their own ends
 2. attempted to censorship
 3. control publications and thereby silence opposition voices
 4. Such fears even exist today in totalitarian societies, in which leaders suppress or control media to maintain power.

In 1559, Pope Paul IV issued an Index of Prohibited Books which included Protestant books along with occult and pornography books and opposition books---- Martin Luther defied the pope and used the printing press to spread Reformation literature to the masses.... And so rebels and imprisonment and punishments. In the 16th century King Henry VII felt so threatened that he prosecuted those who published material offensive to the crown. Insisted on licensing and held English press under strict control. In late 1700s in the United States Benjamin Franklin --- Philadelphia 'Aurora'—leading voice for the cause of Republicanism in the United States.

So press affects the 'public opinion'. A judge said that:

"Give to any set of men the command of the press and you give them the command of the country, for you give them the command of public opinion, which commands everything."

Public concern for "indecent" material

- Concern for the ill effects of media violence and sexually explicit material
- In the early 19th century 'penny press'—reports on the activities of arrested thieves, drunks prostitutes and other miscreants and low lives of society became immensely popular among many readers – and so became a target of extreme criticism.
- Sensationalism promoted
- Competitors in print
- So on several occasions angry readers attacked the press---"moral war"

It was in the later half of the 19th century when new technologies and the spread of literacy made possible the development of remarkable new forms of communication – mass communication. New media technologies were invented and popularized and apprehensions were that:

- New technology would disrupt peaceful, rural communities
- Force people to in urban areas to serve as a convenient work force in large factories, mines or bureaucracies
- For some mass media symbolized every thing that was wrong in the urban life
- Media lowered class tastes
- Brings political unrest

- Violated cultural norms
 - The old social order of the landed aristocracy was crumbling and was its culture and politics
- Dominant perspective that emerged during this period was of **mass society theory**. Among the originators of mass society notions was a German sociologist, Ferdinand Tönnies. He tried to differentiate between the earlier form of social organization and the European society as it existed in the late 19th century. The two terms he used were:-
 1. Gemeinschaft or folk society
 2. Gesellschaft or modern, industrial society

Gemeinschaft or folk society

People were bound by strong ties of family, tradition, rigid social roles- basic social institutions were very powerful---- he argued that folk society yearn for the order and meaning and they often find life in modern societies to be troublesome and without meaning. In Modern or industrial societies people are often bound by relatively weak social institutions based upon rational choices rather than tradition.

French Sociologist, Emile Durkheim also offered more or less a similar theory about the dichotomy in the society.

1. Mechanical solidarity- compared folk societies to machines in which people were little more than cogs. The machines are ordered and durable, but people were forced by collective consensus to perform traditional social roles—bound by consensus to one another like the parts of a great engine.

2. Organic solidarity- he compared the modern social orders to animals. As they grow, animals undergo profound changes in their physical form. The animals are made up of cells and cells serve very different purposes and also undergo changes. Similarly in modern social orders the people grow and changes along with the society at large- for their survival. So organic solidarity is characterized by specialization, division of labor and interdependence and in this regard media role was appreciated to permit important new social bonds formation.

Later the ills (decline of common morality) of the society must be cured by social pathologists- sociologists- not by reverting to old social orders but scientifically chosen forms would solve the problems inherent in modernity.

Characteristics of the mass society and mass audience

- Large number
- Widely dispersed
- Non-interactive and anonymous
- Heterogeneous
- Not organized or self acting

And so the theory made a several basic assumption about individuals and the role of media and the nature of social change.

1. first assumption was that media is cancerous force within society and must be purged or totally restructured- govt control – Nazi- BBC—also George Orwell novel in 1948 ‘1984’ Big brother watches every one, televised propaganda was used to foment hatred against external enemies and promote love of Big Brother
2. Media have the power to reach out and directly influence the minds of average people- direct effects assumptions – usually negative- average citizens are portrayed as helpless and are being manipulated by the power of the media e.g. violence on TV, or in comics or heavy metal music and average teenagers
3. once people's minds are corrupted by media, all sorts of bad, long-term consequences result-bringing not only ruin to individual lives but also certain social problems on a

vast scale-every social problem is attributed to the media e.g. teenage delinquents disaffected housewives- seeing to many soap operas- drug addicts

4. Average people are vulnerable to media because they have been cut off and isolated from traditional social institutions that previously protected them from manipulation. The argument is, in modern societies when an individual is isolated and is striped off his traditional protective family structures provided by the traditional community he started believing whatever media communicated to them. Media became the most trusted and valued source of messages about politics, entertainment, religion, education and on and on e.g. story telling replaced by movies, television and videos.
5. Mass media inevitably debase higher forms of culture, bringing about a general decline in civilization.

This criticism was held by Western cultural and educational elites- in decades following the enlightenment (18th century European social and Philosophical movement that stressed rational thought) these elites thought themselves as responsible for nurturing and promulgating higher forms of culture, not only within their own societies but also around the world. (White, male, western, protestant) so media was viewed as a threat to high culture- e.g. rather than glorifying gangsters highlight great leaders or religious leaders etc. media should not lower people tastes by giving them what they want but should give what they need. (BBC)

PROPAGANDA THEORIES

In today's session we will see:

- How the idea of Propaganda emerged in the mass society and mass media relationship.
- And then look the theories that were developed to understand and control it as these were the first true media theories earlier within the mass society theory media was seen as one of the disruptive forces.

Propaganda Theories

But in propaganda theories, media became the focus of attention. Propaganda theorists specifically analyzed media content and speculated about its influence. They sought to understand and explain the ability of messages to persuade and convert thousands or even millions of individuals to extreme viewpoints.

In the beginning of the 20th century traditionalist elite propagandists had TWO alternatives:

- The American way – stood for truth justice and freedom.
- Totalitarianism – communism and Nazis- falsehood, evil and slavery---- Of course they had their own versions of truth justice and freedom.

Initially Americans resisted the propaganda for it violated the most basic rules of fair democratic political communication - for propaganda freely used lied and deception to persuade- what they believed in was that people should be taught to critically evaluate propaganda messages, then they will be able to reject them as unfair and false. They believed that public education could save democracy. But optimism faded as both communism and Nazism spread from Europe to America in 1930s. So propaganda experts became convinced that even if public education was a practical means of resisting propaganda, it would simply take too long. Time was running out. Propaganda must be resisted by whatever means possible so if the power of the propaganda could be harnessed to promote good and just ideals that would just not counter the threat but have a tool that could help build a better social order – white propaganda.

Origin of Propaganda

Term originated in the 16th century during the counter-Reformation. Used by the Society for the Propagation of the Faith- The term has since come to refer to the no-holds-barred use of communication to propagate specific beliefs and expectations ultimate goal is to change the way people act e.g. in World War I Nazi Germany's propaganda division said the secret to effective propaganda is to simplify a complex issue and repeat that simplification over and over again.

Effective propaganda is covert. Disinformation- false information to discredit the opposition.

Black propaganda – deliberate and strategic transmission of lies.

White propaganda – intentional suppression of potentially harmful information and ideas, combined with deliberate promotion of positive information or ideas to distract attention from problematic events.

Grey propaganda – involves transmission of information or ideas that might or might not be false.

Engineering of Consent

The totalitarian propagandist conceptualized as a very practical means of mass manipulation an effective mechanism for controlling large populations so that the dominant majority came to have and act upon certain beliefs and attitudes.

Propagandists typically held elitist and paternalistic views about their audiences. They believed that people needed to be changed for their own good.

They believed that people were so irrational or so illiterate so in-attentive that it was necessary to coerce, seduce or trick them into learning bits of misinformation.

They also believed in suppressing opposition

Three Theories That Influenced the Propaganda Theories In 1930s

1. Behaviorism
2. Freudianism
3. Magic bullet theories

Behaviorism

John B. Watson - an animal experimentalist who argued that all human action is merely a conditioned response to external environmental stimuli. Media provides external stimuli that triggered immediate responses.

Freudianism

Sigmund Freud, pioneer of this theory, stated that Ego is rational mind is in control. Id is the dark side of the self- the egocentric,(selfish and self-centered) pleasure seeking part of the ourselves- that Ego must struggle to keep in control

Ego relies on the internalized set of cultural rules the Superego- for guidance.

Caught between the primitive Id and the overly restrictive Superego, the Ego fights a losing battle when the Ego loses control to the Id, Hysteria or worse results and when the Superego becomes dominant and the Id is completely suppressed, people turn into unemotional, depressed social automatons that simply do what others demand.

Propaganda theorists used Freudian theory to develop propaganda. It would be most effective if it appeal directly to the Id and stimulate it to overwhelm (overpower) the Ego or through effective propaganda efforts the cultural rules (Superego) moved the self in the direction of the Id. So people were seen as individuals incapable of rational self control. People were seen as highly vulnerable to media manipulation- media stimuli and the Id could trigger action that the Ego and the Superego were powerless to stop.

Magic Bullet Theories

In the 1920s Media was assumed to operate like magic bullets that penetrated people's minds and instantly created associations between strong emotions and specific concepts. By carefully controlling these magic bullets, propagandists felt that they could condition people associate good emotions, such as loyalty and reverences with their own country and associate bad emotions, such as fear and loathing with their enemies.

These theorists thought that rational mind was a mere façade, incapable of resisting powerful messages. It happened in Germany, Japan, Russia and Italy. In October 1938 H. G Wells War of the Worlds

LASSWELL'S PROPAGANDA THEORY

He combined behaviorism and Freudianism into a particularly pessimistic vision of media and their role. Propaganda was not so much the result of the substance or appeal of specific messages but rather the result of the vulnerable state to mind of average people. He argued that economic depression and escalating political conflict had induced widespread psychosis (hang up, obsession) and this made people susceptible to even crude forms of propaganda he rejected simplistic magic bullet theory .He believed that people need to be slowly prepared to accept radically different ideas and actions. Communicators need a well developed long-term, campaign in which new ideas and image are carefully introduced and then cultivated symbols must be created and people to associate specific emotions with these symbols. if these cultivation strategies are successful, they can be referred to as Master symbols – so Master symbols are associated with strong emotions and possesses the power to stimulate beneficial large-scale mass action if they are used wisely.

He envisioned a long and quite sophisticated conditioning process. Exposure to one or two extremist messages would not likely have significant effects. For successful social movements gain power by propaganda master symbols over a period of months and years using variety of media. He proposed that that power to control delivery of propaganda through the mass media would be placed in the hands of a new elite a scientific technocracy that would be pledged to using its knowledge for good rather than evil

Hence it became the foundation for numerous official efforts to improve and spread democracy at agencies such as VOA and US information Agency.

PARADIGM SHIFT & TWO STEP FLOW OF INFORMATION

In our previous session we discussed the theories that propounded that media has a powerful effect on people. We discussed the theories which were the reason for the theories that media can be used as a powerful propaganda tool.

Now we will discuss how a radical transformation in media theory took place. And the focus from powerful effect of media shifted to Limited Effects of Media. And how this became the dominant paradigm in U.S media research from 1940 till 1960s. We will discuss the work of the pioneer researchers in this field who were responsible for bringing this shift. We will discuss the work of Paul Lazarsfeld of Princeton University and then the work of Carl Hovland.

But before we proceed let's look at the term Paradigm shift. Thomas Kuhn in 1970 a science historian argued that the way science progresses is through these radical breaks in theory. For a period of time a single theoretical perspective or paradigm dominates most research. It provides a useful guide for research as long as its basic assumptions are accepted. But sometimes small opposition research communities emerge to develop and investigate alternate theories. Sometimes their work is ignored and sometime they are able to conclusively demonstrate the validity of their perspective.

Sometimes researchers committed to a dominant paradigm uncover important findings that are inconsistent with it. And as they explore these findings more and more contradictory data are obtained. Eventually researcher makes an effort to explain for these inconsistencies and develop a new body of theory.

Sometimes an important role is played by a scientific iconoclasts-people who rebel against key assumptions in the dominant paradigm or who are convinced that new research methods should be used. These rebels work in isolation as they develop alternate perspective; the value of their ideas and findings might not be recognized until decades after the original research was done.

Paradigm Shift In Mass Communication Theory

The people who led the paradigm shift in mass communication theory during the 1940s and 1950s were primarily methodologists – not theorists. They were convinced that the influence of media can be assessed by employing objective, empirical methods to measure it.

They were impressed by the accomplishments being made in the physical science. The ability to understand and control the physical world was being vividly demonstrated e.g. the highly sophisticated bombs- which could be used for either good or evil- to defend democracy and bolster totalitarianism.

Similarly the scientific methods provided the essential means to control media's power. They argued that new research methods such as experiments and surveys made it possible to observe the effects of media. These observations would permit definitive conclusions to be reached and would guide the construction of more useful theory.

The researchers were trained in the empirical research methods adopted; statistical techniques were adapted to the study of media effects to bring validity in their approach. Large-scale expensive studies were conducted.

Two-Step Flow of Information And Influence

Paul Lazarsfeld was a mathematician, but also interested in psychology, sociology and mass communication. He and his research institute at Columbia University pioneered research in the effects of radio and introduced. The notion that interpersonal communication was an important mediating factor in certain mass media effects.

Lazarsfeld preferred inductive approach to theory construction that is; research should begin with empirical observation, not with armchair speculation.

After the facts are gathered they are sifted and the most important pieces of information are selected. This information is used to construct empirical generalizations – assertions about the relationships between variables.

This research approach is cautious and inherently conservative. It avoids sweeping generalizations that go beyond empirical observations and demand that theory construction be disciplined by data collection and analysis. Theory is gradually created by combining generalizations to build what Robert Merton in 1967 referred to as middle-range theory.

Middle range theory comprises of empirical generalizations that are solidly based on empirical facts.

Lazarsfeld studied the election campaign of 1940 – between Roosevelt against Republican Wendell Willkie. He assembled a large research team in May- the voters were interviewed seven times from May till November. His findings contradicted mass society theory. He argued that the most important influence of mass media was to reinforce a vote choice that had already been made. Media simply gave people more reasons for choosing a candidate to whom they already favored.

He found very little evidence that media converted people. Instead, the converts were often people with divided loyalties and were pressured by certain group ties. He found out that the few who were early deciders were also the heaviest users of media. These heavy users might be the same people whose advice was being sought by other more apathetic voters. These heavy viewers held well developed political views and used media wisely and critically.

So rather than be converted themselves, they might actually gain information that would help them advise others so that they would be more resistant to conversion. Thus these heavy users might act as gate-keepers- screening information and only passing on items that would help other share their views. They would pass along information to others in the community who looked to them for guidance.

Lazarsfeld chose the term opinion leader to refer to these individuals. He labeled those who turned to opinion leaders for advice as opinion followers.

These (opinion followers) people were influenced primarily through interpersonal contacts rather than by what they read in the newspapers and magazines or heard on the radio. This finding led the establishment of a TWO-STEP FLOW MODEL OF MASS COMMUNICATION, in which effects were perceived as being modified by interpersonal communication about those media messages.

For the attributes of opinion leaders another research conducted in 1943 on the housewives in Illinois--a snowball sampling was done- to find out who influenced their thinking on marketing, movies, fashions and politics- and then influential people were interviewed.

After 10 years Elihu Katz and Lazarsfeld published their work PERSONAL INFLUENCE in 1955. They disclosed that opinion leaders existed at all levels of society and that the flow of their influence tended to be horizontal rather than vertical. Opinion leaders influenced people like themselves rather than those above or below them in the social order.

OPINION LEADERS differed from followers in many ways of their personal attributes:

- They were more gregarious
- Used media more
- Were more socially active
- And shared the same social status

Limited Effects Theory

Two popular labels from perspective on media that developed out of Lazarsfeld's work are:

Indirect Effects Theory

When media do seem to have an effect, that effect is “filtered” through other parts of the society, for the example, through friends or social groups

Limited Effects Theory

Limited Effects Theory propounds that media have minimal or limited effects because those effects are mitigated by a variety of mediating or intervening variables.

The broad generalizations that emerged from the limited effect research work conducted between 1945 and 1960.

Media rarely directly influenced individuals. Most people are sheltered from direct manipulation by propaganda by their family, friends, co-worker and social groups. People don't believe everything they hear or see in the media. They turn to others for advice and critical interpretation. This assumption contradicts mass society notion that viewed people as isolated and highly vulnerable to direct manipulation. There is two –step flow of media influence. Media will only be influential if the opinion leaders who guide others are influenced first.

But since these opinion leaders are sophisticated, critical media users, they are not easily manipulated by media content. They act as effective barrier to media influence.

By the time most people become adults that have strongly held group commitments such as political party and religious affiliation that individual media messages are powerless to overcome.

These commitments cause people to reject messages even if other group members are not present to assist them. Media use tends to be consistent with these commitments. E.g. Republican and democrats; religious commitments etc

When media effects do occur, they will be modest and isolated. Huge number of people across the land will not be converted. Rather small pockets of individuals might be influence-usually those who are cut off from the influence of other people or whose long-term commitments are undermined by social crises.

Carl Hovland and the Experimental section

The Army's information and Education Division had a Research Branch –headed by a psychologist Carl Hovland. Primary mission was “to make experimental evaluations of the effectiveness of various programs of the Information education division”

To find out the essential elements of attitude change he designed experiments employing controlled variation. To study the claim of mass society theory, he experimented on the soldiers with the assumptions that since soldiers were torn from their families jobs and social groups. They are isolated individuals, supposedly highly vulnerable to propaganda.

Hovland found that the military's propaganda wasn't as powerful as had been assumed. They discovered that although the movies were successful in increasing knowledge, they were not as effective in influencing attitudes and motivations (their primary functions).

But they also found out that although initially films were more effective in imparting factual information than in changing attitudes about the British as time passed, factual knowledge decreased but attitudes toward the British actually became more positive. So time was key variable in attitude change.

Possibly propaganda effects were not as instantaneous as mass society theory or behaviorist notions suggested. However this group found that attitude change was a very complex issue and many variables had affects on the attitude of an individual e.g. kind of message- one sided or two-sided; socio-economic background, when people are predisposed to a certain attitude etc

Since the findings on effects research were enormously varied, two interrelated empirical generalizations emerged. These generalizations assert that the influence of mass media is rarely direct because it is almost always mediated by:

- individual differences
- group membership or relationships

These two factors normally serve as effective barriers to media influence.

Individual Differences Theory

Argued that, because people vary greatly in their psychological make-up and because they have different perceptions of things, media influence differs from person to person. More specifically, media messages contain particular stimulus attributes that have differential interaction with personality characteristics of members of the audience.

Social Categories Theory

This theory assumes that there are broad collective aggregates or social categories in urban-industrial societies whose behaviour in the face of given set of stimuli is more or less uniform. People with similar backgrounds e.g. age gender income level, religious affiliation.

Selective Process

One of the central tenet of attitude change theory that was adopted by influential mass communication theorists, is the idea of COGNITIVE CONSISTENCY.

As discussed earlier that people seemed to seek out media messages consistent with the values and beliefs of those around them. This implied that people tried to preserve their existing views by avoiding messages that challenged them. We must here again mention the theory of COGNITIVE DISSONANCE.

He explained that the bedrock premise of dissonance theory is that information that is not consistent with a person's already-held values and beliefs will create a psychological discomfort (dissonance) that must be relieved.

People generally work to keep their knowledge of themselves and their knowledge of the world somewhat consistent.

According to Festinger “If a person knows various things that are not psychologically consistent with on another he will, I a variety of ways, try to make them more consistent.”

Collectively, these ways have become known as the SELECTIVE PROCESSES. Some psychologists consider these defense mechanisms that we routinely use to protect ourselves from information that would threaten us. Here are the three forms of selectivity that were studied by attitude change researcher.

These notions have since been widely criticized and should be interpreted very carefully.

- Selective exposure
- Selective retention
- selective perception

1. Selective exposure

People's tendency to expose themselves to or attend to media messages that feel are in accord with their already-held attitudes and interests and the parallel tendency to avoid that which might be dissonance-creating.

2. Selective retention

Is the process by which people tend to remember best and longest information that is consistent with their preexisting attitudes and interests e.g. unpleasant memories? 

3. Selective perception

Is the mental or psychological recasting of a message so that its meaning is in line with a person's beliefs and attitudes?

MIDDLE RANGE THEORIES**Background**

In US the golden age of TV began in the 1950s and continued throughout the 1960s; the highly successful introduction of colour television during the 1960s confirmed the popularity of the new medium. The life styles changed – visits with friends and extended family members declined sharply, decline in book reading, less out door games.

Concern grew that Television is: affecting nation slowly, under mining our mental ability or moral fiber, making us passive couch potatoes, there was mindless entertainment as against classic .Special attention was directed at television's influence on children — is it making them passive, dull or bringing violence and lead them to juvenile delinquency. In late 1950s Wilbur Schramm, Jack Lyle and Edwin parker directed on to the most ambitious research projects. During the 1960s and into the 1970s the limited effects paradigm dominated American mass communication research. In this, the studies conducted by Schramm's Stanford group demonstrated the power of the paradigm and its ability to produce findings that had immediate, practical value.

First research center was established at the university of Illinois and then at Stanford university. These research centers conducted its research without using a single well articulated theoretical framework. It relied on a number of empirical generalizations that had emerged from earlier studies. Their goal was to construct a theory based on systematic empirical observation. They worked inductively identifying consistencies in their data and then summarizing and interpreting them. Their conclusions were No informed person can say simply that television is bad or good for children ... for some children, under some condition, some television is harmful for other children under the same condition or for the same children under other conditions, and it will be beneficial. For most children under most conditions, most television is probably neither particularly harmful nor particularly beneficial.

So according to the researcher the effect of television could most usefully be viewed as 'an interaction between characteristics of television and characteristics of viewers'

They asserted that the arrival of television hadn't radically altered child-rearing; it had merely eliminated some old problems (reading comic books) and substituted new ones. The researchers advised that although television might aggravate some child-rearing problems, these could be handled if parents provided a little extra care and understanding.

And so other researchers also followed research in the limited effects paradigm they were content to simply conduct empirical research and address the many research questions that started springing up. But few thoughtful tried to take stock of what had been done. They wanted to know how all the individual research findings might be added up or collated

Robert Merton could truly claim to the world of grand sociological theory in the tradition of Emile Durkheim and the microscopic sociological observation as practice by Lazarsfeld and Hovland and Schramm

The books he wrote were Social Theory and Social Structure and Social Theoretical Sociology. He gave them perspective from which to interpret their work and he taught them the necessity of combining induction with deduction. He provided a conceptual foundation for the new paradigm. He was a strong advocate for what he called 'theories of the middle range'

Unlike grand social theories (that is, mass society theory) that attempted to explain all forms of social action, middle range theories were designed to explain only limited domains or ranges of action that had been or could be explored during empirical research

Merton described middle-range theories as follows:

Middle-range theories consist of limited sets of assumptions from which specific hypotheses are

logically derived and confirmed by empirical investigations. These theories do not remain separate but are consolidated into wider networks of theory.

These theories are sufficiently abstract to deal with differing spheres of social behavior and social structure, so that they transcend sheer description or empirical generalization.

The middle range orientation involves the specification of ignorance, rather than pretend to knowledge where it is in fact absent, this orientation expressly recognizes what must still be learned in order to lay the foundation for still more knowledge.

So Merton argued that all this research work would eventually be brought to construct a comprehensive theory that would have the power and scope of theories in physical sciences. Moreover, when it was finally constructed, this theory would be far superior to earlier forms of social theory that were not empirically grounded.

Thus, middle range theory provide an ideal rationale for limited effects research. It implied that eventually all the individual effects studies would add up and a broad perspective on the role of media could be constructed

But the effort to combine them into broader theories proved more problematic than had been expected

Functional Analysis Approach

Merton used the perspective of functional analysis from carefully examining research in anthropology and sociology.

That is the society consists of complex sets of interrelated activities, each of which supports the others.

Every form of social activity is assumed to play some part in maintaining the system as a whole.

So functionalist approach was that all practices that contribute to maintaining the society can be said to be functional rather than good, any practices that are disruptive or harmful are by definition

Dysfunctional rather than evil.

As long as functional practices dominate and dysfunctional practices are kept to some minimum. The society will flourish- it can be said to be in balance because the functional practices balance out the dysfunctional ones. But it turned out to be quite complicated. Various forms of media content can be functional or dysfunctional for society as a whole, for specific individuals, for various subgroups

E.g. news about a corrupt politician alerts the society is functional but dysfunctional for the politician. So an overall problem with functional analysis is that it rarely permits any definitive conclusion to be drawn about the overall functions or dysfunctions of media.

In general functional analysis produces conclusion that largely legitimize or rationalize the status quo.

E.g. existing forms of media content and the industries that produce them can be assumed to be functional. After all if the society is not falling apart then it must be in balance.

Functional analysis and the limited effects paradigm made a good fit, if media influence was modest, media couldn't be too dysfunctional

Information Flow Theory

Number of surveys and experiments were conducted to assess the flow of information from media to mass audiences. The overall objective of this work was to assess the effectiveness of media in transmitting information to mass audiences. News flow research focused on determining whether barriers impeded the flow of information from media to typical audience members

Some barriers investigated included:

- level of education
- amount of media use for news
- interest in news
- talking about news with others

- difference between hard and soft news
- hard news typically included news about politics, science world events and community organizations
- soft news included sports coverage gossip about popular entertainers and human interest stories about average people

The research confirmed the importance of motivating people to pass on information, but suggested that even a free gift was insufficient to guarantee the accurate flow of information.

The most important limitation of information flow theory is that it is a simplistic, linear, source-dominated theory. 

Information originates with authoritative or elite source then flows outward to ignorant individuals

Barriers to the information flow are to be identified and overcome and little effort is typically made to consider whether the information has any value or utility for average audience members.

Elite Pluralism

Like other examples of limited effects theory, elite pluralism assumes that media have little ability to directly influence people. Media alone cannot alter politics. Elite pluralism argues that media, in the name of stability should reinforce political party loyalties and assist the parties to develop and maintain large voter coalitions. Media shouldn't be expected to lead public opinion but rather reinforce it. If change is to occur, it must come from the pluralistic groups and be negotiated and enacted by the leaders of these groups. This idea was spawned partly as an effort to make sense of the voter research initiated by Lazarsfeld in the 1948 election. He and his colleagues found inconsistencies between their empirical observation of *typical voters* and the assumption that classical democratic theory made. Classical democratic theory- assumed that every one must be well informed and politically active. But the new perspective based on empirical data showed that average people didn't care about politics. Voting decisions were more likely to be based on personal influence than on reasoned consideration of the various candidates. So they argued that voter apathy weren't really a problem for the political system as a whole. They argued that we are better off if our political system changes very slowly over time as result of gradual conversions. They believed that the important factor was not the quality of voting decisions but rather their stability

Opposition to Elite Pluralism

First look at the two terms ELITE and PLURALISM.

ELITE implies a political system in which power is ultimately in hands of a small group of influential persons, a political elite.

PLURALISM refers to cultural, social, and political diversity.

It implies a political system in which many diverse groups are given equal status and representation.

Can there be a political system that is based on both of these principles- a system in which power is centralized in the hands of the few but in which the rights and status of all minority groups are recognized and advanced.

So to opponents elite pluralism was a rationalization of the status quo that provided no direction for future development. Strong opposition to elite pluralism came from the political left headed by C. Wright Mills. Based on his knowledge of survey research he argued that in American society, political power was not decentralized across a broad range of pluralistic groups. Instead he believed that power was centralized in a small group of military-industrial-complex leaders whom he called THE POWER ELITE.

These elite were not representative of pluralistic groups. Rather it was isolated from them and typically acted against their interests.

KLAPPER'S PHENOMENISTIC THEORY**Elite Pluralism**

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Klapper's Phenomenistic Theory

In 1960 Joseph Klapper at Colombia University concerned that average people exaggerated the power of media. He introduced what he called PHENOMENISTIC THEORY.

He argued that media rarely have any direct effects and are relatively powerless when compared with other social and psychological factors such as social status, group membership, strongly held attitudes, education and so forth. His theory is often referred to now as reinforcements theory because a key assertion is that the primary influence of media is to reinforce (not change) existing attitudes and behaviors.

Instead of disrupting society and creating unexpected social change, media generally serve as agents of the status quo, giving people more reasons to go on believing and acting as they already do.

He argued that there simply are too many barriers to media influence for drastic changes to occur except under very unusual circumstances.

Klapper's Generalizations

- Mass communication ordinarily does not serve as a necessary and sufficient cause of audience effects, but rather functions among and through a nexus of mediating factors and influences.
- These mediating factors are such that they typically render mass communication a contributory agent, but not as the sole cause in a process of reinforcing the existing conditions. Regardless of the condition in question and regardless of whether the effect in question be social or individual the media are more likely to reinforce than to change.
- On such occasions as mass communication does function in the service of change, one of the two conditions is likely to exist; Either:
- The mediating factors will be found to be inoperative and the effect of the media will be found to be direct;
- Or the mediating factors, which normally favor reinforcement, will be found to be impelling toward change.
- There are certain residual situations in which mass communication seems to produce direct effects, or directly and of itself to serve certain psychophysical functions.

- The efficacy of mass communication, either as a contributory agent or as an agent of direct effect, is affected by various aspects of the media and communications themselves or of the communication situation, including e.g. aspects of textual organization, the nature of the source and medium, the existing climate of public opinion and the like.

Criticism

- Downplays reinforcement as an important media effect
- Is too specific to its time and media environment (no television)
- Klapper's "nexus of mediation variables" that is church, family and school began to lose their powerful position in people's socialization - and therefore in limiting media effects
- Many critical scholars see this as media's most negative influence

Assumptions of the limited effects paradigm

- Empirical social research methods can be used to generate theory through an inductive research process.
- Exploratory, descriptive research is expected to produce empirical generalizations that can later be combined to form middle-range theories.
- Eventually, middle-range notions can be combined to create broad, powerful social theories that are firmly grounded in empirical facts.
- The role of mass media in society is limited; media primarily reinforce existing social trends and only rarely initiate social change.
- The media will cause change only if the many barriers to their influence are broken down by highly unusual circumstances.
- The empirical mass communication research supported this assumption. In study after study, little evidence of strong media influence was found.
- Mass media's role in the lives of individuals is limited, but it can be dysfunctional for some types of people.
- Media provide a convenient and inexpensive source of entertainment and information.
- But neither use has much long-term or important impact on the daily life of most of people.
- Almost all information is either ignored or quickly forgotten.
- Entertainment mainly provides a temporary distraction from work, allowing people to relax and enjoy themselves so that they can go back to work refreshed.
- People who are adversely affected by media tend to have severe personality or social adjustment problems; they would be deeply troubled even if media weren't available.
- The U.S. political and social system is both stable and equitable
- Although not democratic in the classical sense, the U.S. system is nevertheless a viable and humane system that respects and nurtures cultural pluralism while preserving social order,
- There is no need for radical reform.
- Media play a limited, but nonetheless useful, functional role within the larger society.
- Potentially harmful effects can be detected and prevented should any appear.

Drawbacks of the Limited Effects Paradigm

- Both survey research and experiments have serious methodological limitations that were not adequately recognized or acknowledged.
- Empirical researchers were anxious to popularize their approach and sometimes made exaggerated claims for it.
- Naïve people outside the empirical research community made false assumptions about the power and utility of this type of research.
- When empirical researchers were directly challenged in the late 1960s, they were slow to acknowledge limitations of their work and reacted defensively.
- The methodological limitations of early empirical social research led to findings that systematically underestimated the influence of mass media for society and for individuals.

- Researchers like Lazarsfeld and Hovland were inherently cautious. They didn't want to infer the existence of effects that might not be there –spurious effects.
- The researchers developed methods designed to guard against this, but they risked overlooking or dismissing evidence that could have been interpreted as an argument for significant media effects.
- In their conclusion, they often failed to emphasize that they might be overlooking many types of media effects because they had no way of measuring them.
- Early empirical research centered around whether media had immediate, powerful, direct effects; other types of influence were ignored.
- First, the mass society paradigm, which had been dominant, asserted that such effects existed and should be easy to observe. This paradigm needed to be evaluated and the early limited effects research did so.
- Second, the early research couldn't "see" an effect, it didn't exist. Only later, did researchers develop techniques that permitted other types of influence to be empirically assessed.

Contributions of the Limited Effects Paradigm

- The limited effects paradigm effectively replaced mass society theory as the dominant perspective on media.
- The limited effects paradigm lessened unjustified fears about massive, uncontrollable media effects.
- This benefited media practitioners.
- Most important, it helped ease pressures for direct government censorship of media and permitted media practitioners to implement useful forms of self-censorship.
- The paradigm prioritized empirical observation and downgraded highly speculative forms of theory construction.
- It demonstrated the practicality and utility of empirical research and inspired development of broad range of innovative methods of data collection as well as new techniques for data analysis.
- These empirical techniques have proved to be powerful and useful for specific purposes.
- If the paradigm had not become dominant, scientists might not have devoted the time and resources necessary to develop these techniques.



DIFFUSION OF INNOVATION THEORY

In 1962 Everett Rogers combined the information flow research findings with studies about the flow of information and personal influence in several fields including anthropology, sociology and rural agricultural extension work. He developed a diffusion theory. So although it is classified as an important theory in the field of communication, diffusion of innovations there has known practical application in many other disciplines liked sociology, rural sociology, economics and medical sociology.

What Is Meant By Diffusion of Innovation

DIFFUSION is: “The process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of social system”

INNOVATION is: “An idea, practice, or object perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption

Everett Rogers in his classic work analyzed thousands of diffusion studies in various disciplines over the years and found similarities. All the studies involved an innovation communication form one person to another a society of community setting and the element of time

Diffusion of innovation theory states that an innovation (i.e., an idea, new technique, new technology) diffuses or spreads through out society in a predictable pattern. A few people will adopt an innovation as soon as they hear of it other people will take longer to try something new and still others will take much longer. The pattern is that of an S-shaped curve.

When a new media technology or other innovation is adopted rapidly by a great number of people, it is said to EXPLODE into being.

Social scientists have borrowed a phrase from physicists to describe this adoption phenomenon, the concept of the critical mass.

In physics, the critical mass has to do with the amount of radioactive agents needed to produce a chain reaction. In mass communication, the critical mass describes the point when adoption of an innovation takes off, when the greatest number of people begin to adopt it, and the dramatic upward line on the S-shaped curve begins its ascent.

Rogers and other diffusion researchers have identified five separate innovation-adoption categories into which all people in a society will fall.

- Innovators
- Early adopters
- Early majority
- Late majority
- Laggards

1. Innovators

Innovators are described as venturesome and ready to try new things.

Their social relationships tend to be more cosmopolitan than those of other groups.

Such people tend to form cliques and communicate with one another despite geographical distances

2. Early adopters

Early adopters are more localite than cosmopolite.

Due to their integral part in the local society, this adopter category produces the most opinion leaders of any other category. They are sought for information about innovations, and their advices are valued.

Those in this adopter category have the respect of others in the community because of their success and willingness to try innovations.

The respect of others in the community is important to the early adopter, and actions are geared toward preserving that respect

3. Early majority

This adopter category includes people who do not wish to be the first to adopt new technologies or new ideas. Instead, the early majority prefers to deliberate, often for some period of time, before its members make a decision to adopt. These people serve the important function of legitimizing and innovation, or showing the rest of the community that the innovation is useful and adoption is desirable.

4. Late majority

Members of the late majority are skeptical and cautious about the benefits of adoption. They wait until most of the community has already tried and adopted the innovation before they act. Sometimes peer pressure or social pressures serve to motivate the late majority. In other cases, economic necessity induces them to adopt the innovation.

5. Laggards

Members of this group are the last to adopt. The laggards are tied to the past, to the traditional way of doing things, and are very reluctant to try anything new.

Many of these people interact with others of the same mind-set. E.g. microwave, mobile phones. Once a laggard adopts an innovation, the rest of society may have moved so far forward that the ‘innovation’ has become outdated.

Conceptual Roots

In the 1960s Albert Bandura developed a comprehensive learning theory steeped in psychological principles. The psychological explanations for these events, in terms of **social learning theory** are:-

Learning about the innovation

Symbolic modeling- (e.g. an innovative behavior shown on television that is subsequently imitated by viewers.) is the most common source of influence at the beginning of the diffusion process. Early adopters are usually those who read newspaper or watch television.

If an innovation is hard to understand and difficult to put to practical use, it will not be adopted as quickly as an innovation that is relatively simple to use.

Some innovations must be spread through interpersonal contact and in such situations, physical proximity affects adoption

Adoption of the Innovation

Whether or not a person USES or ADOPTS the new behavior or innovation depends upon many different factors. Research has shown that the greater the benefits, the More the incentive to adopt a particular behavior. E.g. Internet in business.

Adoption of innovations is also affected by SELF-EFFICACY or belief in one’s own abilities. Before a person decides to try something new that person usually asks the question, Can I do it? Status incentives are some of the most powerful motivational factors for adoption of something new. E.G latest hairstyles, new fashions or use of MP3 – once the majority has adopted those items or styles, their values status symbols is gone and the early adopters must find other novel items or styles.

Adoption also depends upon a person’s individual values and perceptions of self. If new behaviors or innovations conflict in some way with those values or perceptions, the person is less likely to adopt. E.g. smoking, drinking.

Developing social networks after Adoption

The third step in successful diffusion of an innovation involves interpersonal communication among casual acquaintances- the weaker links of the communication network. Research has shown that cohesive, close groups or clusters of people (immediate family, close friends, clubs, co-workers religious friends etc) learn of innovations through these weak social ties.

In the diffusion and adoption process, research has shown that public channels of communication, or communication by way of mass media, usually serve to spread the awareness of an innovation much faster than interpersonal channels. Interpersonal communications often prove essential in influencing people to adopt the idea or innovation that mass media have introduced to them.

Four key steps that effectively summarize the diffusion process are:-

1. Knowledge
2. Persuasion
3. Decision
4. Confirmation

1. Knowledge

A person or members of a community become aware of some new innovation or communication technology, e.g. software program for home computers.

At this first step in the diffusion process, information is passed through some channel of communication, usually mass media or telecommunications media, but sometimes by way of interpersonal contact.

2. Persuasion

Step two of the diffusion process takes place mostly within the mind of the potential adopter. The individual weighs the advantages that the new technology would bring to him or her personally. Based upon these evaluations and discussions with others, the individual begins to lean toward either adoption or rejection of the innovation

3. Decision

With this step, the individual makes the final decision of whether to adopt or reject.

4. Confirmation

Once a decision is made, the individual normally seeks validation.

Whether the decision was to adopt or to reject, the person continues to evaluate the consequences of the decision.

If the decision was to reject, new information or economic pressures might compel the person to adopt the innovation

Important Diffusion Studies

Iowa Hybrid corn seed

- To increase yields by 20 percent
- Slow to adopt – reason being price no more seeds for the next season, agriculture innovations were rare so farmers were not ready
- Diffusion of news
- About agricultural innovations such as fertilizer and pesticides
- New drug (tetracycline) amongst physicians
- Innovations related to health information – family planning
- Advanced knowledge about political and social sciences
- rise of new media technology

SUMMARY

After a number of empirical researches he tried to show that when new technological innovations are introduced, they will pass through a series of stages before being widely adopted

- First the most people will become aware of them, often through information from mass media.
- Second the innovations will be adopted by a very small group of innovators or early adopters
- their opinion leaders learn from the early adopters and try the innovation themselves

- fourth if opinion leaders find the innovation useful, they encourage their friends – the opinion followers

Finally after most people have adopted the innovation a:

- Diffusion theory is an excellent example of the power and the limitations of a middle-range theory. It assigns a very limited role to mass media.
- Media only create awareness of new innovations. Only the early adopters are directly influenced by media content .Others adopt innovations only after being influenced by other people.
- He recommended that diffusion efforts be led by change agents, people who could go out into rural communities and directly influence early adopters and opinion leaders
- Media are used to draw attention to innovations and as a basis for group discussions led by change agents. Extremely useful in USAID to spread agricultural innovation in the third world.

CHALLENGING THE DOMINANT PARADIGM

In today's session we will see how the growing violence and the possible contribution of the television became a concern for the American society. Several different perspectives are discussed, including:

Catharsis

Social learning

Social cognitive theory

First the background and focus on children and violence. Society changed from a primarily rural agricultural society to a highly urban nation dependent on an industrial base economy. People had regular incomes. They had more money to spend on the leisure. More consumer goods were competing in the market place. More and more need to advertise

Women entered into work force. It became more and more acceptable for both parents working outside home. The traditional community anchors –church and school- began to lose their dominance in the social development of their children

The teenagers brought sharp increase in delinquency and crime. In the 1960s political changes – President John F. Kennedy Dr. Martin Luther King assassinated. New unfamiliar music – rock music. Sociologists discovered the existence of a 'generation gap' between conservative, middle class parent and their increasingly liberal, even radical children.

Media's role in all these change was hotly debated

Although social researchers and media practitioners typically argued from the limited effects perspective, a new generation of critics charged that media were harming children and disrupting their lives.

Particularly Television became the target of increasing criticism and the object of scientific inquiry, especially where harmful effects were presumed. The debate rose between the ones who strongly advocated the limited effects notions and those who were skeptical about their findings and accused them of paid messengers of the media industries, where as the over zealots critics of the television were accused of oversimplifying complex problems and ignoring alternative causes. The debate over media's role in fomenting social instability and instigating violence reached a peak in late 1960s. The federal government itself tried to locate new answers to this problem by establishing the Surgeon General's Scientific Advisory Committee on Television and social behavior in 1969. The collection of scientists' research concluded after two years and a million dollars of study.

It reported to a U.S. senate subcommittee:

"While the ... report is care fully phrased and qualified in language acceptable to social scientists , it is clear to me that the causal relationship between televised violence and antisocial behavior is sufficient to warrant appropriate and immediate remedial action. The data on social phenomena such as television and violence and or aggressive behavior will never be clear enough for all social scientists to agree on the formulation of a succinct statement of causality, But there comes a time when the data are sufficient to justify action, that time has come.

President Johnson established a National Commission of the Cause and Prevention of Violence in 1968. The Commission offered some serious criticisms of media and recommended a variety of changes in both news reporting and entertainment content.

Commission's report in it preface stated that:

'if, as the media claim, no objective correlation exists between media portrayals of violence and violent behavior-if, in other words, the one has no impact upon the other- then how can the media claim an

impact in product selection and consumption, as they obviously affect the viewers commercial attitudes and behaviour? Can they do one and not the other?

This did not stop the controversy. But ultimately the industry agreed to a self-imposed family viewing hour in which violent content was ostensibly minimized.

Television Violence Theories

The most important outcome of the violence research was the gradual development of a set of middle-range theories that summarized findings and offered increasingly useful insight into the media's role in the lives of children. The accumulated research clearly demonstrated a correlation between viewing violence and aggressive behavior- that is, heavy viewers behave more aggressively than light viewers... Both experimental and longitudinal studies supported the hypothesis that viewing violence is causally associated with aggression.

CATHARSIS - JUSTIFICATION OF MEDIA VIOLENCE

Catharsis – sometimes called sublimation- the idea that viewing violence is sufficient to purge or at least satisfy a person's aggressive drive and, therefore, reduce the likelihood of aggressive behavior.

Catharsis suggested that television violence had social utility, providing young people with a harmless outlet for their pent-up aggression and hostility. However critics called this a 'phony argument'. Common sense and your own media consumption offer some evidence of the weakness of the catharsis hypothesis. When we watch families devouring chocolate cakes, does it purge you of your hunger drive? If you walk out of a movie like Die Hard did you walk out of the theater a tranquil, placid person? What scientist learnt that certain presentation so mediated violence and aggression can reduce the likelihood of subsequent viewer aggression. But catharsis is not the reason.

Rather viewers LEARN THAT violence might not be appropriate in a given situation. Their aggressive drive might not have been purged, but they might have simply learned that such treatment of another human is inappropriate. Their inclination towards violence was inhibited by the information in the media presentation. This leads us to the theory that is generally accepted as most useful in understanding the influence of media violence on the individual – social cognitive theory.

SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY

Social learning – encompasses both imitation and identification to explain how people learn through observation of other in their environments.

Imitation

IMITATION is the direct, mechanical reproduction of behavior. Supposing a viewer watches a violent movie in which teenagers beat a policeman and the next day he does the same. This demonstrates imitation. The problem for mass communication theorists, however, is that these obvious examples are relatively rare. Moreover such gross examples support the argument that negative effects occur only in those 'predisposed' to aggression.

Identification

Identification on the other hand is:

"A particular form of imitation in which copying a model, generalized beyond specific acts, springs from wanting to be and trying to be like the model with respect to some broader quality."

Although there might be few who will imitate what they, there will be many who would like to be identified with movies' characters. Imitation from media is clearly more dramatic and observable than is identification. But identification with media models might be the more lasting and significant of the media's effects.

Human learn from observation. The first serious look at learning through observation was offered by psychologists Neal Miller and John Dollard in 1941. They argued that imitative learning occurred when

observers were motivated to learn, when the cues or elements of the behaviors to be learned were present, when observers performed the given behaviors, and when observers were positively reinforced for imitating those behaviors. In other words, people could imitate behavior that they saw; those behaviors would be reinforced and therefore learned.

There have been questions however about how much and what kinds of behaviors people learn from the media. So instead of presenting a means of understanding how people learn from models (including media models) Miller and Dollard simply described an efficient form of traditional stimulus-response learning.

They assumed that individuals behaved in certain ways and then shaped their behavior according to the reinforcement they actually received.

Imitation simply made it easier for an individual to choose a behavior to choose a behavior to reinforce. The actual reinforcement, they argued, ensured learning.

But this insistence on the operation of reinforcement limited their theory's application for understanding how people learn from the mass media.

The theory's inability to account for people's apparent skill at learning new responses through observation rather than actually receiving reinforcement limited its applicability to media impact.

Learning theory

SO traditional learning theory asserts that people learn new behavior when they are presented with stimuli (something in their environment), make a response to those stimuli, and have those responses reinforced either positively (rewarded) or negatively (punished) . In this way new behaviors are learned, or added to people's behavioral repertoire- the individual's available behaviors in a given circumstance.

SOCIAL COGNITIVE THEORY

Social theorists have advanced various theories about why people behave in the ways that they do. Some say behavior is based upon a person's motivations. Other proposes that behavior is a response to external stimuli and subsequent reinforcements.

Still others point out that people react differently in different situations, and these scholars feel that the interaction between a person and situation produces a particular behaviour.

One theory in particular reappears time and again in media effects literature is SOCIAL COGNITIVE THEORY.

According to Albert Bandura, " social cognitive theory explains psychosocial functioning in terms of triadic reciprocal causation , in this model of reciprocal determinism, behavior; cognitive, biological and other personal factors; and environmental events all operate as interaction determinants that influence each other bidirectionally.

This theory explains human thought and actions as a process of TRIDAIC RECIPROCAL CAUSATION.

This means that THOUGHT AND BEHAVIOR are determined by three different factors that interact and influence each other with variable strength, at the same or at different times:

1. Behavior
2. Personal characteristics such as cognitive and biological qualities (e.g. Iq, sex, or race)
3. Environmental factors or events

Baundra's social cognitive theory of mass communication the broader social learning theory serve as the foundations for volumes of research in all areas of media effects study-

- Effects of media violence
- And sexually explicit material
- Pro-social or positive media effects
- Cultivation effects
- Persuasion

For the student of media effects, an understanding of Bandura's theory is therefore essential because the serve as a common denominator among many other media effects theories and hypotheses.



Social cognitive theory emphasizes the importance of these uniquely human characteristics, known as the

1. Symbolizing capacity
2. Self-regulatory capacity
3. Self-reflective capacity
4. Vicarious capacities (Bandura, 1994)

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1. Symbolizing Capacity

Human communication is based upon a system of shared meanings known as language that is constructed of various symbols.

These symbols occur at more than on conceptual level – letters of the alphabet are symbols used to construct words, e.g. and words serve as symbols to represent specific objects, thoughts, or ideas. The capacity to understand and use these symbols allows people to store and process, and transform observed experiences into cognitive models that guide them in future actions and decisions.

2. Self Regulatory Capacity

The self-regulatory capacity includes the concepts of motivation and evaluation.

People have the ability to motivate themselves to achieve certain goals. To motivate themselves to achieve certain goals, they tend to evaluate their own behavior and respond accordingly. In this way, behavior is self-directed and self regulated.

3. Self Reflective Capacity

This capacity involves the process of thought verification. It is the ability of a person to perform a self-check to make sure his or her thinking, is correct. Bandura identified four different self-reflective “modes” used in thought verification:

- i. Enactive
- ii. Vicarious
- iii. Persuasive
- iv. Logical modes

i. Enactive Mode

In the enactive mode a person assesses the agreement between thoughts and the results of actions. Person's actions corroborate his/her thought and provide verifications.

ii. Vicarious Mode

In vicarious mode observation of another's experiences and the outcomes of those experiences serve to confirm or refute the veracity of thoughts.

Example—suppose a woman thinks women are inferior and the TV comes in she watches Xena and then her thoughts about female inferiority could be shocked into some kind of reassessment.

iii. Persuasive Mode

An effective advertisement serves as the best demonstration of the persuasive mode, especially a commercial in which a person on the street is convinced to change brands. Despite the added cost, the viewer might be persuaded by the decision of the person to purchase the product advertised.

iv. Logical Mode

It involves verification by which previously acquired rules of inference. Perhaps the person who was convinced to try the new product liked it so much that he decided to try the higher-priced brands of other types of products.

4. Vicarious Capacity

This is the ability to learn without direct experience, emphasizes the potential social impact of mass media- for better or worse. As an example, of positive social impact the vicarious capacity allows a person to learn all sorts of beneficial things by simply reading or watching a television program presenting these pro-social behaviors. On the other hand on the negative side, people may witness and learn certain antisocial behaviors to which they might not otherwise have been exposed.

OBSERVATIONAL LEARNING AND MODELING

Social learning and social cognitive theories place much emphasis on the concept of OBSERVATIONAL LEARNING. A person observes other people's action and the consequences of those actions, and learns from what has been observed. The learned behavior can then be reenacted by the observer.

MODELLING

The phenomenon of behavior reenactment is called MODELLING. It is the acquisition of behaviors through observation. It includes four component processes:

- i. Attention
- ii. Retention
- iii. Motor reproduction
- iv. Motivation

1. Attention

A person must pay attention to any behavior and perceive it accurately in order to model it successfully. Example—the beginner cricketer watches the actions, listen to the instructions.

2. Retention

Modeled behavior must be remembered or retained in order to be used again; the permanent memory stores the information by means of symbolic representations that subsequently can be converted into actions. Example the beginner cricketer then remembers the instructions with the demonstrations

3. Motor reproduction

At first motor reproduction may be difficult and even faulty as the beginner has to ‘think through’ all the various steps involved in making a successful swing.

The natural ability or the superior motor memory of the beginner largely determines the length of time required for mastery of the modeled action.

4. Motivation

For various reasons, people are not always motivated to model the behaviors they learn. Motivation becomes a major factor in the decision to use modeled behavior.

Three types of situations provide the incentives that motivate a person to model learned behavior. Positive outcomes through direct performance of the behavior, Observation of another’s behavior and the subsequent outcome, and evaluation based upon personal values or standards of behavior e.g. in his case , the child is motivated to avoid modeling the violent behavior because he has witnessed a horrible outcome. (power rangers, kicking a boy) his internalized standard of conduct has become more strict.

Abstract Modeling

New life situations require people to apply the rules of behavior learned in the past to the new and different situations. Abstract modeling takes learning to a higher level than mere mimicry of observed behavior and therefore offers many practical advantages.

Rules of behavior learned in the past serve as a guide for new life situations. These rules often provide an abstract framework for decisions making in new situations.

Whenever a person observe behavior or receives information that conflicts with established patterns of behavior or principles of conduct, the inner conflict causes a reexamination of motivations to perform the established behavior. In other words, existing standards of behavior are not perfect or constant for each new situation. A person is merely guided by the outcomes of his or her own past experiences or the observed experiences of other people.

Abstract modeling takes learning to a new level than mere mimicry of observed behavior, new situations generate new behaviors based upon the rules of behavior learned previously, these behaviors are themselves learned and stored in memory for the future adaptation in other situations.

The use of abstract modeling offers many practical advantages. One acquires personal standards for judging one’s won motivations and behavior and those of others.

Abstract modeling also boosts critical thinking and communication skills.

(E.g. homemade cards for mother and it is improvised for the whole family

Effects of Modeling

Sometimes a person observes behavior or receives information that conflicts in some way with that person’s established pattern of behavior. Two major effects are associated with such situation-inhibitory and disinhibitory effects.

Inhibitory Effects

Most studies on inhibitory and disinhibitory effect have examined transgressive, aggressive or sexual behavior.

Inhibitory effects occur whenever new information or the observation of new behavior inhibits or restrain a person from acting in a previously learned way.

Inhibitory effects occur whenever a person refrains from reprehensible conduct for fear of the consequences.

So INHIBITORY EFFECTS

Seeing a model punished from a behavior is sufficient to reduce the likelihood that the observer will make that behavior.

Disinhibitory effect disinhibits or lifts previously learned internal restraints on certain behaviors .E.g. a smoker might decide to change his behavior if he sees his favorite uncle suffer miserably and die due to excessive smoking. - Inhibitory effect.

When a girl decides to smoke coming from a family which considers smoking a taboo.

Disinhibitory effect

Seeing a model rewarded for a prohibited or threatening behavior increase the likelihood that the observer will make that behavior. Disinhibitory effects lift previously learned internal restraints on certain behaviors.

Modeling from mass media

Modeling from mass media, then is an efficient way to learn wide range of behavior and solution to problems that we otherwise learn slowly or not at all, or pay too high a price to learn in the actual environment. And according to Bandura things people experience in their environments e.g. mass media can affect people's behaviors and that affect is influenced by various personal factors specific to those people.

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Learning from Media Content and Modeling

Whenever a person sees a character on the screen expressing some strong emotion or performing some powerful action, the viewer is affected or aroused.

The viewer *remembers similar experiences* and emotions, and these thoughts and images serve as cues that trigger self-arousal.

E.g. ET, Jaws, horror movies—fear reaction.

Such experiences of arousal are not always fleeting in nature, several studies have shown that audience members sometimes develop lasting emotional reactions, attitudes and behaviors after viewing emotional content that arouses them.

Social construction of reality and cultivation

Some studies show that realities depicted on television programs do not always reflect the true state of affairs in the real world. Some scholars believe that heavy viewing of television tends to shape or cultivate viewers' perceptions and beliefs so that they are more in line with the world portrayed on television than with that of the real world. Media scholars call this media effects phenomenon the social construction of reality. E.g. chances of being on the plane and it will crash; chances of being a victim of a violent crime; stereotypical portrayals of men and women especially in terms of their profession.

Effects of viewing televised or film violence

Through the years, most media effects studies have examined the negative effects that result from the vicarious capacity, such as the learning of aggressive behavior by viewing televised or filmed violence. When carried to its worst extreme, the modeling of such behavior has been linked to violent and brutal "copycat" crimes such as rape, murder.

Learning good things from media

In recent years, a growing body of research that examines children's television programming has yielded promising findings. These studies have shown that many children's television shows have pro-social or positive effects. Children improve literacy, science, and mathematics skills and learn positive social behavior, enhance their imaginative powers and develop problem-solving.

Longitudinal studies have revealed that positive effects, in terms of academic achievement and reading skills especially from viewing Sesame Street as preschool.

Positive benefits of educational programming for children are enhanced whenever parents or care givers view programs with the children and reinforce the messages.

Social prompting or persuasion

Advertising campaigns and other efforts of persuasion serve as excellent examples of social prompting, another example of modeled behavior. Social prompting does not involve learning new behavior, and therefore it differs from observational learning and disinhibition. Social prompting implies that a person is offered an inducement (an incentive) to act in a particular way that has already been learned. E.g. most people are not inclined to try a new product unless of course, the new product is shown to offer great benefits of inducements- toothpaste

Diffusion by way of symbolic modeling

One important area of media effects research involves the study of diffusion or spread of an innovation a new technology, tool behavior, farming techniques- throughout the society or a large group of people. Diffusion of innovations research examines the different strengths of media and interpersonal influences in adoption of new behavior.

Social changes have occurred due to the influences of television on elite societies of viewers who model the various behaviors, styles and ideas that they see and learn

Recent research

Social cognitive theory serves as the theoretical basis for many types of media effects research- from media violence studies and fright reactions to media content to effects from sexually explicit content and effects from persuasive media messages.

In recent years, social cognitive theory of mass communication has proven especially useful as the theoretical underpinning for communication campaigns and their design, for health communications, election campaigns etc

Summary

Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory serves as the basis for many other theories of media effects. It provides a framework to analyze human cognitions that produce certain behaviors and describe mental processes at work, whenever a person learns. Social cognitive theory is an offshoot of Bandura's more comprehensive social learning theory, which explains behavior by examining the triadic reciprocal causation process, or the interaction among cognitive, behavioral and environmental factors.

Cognitive traits

Social cognitive theory emphasizes the importance of several distinct cognitive traits that set human beings apart. These include the symbolizing, self regulatory, self-reflective, and vicarious.

Social cognitive theory helps explain cultivation effects, priming effects and pro-social effects in terms of cognition, observational learning and modeling.

The basis for many persuasion effects or social prompting from mass media can be found in social cognitive theory, which recognizes that motivations or influences to model new behavior or adopt new ideas are dynamic and usually a combination of outside factors and personal cognitions and characteristics.

Diffusion of innovations, another important arm of media effects research, also finds a conceptual basis in social cognitive theory. Diffusion of an innovation throughout a society or a large group of people is explained in terms of symbolic modeling, persuasion or social prompting and motivation

PRIMING EFFECTS

Often questions like these bother the researchers about violent content in the media

Does media violence cause viewers to make associations with angry or critical thoughts stored in their own memories? Does the viewing of mediated violence and the mental associations it arouses make viewers more likely to commit acts of violence themselves? These questions are related to the psychological processes present whenever media effects do indeed occur.

Priming occurs when exposure to mediated communication activates related thoughts that have been stored in the mind of an audience member. Media message content triggers concepts, thoughts, learning, or knowledge acquired in the past that are related to the message content. In this way, message content is connected, associated, or reinforced by related thoughts and concepts that it brings to mind. For a certain period after viewing such content, a person is more likely to have thoughts or memories become permanently associated with the message content, or stimulus.

E.g. if one views a rail accident or air accident the viewer might recall an accident he is part of. his interest in the news story and his reaction to it may well be affected by his existing knowledge and previous experiences.

In other words his memories *primed* him to react in a particular way to the story. The priming activation may also influence a person's behavior, causing him or her to act or react in some way, sometimes with undesirable consequences. The most sensational example of undesirable priming, in this case operating with social learning theory may be that of COPYCAT crimes- especially murder or other violent crimes that occurred after the person was PRIMED by movie or program

Instance of copycat crimes are grave extremes of priming. Such cases represent a very small percentage of the population experience priming affects so completely that they actually MODEL OR IMITATE the viewed behavior. Priming effects from the viewing of media violence are normally much more subtle but even that level they represent cause for concern.

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Conceptual Roots

Priming is based upon the concept of cognitive neo association. This social psychological perspective attempts to explain a portion of the phenomenon memory.

To understand cognitive neo association, one must picture the brain as a complex network or pathway that connect associated ideas, thoughts feelings and concepts.

Memory can be described as the overall network, when a person watches a television program or reads a newspaper the information being processed triggers or activates certain pathway throughout the network. Individual thoughts or feelings from past experiences are remembered and associated with the new information. These ideas and thoughts may stimulate other, related ideas and they may influence a person's actions. Ideas connected to emotions trigger associated feelings and responses.

E.g. research has shown that thinking depressing thoughts can actually cause feeling of depression and exposure to ideas of aggression can produce feelings of anger or even aggressive acts under some circumstances. Similarly a sad scene in a movie, causes audience to remember similar moment in their own lives and recall emotions associated with the events.- a painful separation, death of a loved one, a tragic accident.

Individual differences in perceptions, of course cause priming activation strengths to vary considerably from person to person. However, number of media effects studies have shown strong evidence for priming, especially for the priming of ideas related to aggression. One study found that children who read comic books with violent content were more likely to have aggressive thoughts than children who read comic books with more neutral contents.

Variables that enhance priming effects

Modeling from mass media, then is an efficient way to learn wide range of behavior and solution to problems that we otherwise learn slowly or not at all, or pay too high a price to learn in the actual environment.

Research has shown that there are some intervening variables that strengthen the cause- effect phenomenon when they are present , which are following:

- i. The perceived meaning of the communication
- ii. The perceive justifiability of the witnessed aggression
- iii. The extent to which audiences identify with the characters
- iv. The perceived reality of the mediated communication
- v. The stimulus of prior experiences

1. Perceived meaning

In a research first participants were angered then shown professional prize fights and professional football. They were given the information that either they were fighting to hurt others or simply performing their professional jobs. Afterwards there were asked to give electric shocks to those who angered them. The ones who were told that athletes were trying to hurt each other showed evidence of being ‘primed’ with more aggressive thoughts as they administered more punishing electrical

2. Percieved justifiability

Research has also shown that viewers of mediated violence are also influenced in their actions by the outcomes of the situations they see.

A number of studies reveal that viewers believe what happens on television or in movies could also happen to them if they behave in ways similar to the characters depicted .When viewers see aggressors suffering as a result of their behavior; they are les likely to imitate the aggressive behavior. Also when viewers are reminded of the serious and unfortunate consequences of violence, aggression is usually restrained

3. Character identification

Research has shown that identification with a media character enhances priming effects. In an experiment first participants were angered and then shown a prizefight.

One group was told to think of themselves as the winner. The 2nd group was asked to think of themselves as the referee. The 3rd group did not receive any instructions.

Half the group was asked to think of the word ‘hit’ each time winner punched his opponent. After the movie each participants had the opportunity to shock the person who had angered him, the most severe punishment was administered by the group of men who had pictured themselves as the winner and had thought hit with each punch

4. Perceived reality

The perceived reality of media depictions can also intensify the strength of priming effects. Research has shown that priming effects are strongest when audiences believe they are witnessing actual rather than fictional events. E.g. in one study angered participants saw the same war film, but only half were told it was a fictional movies. The other half were led to believe that the film depicted actual combat groups. Similarly in another study similar results among three groups of 5th and 6th grade children. first group saw a fight being reported realistically on the news.

2nd in the context of fantasy entertainment.

3rd in control viewed as an ordinary commercial . When tested first group scored significantly higher on an aggression index than the other two.

5. Memories of prior experiences

Another factor identified with enhancing priming effects is that of prior learning or remembered experiences. As an audience member views a violent act, he or she remembers other occasions when semantically similar thoughts or feelings cropped up. The memory reactivates a neural network and strengthens the effects of priming.

Recent research and the future trends

In recent years effects scholars have continued to study priming effects, especially those that result from exposure to media violence. In the Annual Review of Sociology it was stated that much of the evidence that links mediated violence to the aggressiveness or the priming of aggressive thoughts.

In recent years, priming effects have been found in areas of communication research other than media violence studies such as political communications, Minority portrayals and Advertisements.

The number of media effects studies base upon priming theory continues to increase as more research seek to identify the links between media priming and the subsequent attitudes and behaviors of audience members.

Summary

Priming is a popular area of media effects research that explores the cognitive components of information processing.

Priming occurs when exposure to mediated communication activates related thoughts in the mind of an audience member.

Media content triggers concepts, thoughts, learning or knowledge acquired in the past and related to the message content.

For a certain period of time after viewing, a person is more likely to have thoughts about the content, related thoughts, or memories, sometimes these related thoughts become permanently associated with the message content or stimulus.

Priming may influence a person's behavior

The person may act or react in a certain way, sometimes with undesirable consequences. . Instances of *copycat* crimes are grave extremes of priming.

Priming is based upon the concept of cognitive neo association which attempts to explain the phenomenon of memory. Individual thoughts or feelings from past experiences are remembered and associated with the new information.

Ideas connected to emotion trigger associated feelings and responses, audience members are likely to have thoughts with similar meanings to what they are viewing or semantically similar thoughts.

Most studies on priming use tight controls in laboratory situations.

The connection between the priming of aggressive thoughts and the actual display of aggression is not particularly strong unless certain variables are present. These include:

- The perceived meaning of the communication
- The perceived justifiability of the witnessed aggression
- The perceived reality of the mediated communication and e
- The stimulus of prior experiences

In recent years, a number of media violence studies have shown evidence for priming effects. Future research on priming by media effects scholars will continue to search for answers.

CULTIVATION OF PERCEPTIONS OF SOCIAL REALITY

Since the dawn of mass mediated entertainment, people have feared powerful and harmful media effects, especially on the children. Through the years the research findings have varied, but a number of studies have shown that the connection between viewing violence and committing violent acts is not merely a public perception. Today research continues and many answers have been determined, but many questions remain.

The cultivation hypothesis developed as one attempt to explain the influence of television on its viewers. The cultivation tradition grew out of a media violence research project called the Cultural Indicators Project, headed in the 1960s by George Gerbner, a University of Pennsylvania communication scholar. Investigators explored the relationship of long-term television viewing, to the inculcation of various perceptions, values, and beliefs on the part of audiences.

Simply stated, the cultivation hypothesis proposes that over time, heavy viewers of television develop views of the world similar to what they see on television. The basic assumption underlying the cultivation or enculturation, approach is that repeated exposures to consistent media portrayal and themes influence our perceptions of these items in the direction of the media portrayals.

In effect, learning from the media environment is generalized, sometimes incorrectly to the social environment.

History

Some early research studies indicated that media portrayals of certain topic could have an impact on audience perceptions, particularly if the media were the main information sources. DeFleur in 1967 found that television had a homogenizing effect on children's perceptions of occupations commonly shown on television.

Then to study the viewer perceptions of social reality stems from the Cultural Indicators project of George Gerbner and his associates. Since 1968 they have collected data on the content of television and have analyzed the impact of heavy exposure on the audience. Some of the many variables that have been content analyzed are the demographic portraits of perpetrators and victims of television violence, the prevalence of violent acts, the types of violence portrayed, and the contexts of violence.

They found that long-term exposure to television, in which frequent violence is virtually inescapable, tends to cultivate the image of relatively mean and dangerous world. The basic hypothesis of cultivation analysis is that the more time one spends living in the world of television, the more likely one is to report conceptions of social reality that can be traced to television portrayals. In their finding indicated that the perceptions of reality were cultivated by television.

Conceptual roots

Cultivation adherents argue that television as a 'whole sale distributor of images is different from other mass media. It serves as the *great storyteller* of our age.

Programs are produced to appeal to the entire population. Even very young viewers find it easy to become enthralled by an entertaining television show. According to these researchers the diverse publics all tend to think more alike when watching television because they all receive similar messages.

All television program, from entertaining action program to news programs, possess similar, repetitive patterns sometimes called myths, facts, or ideologies. These patterns are thought to influence viewers' perception of the world.

Long-term exposure to these overall patterns of television programming is most likely to result in the 'steady entrenchment of mainstream orientations for most viewers.'

Mainstreaming and Resonance

Mainstreaming is one of the principal concepts that underlie cultivation analysis; another is resonance.

Mainstreaming

Mainstreaming assumes that dominant sets of attitudes, beliefs, values and practices exist within cultures. Patterns also emerge across the spectrum of television programming-patterns regarding outcomes to various situation, gender roles,, minority representation and so forth.

These patterns result in a “mainstream set of attitudes beliefs and values that are repetitively presented on television. Heavy television viewers tend to cultivate similar mainstream views , cultivation researcher Nancy Signorielli and Michael Morgan defined the concept in this way”

Mainstreaming means that heavy viewing may absorb or override differences in perspectives and behavior which ordinarily stem from other factors and influences, in other words, differences found in the responses of different groups of viewers, differences that usually are associated with the varied cultural, social, and political characteristics of these groups, are *diminished* or even absent from the responses of heavy viewers in these same groups. So mainstreaming is a leveling effect.

Heavy viewing resulting in a common viewpoint washes out differences in perceptions of reality usually caused by demographic and social factors.

Resonance

Resonance occurs when real world support the distorted image of reality shown on television. Whenever direct experience is in agreement with the messages from television, the messages are reinforced- they resonate- the cultivation effect is amplified.

So resonance is when the media reinforce what is seen in real life, thus giving an audience member a ‘double dose’ the resulting increase in the cultivation effect is attributed to resonance. For example, research has shown that the heavy television viewers who are most likely to fear crime are those who live in inner-city areas where crime rates are high. Cultivation researcher stresses that the concept of cultivation assumes that television and its publics interact in a dynamic process.

The extent to which person cultivates the messages seen on television depends upon a number of factors. Some people are more susceptible to cultivation influence due to personality traits, social background, cultural mores (education) and even their past television viewing experiences.

Gerbner and his associates explained the interactive process in this way:

Although a viewer’s gender or age or class makes a difference in perspective, television viewing can make a similar and interacting difference. Viewing may help define what it means, for example, to be an adolescent female member of a given social class. The interaction is a continuous process as is (cultivation) beginning with infancy and going on from cradle to grave.

Theoretical developments

After an extensive literature review scholars concluded that there was evidence for a link between viewing and beliefs regardless of the kind of social reality in question.

However additional research has also shown that cultivation hypothesis may be more complicated than first thought.

There is evidence that cultivation may be less dependent on the total amount of TV viewing than on the specific types of programs viewed.

Research also indicates that cultivation effect is more pronounced among active viewers than among low-involvement viewers and that personal experience with crime was an important mediating variable that affected the impact of TV programs on cultivating an attitude of vulnerability toward crime. Additionally it was found out that the perceived reality of the TV content had an impact on cultivation. Similarly other variables such as identification with TV characters, IQ, and informational needs of the viewer had differential effects .In other words, different people react indifferent ways to TV content, and these different reactions determine the strength of the cultivation effect.

Apart from these there are other multivariate model of cultivation which are taken into account by researchers like:-

- Is viewing done to meet informational needs or as diversion
- The number of information alternatives available.

Research has shown that maximum occurs among heavy viewers who watch for information, believe the content to be real and have few alternative sources of information. Tapper in 1995 presents a possible conceptual model of the cultivation process that is divided into two phases.

- Phase one deals with content acquisition and takes into account such variables as motives for viewing, selective viewing, the type of genre viewed, and perceptions of the reality of the content.
- Phase two is the storage phase and elaborates those constructs that might affect long-term memory.

Researchers have presented a psychological model of the cultivation process based on the notion of accessibility of information in a person's memory. They posit that human memory works much like a storage bin. When new information is acquired, a copy of that new information is placed on top of the appropriate bin. Later when information is being retrieved for decision making, the contents of the bin are searched from the top down, thus information deposited most recently and most frequently stand a better chance of being recalled.

Similarly researchers have also reported the results of their empirical test that the faster a person's able to make a response, the more accessible is the information retrieved. Consequently, when confronted with a social reality judgment, heavy TV viewers should be able to make judgments faster than light viewers and their judgments should also demonstrate cultivation. (e.g. soap operas)

There are two discrete steps in performing a cultivation analysis.

- First, descriptions of the media world are obtained from periodic content analyses of large blocks of media content. The result of this content analysis is the identification of the messages of the television world. These messages represent consistent patterns in the portrayal of specific issues, policies, and topics that are often at odds with their occurrence in real life. The identification of the consistent portrayals is followed by the construction of a set of questions designed to detect a cultivation effect. Each question poses two or more alternatives.

One alternative is more consistent with the world as seen on television, while another is more in line with the real world. (e.g. 60% homicide done by strangers in real life 16%. The question base on this discrepancy was. Does fatal violence occur between strangers or between relatives and acquaintances. The response 'strangers' was considered to be the television answer)

- The second step involves surveying audiences about their television exposure, dividing sample into heavy and light viewers (4 hours a day is usually the dividing line) and comparing their answers to the questions that differentiate the television world from the real world. In addition, data are often collected on possible control variables such as gender, age and socioeconomic status. A statistical procedure consists of correlation analysis between the amount of television viewing and scores on an index reflecting the number of television answers to the comparison questions.

In sum, cultivation has proven to be an evocative and heuristic notion. It is likely that future research will concentrate on identifying key variables important to the process and on specifying the psychological processes that underlie the process.

SYSTEMS THEORIES OF COMMUNICATION PROCESSES

Although psychologists led communication researchers to the possibility of individual media effects, engineers alerted these researcher to the possibility of developing holistic explanations for societal or system wide effects.

System

System consists of a set of parts that interlinked so that changes in one part induce changes in other parts. System parts can be directly linked through mechanical connections or can be indirectly linked by communication technology. Because all parts are linked, the entire system can change as a result of alterations in only one element.

Systems can be goal directed if there is a long-term objective that they are designed to accomplish. Some systems are capable of monitoring the environment and altering their operations in response to environmental changes.

Interest in systems began with electronics engineers who developed systems that could be programmed to pursue goals, monitor the environment and adjust actions so that the goals were achieved.

These engineers were concerned with designing systems in which communication links functioned efficiently and transmitted information accurately. Communication was a means to an end, if a communication link didn't work properly then the solution was obvious. Communication technology had to be improved so that desired levels of effectiveness and accuracy were achieved.

How it is applied to society?

Thus, in designing and engineering systems of the type, communication problems were solved by technological change. As a result, during the 1950,s and 1960s there was optimism that important, societal –level communication problems might also be solved by improving the accuracy of message transmissions.

The rise of systems theory

After World War II social scientists became intrigued by system notions. These models fundamentally altered how relationships between variables were understood. But most 1960s social systems theorists acknowledged that the greatest and most recent impetus toward the development of systems theories came from an engineering subfield known as CYBERNETICS, the study of regulation and control in complex machines.

Cybernetics investigates how *communication links between the various parts of a machine enable it to perform very complex tasks and adjust to changes taking place in its external environment.*

Cybernetics proved especially useful for communications engineering – the design of powerful new communication system for military applications, such as radar. Communication engineers had abandoned simple, linear model of the communication process by the 1940s. A circular but evolving communication process was conceptualized in which messages come back from receivers to influence sources that in turn alter their messages. These circular process were referred to as feedback loops. In these systems, an ongoing mutual adjustment is possible that ultimately leads to achieving a long-term objective or function. Complex machines rely on feedback loops as means of making ongoing adjustments to changes caused by the environment. Feedback loops enable sources to monitor the influence of their messages on receivers. But just as important, receivers can in turn influence sources.

If the effects are not what is expected or desired, a source can alter a message until the desired feedback is obtained. So the machines built in the World War II provided sophisticated means of detecting subtle changes so that a weapons system could achieve it objective. We refer to these as ‘communication systems’ if their function is primarily to facilitate communication. By this definition, a guided missile is not a communication system. It is a weapons system that contains a communication.

Mathematical theory of communication

Communications engineers also made important breakthrough that is central to the current revolution in communications technology. Accuracy in message transmission is essential if systems are to operate effectively and achieve long-term goals. Even minor errors can compound over time and lead to serious problems. To address this situation, communication engineers developed a very sophisticated system. The flow was known as a signal and each element in it was labeled an information bit. The ultimate information bit is a digital bit-one that is either present or absent.

Methods of monitoring the accuracy of transmission of bits were developed. Any difference between the signal sent and the signal received were viewed as errors or noise. High levels of noise tolerated if a message is redundant, that is, if it contains many bits that carry the same information. Every communication link can be seen as a channel, and every channel can be seen as having a certain capacity to transmit an accurate signal.

Obviously it is better to have channels that can accurately transmit complex signals. When accuracy is a problem, redundancy can be increased, but this reduces efficiency because the same information is being sent more than once. E.g. AM radio is static. Static is thousand of erroneous bits of information that have somehow entered the signal as it moves from the radio transmitter to our receiver. Whereas FM signals aren't as subject to the introduction of errors as the signals moves from transmitter to receiver, so you receive a more accurate transmission of the original signal.

Similarly the trend in communication engineering has been to find ways to reduce or even eliminate noise, improve efficiency and increase channel capacity.

This is the basis for contemporary work on digital high definition television (HDTV). Rather than transmitting 30 frames a second as does traditional television, HDTV transmits only digital information about the changes that occur between those frames. E.G newscasters reading the news. The background does not change only their mouths and facial expressions change. After the initial transmission all that is sent and received in a digital HDTV system is information about changes in that original scene. Noise is reduced, efficiency is improved and channel capacity is increased as only necessary information enters the system.

Notions about signals, noise, bits, efficiency, redundancy and channel capacity have found their way into mass communication theory through a variety of sources.

Mathematical theory

One of the first and most important books was the Mathematical theory written by Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver in 1949. They believed that these new concepts would transform how all forms of communication were understood, they were optimistic that it might even be possible to remedy macroscopic, societal-level communication problems using these very microscopic notions. Their ideas came to be referred to as **information theory**.

In communications technology and the design of communication systems, the theory has been enormously successful. Technology based on this theory is providing the building blocks constructing the Information Superhighways. Information Superhighways means a *worldwide system of computer networks accessible to any user connected to it*.

Designers of this super-communications system promised that it would provide us with vast quantities of information at low cost in convenient, user-friendly format, and that promise seems to have been fulfilled. But efficient, accurate transmission isn't enough, entry into the information age has been accompanied by a troubling escalation in social problems.

Only recently have system theorists begun to recognize and try to develop more complex models that allow ongoing transformation of systems.

Adoption of system models by Mass communication theorists

Systems models replaced the Transmissional model that was implicit in most of the early effects research. Lasswell provided a cogent, succinct version of this model when he described the communication process as *who says what to whom through what medium with what effect*.

The Transmissional model assumes that a message source dominates the communication process and the primary outcome of the process is some sort of effect on receivers-usually one intended by the source. Influence moves or flows in a straight line from source to receivers. The possibility that the message receivers might also influence the source is ignored. Attention is focused on whether a source brings about intended effects or whether unintended negative effects occur.

Mutual or reciprocal influence is not considered. Communication theorists proposed new models of communication processes with feedback loops in which receivers could influence sources and mutual influence was possible. Westley and Maclean in 1957 provided a good example of this type of model.

Most conversations involve mutual influence, participants send out message, obtain feedback, and then adjust their actions. In overall social environment can be understood as something that is created by ongoing negotiation between actors.

EMERGENCE OF CRITICAL & CULTURAL THEORIES OF MASS COMMUNICATION**Closed versus open systems**

Two fundamentally different types of systems can be differentiated and used to model different forms of communication. Systems can be closed and homeostatic or they can be open and dynamically balanced. Closed systems are like simple machines that perform a task endlessly. There is limited monitoring of the external environment. The machine works well as long as all the parts interrelate in the same, unchanging manner. If a part becomes so worn that it stops working or a wire that is part of a communication link frays, the system will fail. It has no capacity to adjust to problems. The role played by communication in these closed systems tends to be highly structured and predictable. They often communicate in very simple digital messages turn on and turn off.

Open system

An open system consists of parts that interrelate in such a way that the overall system can monitor its environment and adjust to both internal and external changes. The parts of an open system can alter their functions so that if one part fails, others can adjust and take over its function. These systems can be capable of growth and change over time, often, their relationship to the environment can change as well. These systems are said to be dynamically balanced- that is they are able to maintain their integrity and a high level of organization while undergoing significant changes. They are able to combine stability with change. A classic example of an open system is a *biological organism*.

In our body the various organs communicate in a variety of ways- using electrical and chemical messages transmitted by the nervous and circulatory systems. The body can adapt in very complex ways to the failure of some of its parts and changes in the external environment. Complex adjustments occur- yet the body as a whole maintains its physical integrity- it can grow and change and yet remain highly organized.

Systems theory had its greatest practical impact on mass communication theory several decades after the burst of initial interests in the 1960s.

Criticism of systems models

Systems models have a limitation that some critics find troublesome. A status quo bias in systems models can tend to concentrate our attention on observable structures and lead us to assume that the primary function or role of these structures is to maintain and serve the overall system. We are led to ask research questions like

- Is a particular part doing what it should?
- Is it communicating properly?
- Is it maintaining a proper relationship to other parts?
- Is it enabling the system to operate properly?

The value of each part is assessed by its contribution to the whole. When we view a system in this way we might be concerned about communication but only in a limited way. We tend to view communication as something that merely interconnects parts in much the same way that occur nervous and circulatory systems interconnect organs in our bodies. If the system is doing what we think it should, then we conclude that communication must be appropriate. If we think the system is failing then we look for communication problems. But sometimes systems should fail. Sometimes systems go through necessary transformations in which existing structures break down and give way to new structures. In such a case communication will necessarily play a very different role.

Summary

In the last couple of sessions we have studied two bodies of thought –social cognitive theory and systems theory, both of which came to mass communication theory from outside the discipline itself – signaled an important shift in thinking about mass communication.

Emergence of critical and cultural theories of mass communication

Before we proceed let's briefly overview how the challenge to limited effects paradigm came from ideas other than social cognitive learning and systems theories. As we know limited effects theory focuses on whether media content can have an immediate and direct effect on specific thoughts and actions of individuals. Researchers typically sought evidence for these effects in experiments or through survey. However, there is another way of approaching the study of mass media effects. Instead of focusing on specific effects on individuals we can focus instead on changes in culture, on how shared understandings and social norms change. Instead of trying to locate hundreds of small effects and add them all up. We can ask whether the development of mass media has profound implications for the way we create, share, learn and apply culture.

Now we will trace the emergence of theories that directly address questions about the way media might produce profound changes in social life. These new perspectives argued that media might have the power to interfere into and modify how we make sense of our social world and ourselves. These theories are quite diverse and offer very different answers to questions about the role of media in social life. Nevertheless, in all these theories, the concept of culture is central.

Media affect society because they (media) affect how culture is created, shared, learned and applied. Cultural theories offer a broad range on interesting ideas about how media can affect culture and also provide many different views concerning the long-term consequences of the cultural changes affected by media.

Two ways used by cultural theorists

Now we will discuss the two widely used ways used by cultural theorists to differentiate the various theories of media.

1. There are **microscopic**, interpretive theories that focus on how individuals and social groups use media to create and foster forms of culture that structure everyday life

2. And there are **macroscopic**, structural theories that focus on how social elites use their economic power to gain control over and exploit to propagate hegemonic culture as a means of maintaining their dominant position in social order,

They are called political economy theories because they place priority on understanding how economic power provides a basis for ideological and political power.

Differences between Microscopic and Macroscopic Theories

Cultural studies theories are less concerned with the long-term consequences of media for the social order and more concerned with looking at how media affect our individual lives. These theories are said to be micro –level or **microscopic** because they de-emphasize larger issues about the social order in favor of questions involving the everyday life of average people.

Critical theories and political economy theories by contrast are **macroscopic** cultural theories, which are less concerned with developing detailed explanations of how individuals are influenced by media and more concerned with how the social order as a whole is affected.

These theorists until recently microscopic and macroscopic theories developed in relative isolation. Theorists were separated by differences in geography, politics and research objective. But that may be changing, as we will discuss in the coming sessions.

Microscopic cultural studies researchers prefer to understand what is going on in the world immediately around them. They are intrigued by the mundane, the seemingly trivial, and the routine. They view our experience of everyday life and of reality itself as an artificial construction that we somehow maintain with only occasional minor breakdowns. They want to know how mass media have been incorporated into the routines of daily life without creating serious disruptions. Perhaps the media do cause problems that are somehow being compensated for or concealed? If so, how is this being done? Will there be a

breakdown eventually- or are we being systematically desensitized and trained to be aggressive? Or is everyday life being transformed in useful ways – are we becoming kinder and gentler.

Whereas macroscopic researcher are troubled by the narrow focus of microscopic theory. These researchers demand answers to larger questions.

How do media affect the way politics is conducted, the way that a national economy operates or the delivery of vital social services? Macroscopic researchers want to know if media are intruding into or disrupting large-scale social process. E.g. have media disrupted the conduct of national politics and therefore increased the likelihood that inferior politicians will be elected? Macroscopic researchers believe that such large-scale questions can't be answered if you begin by looking at individuals.



REVISION

Understanding the nature of communication

Definitions of communication

Conceptualizations of communication- points of convergence

- Communication as a process
- Communication is transactional
- Communication is symbolic

Communication is a process a process –oriented conceptualization of communication suggests that it is continuous and complex and cannot be arbitrarily isolated.

Communication is transactional that is, not only do participant constantly influence each other, they are also by the influenced context in which they interact

A third area of convergence in conceptualizations of communication is the belief that communication is symbolic.

- Semiotics a study of signs
- Sign is a relationship between Signifier and the signified
- Signifier is the word book
- Signified is the concept of the book

Understanding the nature of theory

Theory

Paradigm

Paradigms are different ways of looking at world- the ways to observe, measure and understand social reality.

There are three major paradigms

- Positivistic perspective
- Interpretive perspective
- Critical perspective

Positivistic perspective

- Is objective,
- Rests on order,
- Is governed by strict , natural and unchangeable laws
- And can be realized through experience
- All members of society define reality in the same way, because they all share the same meanings.

Interpretive Perspective

- Interpretative social science relates to the works of Vico, Dilthey and Weber.
- Interpretive theorists believe that reality is not 'out there' but in the minds of the people
- Reality is internally experienced is socially constructed through interaction and interpreted through the actors and is based on the definition people attach to it
- Reality is not objective but subjective

Critical Perspective

This was developed out of the work of Karl Marx and the critical, theorists and feminists. Critical theorists see reality in a different manner.

Reality is created not by nature but by the powerful people who manipulate, condition and brainwash others to perceive things the way they want them to, to serve the needs of the powerful.

Sir Karl Popper, a philosopher instrumental in shaping 20th century views of knowledge are, “*Theories are nets cast to catch what we call the world.*”

Theories help us understand or explain phenomena we observe in the social world.

There are **two approaches** to theory building.

- Deductive approach
- Inductive approach

Deductive approach

- From the general to particular; the process by which theory is tested
- Deductive approach to theory building tend to give primacy to theory

Inductive approach

- Inductive approach to theory building gives primacy to observation.
- From the particular to the general; the process by which theory is generated.
- In this approach, theoretical abstractions are based on- or grounded in empirical observation

Model

A model is a consciously simplified description in graphic form of a piece of reality. A model seeks to show the main elements of any structure or process and the relationships between these elements. (McQuail)

A theoretical and simplified representation of the real world. A model is not an explanatory device by itself, but it helps to formulate theory

Study some of the early communication models

So a successful pictorial model offers three major advantages.

- They organize concepts
- They explain processes and
- They predict outcomes

Two kinds of models

- Structural model
- Functional models

Three different ways of viewing communication processes

- Linear model
- Interactive model
- Transactional model

From communication to mass communication models

The term mass communication emerged in late 1930s;

Nature of the communicator

Nature of audience

Nature of communication experience

What is mass communication?

Why study mass communication?

How the media industry originated?

Development in the history of Mass Communication

DeFleur and Ball Rokeach in 1989 point out to a number of important developments in the history of mass communication

- Age of signs and signals
- Age of speech and language
- Age of writing- papyrus
- Age of printing after 15th century-Gutenberg's invention of moveable type and printing press in 1456
- But the age of MC was ushered by widespread distribution of newspapers (1920 radio 1940 TV)

Mass media includes

- Print media
- Electronic media
- New media- Telematic media

As new media combine telecommunication and information it includes:

- Video games
- Virtual reality
- CD- Rom

Normative Theories of Media

- Authoritarian Theory
- Libertarian Theory
- Chicago School

Authoritarian Theory

- Libertarian theory arose in opposition Authoritarian theory-
- An idea that placed all forms of communication under the control of a governing elite or authorities.
- Authorities justified their control as a means to protect and preserve a divinely ordained social order.

Libertarian Theory

- In rebelling against authoritarian theory early libertarians argued that there should be no laws governing media operations.
- Free press means that all forms of media must be totally unregulated.

Hutchins Commission on Freedom

It emphasized the need for an independent press that scrutinizes other social institutions and provides objective, accurate, news reports.

Chicago School

Chicago School envisioned modern cities as "Great Communities" comprising hundreds of small social groups- everything from neighborhood social organizations to citywide associations.

For these Great Communities to develop, all the constituent groups had to work together and contribute. These were referred to as pluralistic groups in recognition of their cultural and racial diversity.

Totalitarian media Theory

Totalitarian media Theory is a normative theory calling for suppression of pluralistic groups and the use of media under the control of the dominant political party to propagate a strong centralized political culture.

- Civic or public journalism
- Development media theory
- Democratic-participant theory

Keeping the spirit of the SR theory in view many newspapers began practicing *civic journalism*, actively engaging the members of their areas in reporting important civic issues.

Development media theory

Development media theory was intended to recognize the fact that societies undergoing a transition from underdevelopment and colonialism to independence and better material conditions often lack the infrastructure, the money, the traditions, the professional skills.

Democratic-participant theory

Democratic-participant theory was proposed in recognition of new media developments and of increasing criticism of the dominance of the main mass media by private or public monopolies.

- the rise of mass society
- the assumptions about mass society
- main theories of mass society—one propounded by Ferdinand Tonnies – concept of Gemeinschaft (folk society) and Gesellschaft (modern, industrial society)-
- the other propounded by Emile Durkheim- concept of mechanical solidarity (folk societies) and organic solidarity (modern social societies)
- what were the assumptions about the relationship of mass society and mass media

Theories that propounded that media have a powerful effect on people. Theories which were the reason for the theories that media can be used as powerful propaganda tool.

- Behaviorism
- Freudianism
- Magic bullet theory
- Lasswell propaganda theory
- Walter Lippmann

Behaviorism

John B. Watson- an animal experimentalist who argued that All human action is merely a conditioned response to external environmental stimuli. Media provides external stimuli that triggered immediate responses (Nazi propaganda)

Freudianism

Sigmund Freud

1. Ego is rational mind is in control

2. Id is the dark side of the self- the egocentric, (selfish and self-centered) pleasure seeking part of ourselves- that Ego must struggle to keep in control

3. Ego relies on the internalized set of cultural rules the Superego- for guidance

Magic Bullet Theories

In the 1920s Media was assumed to operate like magic bullets that penetrated people's minds and instantly created associations between strong emotions and specific concepts.

By carefully controlling these magic bullets, propagandists felt that they could condition people associate good emotions, such as loyalty and reverences with their own country and associate bad emotions, such as fear and loathing with their enemies.

Paradigm Shift in Mass Communication Theory

Middle –range theory and the consolidation of the limited effects paradigm. How a radical transformation in media theory took place. The focus from powerful effect of media shifted to Limited Effects of Media. And how this became the dominant paradigm in U.S media research from 1940 till 1960s.

Work of the pioneer researchers in this field who were responsible for bringing this shift

Work of Paul Lazarsfeld of Princeton University

Work of Carl Hovland

Two-Step Flow of Information and Influence

This finding led the establishment of a TWO-STEP FLOW MODEL OF MASS COMMUNICATION, in which effects were perceived as being modified by interpersonal communication about those media messages.

Carl Hovland and the Experimental section found that attitude change was a very complex issue and many variables had effects on the attitude of an individual e.g. kind of message- one sided or two-sided; socio-economic background, when people are predisposed to a certain attitude etc

Collectively, these ways have become known as the **SELECTIVE PROCESSES**

- Selective exposure
- Selective retention
- Selective perception

The influential middle range theories developed as part of the limited effects paradigm

- Functional analysis approach
- Information flow theory

Functionalist approach

So functionalist approach was that all practices that contribute to maintaining the society can be said to be Functional rather than good. Any practices that are disruptive or harmful are by definition Dysfunctional rather than evil.

As long as functional practices dominate and dysfunctional practices are kept to some minimum. The society will flourish- it can be said to be in balance because the functional practices balance out the dysfunctional ones.

Information Flow Theory

The overall objective of this work was to assess the effectiveness of media in transmitting information to a mass audience.

News flow research focused on determining whether barriers impeded the flow of information from media to typical audience members

The research confirmed the importance of motivating people to pass on information, but suggested that even a free gift was insufficient to guarantee the accurate flow of information.

Klapper's Phenomenistic theory

He argued that media rarely have any direct effects and are relatively powerless when compared with other social and psychological factors such as social status, group membership, strongly held attitudes, education and so forth.

His theory is often referred to now as reinforcements theory because a key assertion is that the primary influence of media is to reinforce (not change) existing attitudes and behaviors

Klapper's Generalizations

Diffusion of Innovation Theory

Diffusion of innovation theory states that an innovation (i.e., an idea, new technique, new technology) diffuses or spreads throughout society in a **predictable pattern**. A few people will adopt an innovation as soon as they hear of it other people will take longer to try something new and still others will take much longer. The pattern is that of an S-shaped curve.

Rogers and other diffusion researchers have identified five separate innovation-adoption categories into which all people in a society will fall.

- Innovators
- Early adopters
- Early majority
- Late majority
- Laggards

Challenging the dominant paradigm

How the growing violence and the possible contribution of the television became a concern for the American society. Several different perspectives are discussed, including:

- Surgeon General's Scientific
- Catharsis
- Social learning

Surgeon General's Scientific

Advisory Committee on Television and social behavior in 1969.

While the ... report is care fully phrased and qualified in language acceptable to social scientists , it is clear to me that the causal relationship between televised violence and antisocial behavior is sufficient to warrant appropriate and immediate remedial action. The data on social phenomena such as television and violence and or aggressive behavior will never be clear enough for all social scientists to agree on the formulation of a succinct statement of causality, But there comes a time when the data are sufficient to justify action, that time has come.

Catharsis – sometimes called sublimation- the idea that viewing violence is sufficient to purge or at least satisfy a person's aggressive drive and, therefore, reduce the likelihood of aggressive behavior. Catharsis suggested that television violence had social utility, providing young people with a harmless outlet for their pent-up aggression and hostility.

Social Learning

Social learning – encompasses both imitation and identification to explain how people learn through observation of other in their environments

Social cognitive theory

Modeling from mass media

Priming effects

Variables that enhance priming effects

According to Albert Bandura, “ social cognitive theory explains psychosocial functioning in terms of triadic reciprocal causation , in this model of reciprocal determinism, behavior; cognitive, biological and other personal factors; and environmental events all operate as interaction determinants that influence each other bidirectionally.”

Baundra's social cognitive theory of mass communication the broader social learning theory serve as the foundations for volumes of research in all areas of media effects study-

Effects of media violence

And sexually explicit material

Pro-social or positive media effects

Cultivation effects

Persuasion

Social cognitive theory emphasizes the importance of these uniquely human characteristics, known as the

- symbolizing capacity

- self-regulatory capacity
- self-reflective capacity
- vicarious capacities

Modeling

The phenomenon of behavior reenactment is called as MODELLING. Modeling is the acquisition of behaviors through observation.

Modeling includes four component processes

- Attention
- Retention
- Motor reproduction
- Motivation

Whenever a person sees a character on the screen expressing some strong emotion or performing some powerful action,

The viewer is affected or aroused.

The viewer remembers similar experiences and emotions, and these thoughts and images serve as cues that trigger self-arousal. E.g. ET, Jaws, horror movies—fear reaction.

Cultivation

The cultivation hypothesis developed as one attempt to explain the influence of television on its viewers, the cultivation tradition grew out of a media violence research project called the Cultural Indicators Project, headed in the 1960s by George Gerbner, a University of Pennsylvania communication scholar.

Simply stated, the cultivation hypothesis proposes that over time , heavy viewers of television develop views of the world similar to what they see on television.

Mainstreaming

Mainstreaming is a leveling effect. Heavy viewing resulting in a common viewpoint washes out differences in perceptions of reality usually caused by demographic and social factors.

Resonance

Resonance occurs when real world support the distorted image of reality shown on television. Whenever direct experience is in agreement with the messages from television, the messages are reinforced- they resonate- the cultivation effect is amplified.

The extent to which person cultivates the messages seen on television depends upon a number of factors. Some people are more susceptible to cultivation influence due to personality traits, social background, cultural mores (education) and even their past television viewing experiences. Is viewing done to meet informational needs or as diversion? The number of information alternatives available.

Systems

Ideally, systems notions could provide a powerful way of conceptualizing complex, social system and analyzing the role played by communication in them. Important social problems might be solved

- Closed versus open systems
- The criticism of systems models
- Emergence of critical and cultural theories of mass communication

CRITICAL THEORIES & ROLE OF MASS COMMUNICATION IN A SOCIETY -THE MEDIATION OF SOCIAL RELATIONS

Some cultural theories and political economy theories are also referred to as critical theories because they openly espouse certain values and use these values to evaluate and criticize the status quo. However political economy theories are inherently critical but some cultural studies theories are not.

Those who develop critical theories seek to initiate social change that will implement their values. A critical theory raises questions and provides alternate ways of interpreting the social role of mass media, e.g., some critical theorists argue that media in general sustain the status quo. Then some critical theorists identify constraints on media practitioners that limit their ability to challenge established authority.

They charge that few incentives exist to encourage media professionals to overcome those constraints and that media practitioners consistently fail to even acknowledge them. Critical theory often analyzes specific social institutions which promote specific objectives through certain means. Critical theorists are critical of the promotion of mass media and mass culture. Mass media and mass culture have been linked to a variety of social problems. Mass media are criticized for aggravating or preventing problems from being identified or addressed and solved.

A common theme in critical theories of media is that content production is so constrained that it inevitably reinforces the status quo and undermines useful efforts for constructive social change. Stories about movements imply problems with the status quo. Movements frequently defy the authority of existing elites and make demands for social change.

Before we proceed further let's discuss the role of mass communication in a society - the **mediation of social relations**. A central pre-supposition, relating to questions both of society and of culture is that the media institution is essentially concerned with the production and distribution of knowledge in the widest sense of the word.

The main point to emphasize is the degree to which the different media have come to interpose themselves between us and any experience of the world beyond our direct sense observation. Since the media also provide the most continuous line of contact with the main institutions of the society in which we live. In a secular society in matters of values and ideas, the mass media tend to take over from the early influences of school, parents, religion, siblings and companions.

Mediation Concept

Mediation involves several different processes. It refers to the:

1. Relying of second hand or third party version of events and conditions which we cannot directly observe for ourselves.
2. Secondly it refers to the efforts of other actors and institutions in society to contact us for their own purposes. This applies to politicians and governments, advertisers, educators, experts and authorities of all kinds. It refers to the indirect way in which we form our perceptions of groups and cultures to which we do not belong.
3. Mediation also implies some form of relationship. Relationships which are mediated through mass media are likely to be more distant, more impersonal and weaker than direct personal ties.

The mass media do not monopolize the flow of information we receive and intervene in all our wider social relations, but their presence is inevitably very pervasive (all encompassing, omnipresent). We can also say that mediation can mean different things, ranging from neutrally informing, through negotiation to attempts at manipulation and control. The media have been variously perceived as:

1. A window on events and experience, which extends our vision, enabling us to see for ourselves what is going on, without interference from others.

2. A mirror of events in society and the world, implying a faithful reflection. Although the angle and direction of the mirror are decided by others, we are less free to see what we want.
3. A filter or gatekeeper: - acting to select parts of experience for special attention and closing off other views voices, whether deliberately or not.
4. A signpost, guide or interpreter: - pointing the way and making sense of what is otherwise puzzling or fragmentary.
5. A forum or platform:- for the presentation of information and ideas to an audience, often with possibilities for response and feedback.
6. A screen or barrier:- indicating the possibility that media might cut us off from reality by providing a false view of the world, thorough either escapist fantasy or propaganda.

Intermediation

Mind you, the various images discussed do not refer to the interactive possibilities of newer media, in which the receiver can become a sender and make use of the media in interaction with the environment. This indicates the degree to which new technology may indeed lead to revolutionary changes, with 'intermediation' replacing or supplementing the mediation process.

Briefly we can say the audiences or people acquire information and meaning about 'reality' in four main ways:-

1. Via direct observation and experience
2. From the institutions of society directly
3. From the institutions by way of the media
4. From the media autonomously (alone)

None of the elements indicated institutions, media and people are independent of each other. The influence of larger events and of economic and political forces is partly channeled through the mass media.

Media In A Society

Another important concept also needs to be understood before we proceed further and that is mass media operating in societies in which power is unevenly distributed between individuals, groups and classes, and since media are invariably related in some way to prevailing structure of political and economic power, several questions arise about this relationship. So it is evident that first of all, that media have an economic cost, and value and are an object of competition for control and access and are subject to political, economic and legal regulation.

Secondly, mass media are very commonly regarded as effective instruments of power, with the potential capacity to exert influence in various ways. These propositions give rise to following sub-questions:

1. Who controls the media and in whose interest?
2. Whose version of the world (social reality) is presented?
3. How effective are the media in achieving chosen ends?
4. Do mass media promote more or less equality in society?

In discussions of media power, **two models** are usually opposed to each other- **one a model of dominant media, the other pluralist media.**

I. Model of dominant media

This model sees media subservient to other institutions, which are themselves interrelated. Media organizations, in view are likely to be owned or controlled by a small of powerful interests and to be similar in type and purpose. The dissemination is a limited and undifferentiated view of the world shaped by the perspectives of ruling interests. Audiences are constrained or conditioned to accept the view of the world offered, with little critical response. The result is to reinforce and legitimate the prevailing structure of power and to head off change by filtering out alternative voices.

ROLE OF MASS MEDIA IN SOCIAL ORDER & MARXIST THEORY**Pluralist Media**

The pluralist model is, in nearly every respect, the opposite. It holds that there is no dominant elite, and change and democratic control are both possible. Differentiated audiences are seen to initiate demand and are able to resist persuasion and react to what media offer. The pluralist view is an idealized version of what liberalism and the free market will lead to media in social order.

Role of Mass Media In Social Order

Another aspect that also needs to be looked into before we proceed is the role of media in social order. Theorists of mass communication have often shared with sociologists an interest in how social order is maintained and in the attachment of people to various kinds of social unit.

Negative view

The media were early on associated with the problems of rapid urbanization, social mobility and the decline of traditional communities. Media have continued to be linked with social dislocation and a supposed increase in individual immorality, crime and disorder. Mass communication as a process has often been typified as predominantly individualistic, impersonal and anomic, conducive to lower levels of social control and solidarity. The media have brought messages of what is new and fashionable in terms of goods, ideas, techniques and values from city to country and from the social top to the base. They have also portrayed alternative value systems, potentially weakening the hold of traditional values positive view.

Positive View

An alternative view of the relation between mass media and social integration has also been in circulation. It has a capacity to unite scattered individuals within the same large audience or integrate newcomers into urban communities by providing a common set of values, ideas and information and helping to form identities.

This process can help to bind together a large-scale, differentiated modern society more effectively than would have been possible through older mechanisms of religious, family or group control.

In other words, as media seem in principle capable both of supporting and of subverting social cohesion. The positions seem far apart, the one stressing centrifugal and the other centripetal tendencies, although in fact in complex and changing society both forces are normally at work at the same time, the one compensating to some extent for the other.

Centrifugal tendencies include the notions of change, freedom, diversity and fragmentation.

Centripetal tendencies include the notion of order, control, unity and cohesion four different theoretical positions relating to social integration.

In order to make sense of this complicated situation, it helps to think of the two versions of media theory- centrifugal tendencies and centripetal tendencies - each with its own dimension of evaluation, so that there are, in effect, four different theoretical positions relating to social integration.

Four different theoretical positions relating to social integration**Centripetal tendencies**

1. The positive version of the centripetal effect stresses the media as integrative and unifying (essentially the functionalist view).
2. The negative version represents this effect as one of homogenization and manipulative control (critical theory).

Centrifugal tendencies

1. The positive version of centrifugalism stresses modernization, freedom and mobility as the effects to be expected from media (individualism).
2. While the negative version centrifugalism points to isolation, Alienation loss of values and vulnerability (dysfunctional view of change as social disorder).

Rise of cultural theories in Europe

Despite its long life in American social science the limited effects paradigm never enjoyed great popularity in Europe. European social research has instead been characterized by what US observers regard as grand social theories – highly ambitious macroscopic and speculative theories that attempt to understand and predict important trends in culture and society. Mass society theory gave way to a succession of alternate ideas some were limited to specific nations and others spread across many countries. Some of the most widely accepted have been based on the writings of Karl Marx.

Marxist theory influenced even the theories that were created in reaction against it. Marxist ideas formed a foundation or touchstone for much post-World War II European theory and research. Ironically, In the 1970s and 1980s when Marxism was failing as a practical guide for politics economics in Eastern Europe, grand social theories based on Marxist thought were gaining increasing acceptance in Western Europe.

We will briefly summarize key arguments in Marxist perspective and pay particular attention to media.

Marxist Theory

Karl Marx developed his theory in the latter part of the 19th century. Marx was familiar with the grand social theories of era. He drew on them or constructed his ideas in opposition to them. He identified industrialization and urbanization as problems but argued that these changes were not inherently bad. Instead, he had a more positive view of the role of the masses in changing society.

For Marx social change was explained by the struggle between competing and antagonistic forces in society that he called-following the work of another German philosopher , George Hegel , on the historical development of ideas- the *dialectic process*. This struggle was between the ‘haves’ and ‘have nots’ who Marx differentiated in terms of their possession of economic power. The haves were the bourgeoisie, the capitalist owning class, who exercised power through their control of the means of production- that is land , factories and labour- which he referred to as the BASE of society, the ‘have not’ , were the proletariat or working classes , the masses.

He argued that the hierarchal class system was at the root of all social problems. The power of the bourgeoisie is exercised according to the material exploitation of the working classes through extracting their surplus value and making excess profit. He blamed ruthless, robber baron capitalists for exacerbating social problems because they maximized personal profits by exploiting workers. Although mass society theorists demanded restoration of the old order Marx was a utopian, calling for the creation of an entirely new social order which all social classes would be abolished. The workers would rise against capitalists and demand an end to exploitation. They would band together and end the exploitation by a revolution of the workers or the proletariat. Marxism emphasizes the proposition that class struggle is central to the historical development of society.

Key principles used in Marxism

When we talk of Marxism we should also be clear about some important principles used in Marxism very frequently and which are the basis of understanding Marxism. These principles will also be most useful for the media analyst and for the understanding of different mass communication theories related to Marxism.

- Materialism
- Ideology
- False consciousness

-
- Class Conflict

Alienation

The term alienation suggests separation and distance. It contains within it the word **alien**, a stranger in a society who has no connections with other, no ties, on liens of any sort.

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Materialism

When we talk about Marxist thought being materialistic, we are using the term in a special way – not as it is traditionally used in the United States, where it suggests a craving for money and the things that money can buy. Let's first discuss this in the light of the quotation of crucial importance from Marx's *Preface to a Contribution to the Critique of Political economy* (1964)

“The mode of production of material life determines the general character of the social, political, and spiritual processes of life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being determines their consciousness.”

So For Marxists, materialism refers to a conception of history and the way society organizes itself. He suggests that beneath the superficial randomness of things there is a kind of inner logic at work. Everything is shaped, ultimately, by the economic system of a society, which in subtle ways affects the ideas that individuals have, ideas that are *instrumental* in determining the kinds of arrangements people will make with one another, the institutions they will establish and so on.

Marx also wrote in *The German Ideology* '1964'

‘The production of ideas of conception of consciousness is at first directly interwoven with the material activity and the material intercourse of men, the language of real life. Conceiving, thinking, the mental intercourse of men, appear at his stage as the direct efflux from their material behavior. The same applies to mental production as expressed in the language of politics, laws, morality, religion, metaphysics of a people. Men are the producers of their conceptions, ideas etc- real, active men, as they are conditioned by the definite development of their productive forces and of the intercourse corresponding to these, up to its furthest forms.’

This passage is important because it brings people into the picture and suggests that although consciousness is socially produced it is always filtered through the minds of real, live active men and women and is not something that works automatically. We have now, our first important insight – namely that our ideas are not entirely our own, that knowledge is social.

Economic Determination

Everything in life is determined by capital. The flow of money affects our relations with other persons, with nature and with the world. Our thoughts and goals are the products of property structures. Every cultural activity (culture in its widest sense) is reduced to a direct or indirect expression of some preceding and controlling economic content. Men find themselves born in a process independent of their will, they cannot control it, they can seek only to understand it and guide their actions accordingly.

Class Struggle

The dynamic of a society can only be understood in terms of a system where the dominant ideas are formulated by the ruling class to secure its control over the working class. The latter, exploited by the former, will eventually try to change this situation (through revolution), producing its own ideas as well as its own industrial and political organization.

The base and the superstructure

Marx's deterministic economic conception divides the society in two layers or levels: base and superstructure.

Base

The first, upon which everything grows, is composed by the material production, money, objects, the relations of production and the stage of development of productive forces. The overt and tangible world plus the economic relations that capital generates.

Superstructure

What Marx has described as the 'base' represents the economic system found in a given society. This economic system, or mode of production, influences, in profound and complicated ways, the superstructure, or institutions and values, of a given society. Capitalism is not only an economic system but also something that affects attitudes, values, personality types and culture in general. It means that how ideas are transmitted to human beings- through the institutions, philosophical system, religious organizations and arts found in a given society at a given time- that is, through the superstructure. So superstructure are the institutions like legal system philosophy, religion, ideas (educational), Arts (media), culture.

False Consciousness And Ideology

It is important for the ruling class to affect people's consciousness by giving them certain ideas; in this way the wealthy, who benefit most from the social arrangements in a capitalist country maintain the status quo. According to Marx the ideas of a given age are those promulgated and popularized by the ruling class in its own interest.

Generally speaking, then the ideas people have are the ideas that the ruling class wants them to have. The ruling class believes its own messages. This is because it has within itself a group of conceptualizing ideologists who make it their chief source of livelihood to develop and perfect the illusions of the class about itself. The ruling class according to this theory propagates an ideology that justifies its status and makes it difficult for ordinary people to recognize. This notion that the masses of people are being manipulated and exploited by the ruling class is one of the central arguments of modern Marxist cultural analysis. According to Marxist approach the mass media and popular culture are centrally important in the spread of false consciousness, in leading people to believe that **'whatever is, is right'**.

Alienation

The term alienation suggests separation and distance; it contains within it the word alien, a stranger in a society who has no connections with other, no ties, or liens of any sort. According to Marx, capitalism may be able to produce goods and materialist abundance for large numbers of people but it necessarily generates alienation, and all classes suffer from this, whether they recognize it or not.

There is a link between alienation and consciousness. People who live in a state of alienation suffer from 'false consciousness that takes the form of the ideology that dominates their thinking'. Besides this, alienation may be said to be unconscious, in that people do not recognize that they are in fact alienated. One reason for this is that alienation is so all-pervasive that it is invisible and hard to take hold of.

Thus people become separated or estranged from their work, from friends, from themselves and from life. A person's work, which is central to identity and sense of self, becomes separated from him or her and ends up actually as a destructive force. Workers experience themselves as objects, things that are acted upon, and not as subjects, active forces in the world. The things produced become 'commodities,' objects separated, somehow, from the workers' labor. As people become increasingly more alienated, they become the prisoners of their alienated needs and end up, as Marx puts it, 'the self-consciousness and self-acting commodity.'

CONSUMER SOCIETY**Role of mass media in alienation**

Mass media plays a crucial role. They provide momentary gratifications for the alienated spirit, they distract the alienated individual from his or her misery and with the institution of advertising, and they stimulate desire, leading people to work harder and harder. There is a kind of vicious cycle here. If as Marx argues, work in capitalist societies alienates people, then the more people work, the more they become alienated. In order to find some means of escaping their alienation they engage in various forms of consumption, all of which cost money, so that they are forced to work increasingly hard to escape from the effects of their work. Advertising acts as the chief means of motivating people to work hard.

Consumer Society

As we have discussed advertising is an essential institution in advanced capitalist societies because it is necessary to motivate people to work hard so they can accumulate money, which they can use to buy things. But in addition people must be driven to consume, must be made crazy to consume, for it is consumption that maintains the economic system. Thus the alienation generated by a capitalist system is functional, for the anxieties and miseries generated by such a system tend to be assuaged by impulsive consumption. There is nothing that advertising will not do to achieve its goals. If it has to debase sexuality, co-opt the women's rights movement, merchandise cancer (via cigarettes), seduce children, terrorize the masses, or employ any other tactics it will. One thing that advertising does is divert people's attention from social and political concerns and steer that attention toward selfish and private concerns. Thus the immediate mission is to sell goods, the long range mission is to maintain the class system. In order to sell goods, advertising has to change attitudes, lifestyles, customs, habits, and preferences while at the same time, maintaining the economic system that benefits from these changes.

According to a German Marxist, Fritz Haug, that those who control the industries in capitalist societies have learned to fuse sexuality onto commodities and thus have gained greater control of that aspect of people's lives that is of most interest to the ruling classes- the purchasing of goods and services. He argues that advertising industry, the servant of capitalist interests, has learned how to mold and exploit human sexuality, to alter human need and instinct structures.

So according to him the power of the advertising industry to use the appearance of products as a means of stimulating desire for them is now a worldwide phenomenon, and have intervened in the imaginations of people through their cultures. And so people have the illusion that they make their own decisions about what to purchase and what to do, but according to Haug, these decisions are made for them to a remarkable degree. Their acts turn out to be almost automatic responses to stimuli generated by advertisers and the commodities themselves.

The irony is that we are all convinced of our freedom to make our choices, because we believe our minds are inviolable, when in fact our choices have been imposed on us, in subtle ways, the advertising industry, this illusion of autonomy makes us all the more susceptible to manipulation and exploitation.

So advertising is part of what Marxist scholars call the mind industry. The main function of the mind industry is to not to sell its product but also to sell the existing order, to perpetuate the prevailing pattern of man's domination by man, no matter who runs the society and by what means. Its task is to expand and train our consciousness in order to exploit it.

Summary of Marxism

We have discussed that Marx work locates the role of mass media in the context of the operation of the capitalist economy, and emphasis the relationship between economy and communication and culture. Marx's view of the connection between the economic organization of society and the process of mass communication is characterized by a famous passage from his works:-

The ideas of the ruling class are, in every age the ruling ideas: i.e. the class, which is the dominant material force in society, is at the same time its dominant intellectual force.

The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production.. Insofar as they rule as a class and determine the extent and compass of an epoch, they do this in its whole range, hence among other things they regulate the production and distribution of the ideas of their age; thus their ideas are the ruling ideas of the epoch.

- So according to Marx the capitalist class the bourgeoisie – the control the ‘production and distribution of ideas, because of their control of the means of material production. As a result it is their ideas their views and accounts of the world and how it works, that dominate the outlook of capitalist society ’
- These are emphasized through the means of mental production at the expense of other views and accounts of how the world works.
- The outcome is that the ideology of the bourgeoisie becomes the dominant ideology of the society thereby shaping the thinking and action of all other classes in society including the working class or proletariat.
- This ideological domination is crucial in the maintenance of the inequality between the social classes. It enables the capitalist class or ruling classes to legitimate the established order by hiding the social, political and economic disparities of capitalist society.
- Marx referred to the creation of a false consciousness in the minds the other classes about the political and social realities of capitalist society.
- Marx, therefore makes a direct connection between the domination of the economic organization society and the exercise of ideological control, the control of the ways in which we think.
- Ideological domination is the outcome of the relentless logic of the capitalist system.



COMMUNICATION AND CULTURE**Neo Marxism**

Most British cultural studies theories can be labeled neo Marxist. They deviate from classic Marxist theory in at least one important respect- they focus concern on the super-structure issues of ideology and culture rather than other base. The importance that neo Marxists attach to the superstructure has created a fundamental division within Marxism. Many neo Marxists assume that useful change can begin with peaceful ideological reform rather than violent revolution in which the working class seizes control of the means of production. Some neo Marxists have developed critiques of culture that call for radically transforming the superstructure while others call for modest reforms.

Communication and Culture

Social life is more than power and trade, it also includes the sharing of aesthetic experience, religious ideas, personal values and sentiments and intellectual notion- a ritual order.

In order to take the question of the relation between mass communication and culture this sense further, we need to be more precise about what presents itself as an object of study. This is made difficult by the senses in which the term culture is used- itself a reflection of the complexity of the phenomenon.

If we extract essential points from these different usages, it seems that culture must have all of the following attributes. 

- It is something collective and shared with others (there is no purely individual culture.
- It must have some symbolic form of expression , whether intended as such or not;
- It has some pattern, order or regularity and therefore some evaluative dimensions (culture lives and changes, has a history and potentially a future.)
- Perhaps the most general and essential attribute of culture is communication, since cultures could not develop, survive, extend and generally succeeded without communication.
- Finally in order to study culture we need to be able to locate it, as essentially there are three places to look ; in people , in things texts, artifacts) and in human practices

Characteristics of Culture

- Collectivity formed and held
- Open to symbolic expression
- Ordered and differentially valued
- Systematically patterned
- Dynamic and changing
- Communicable over time and space

Frankfurt School and Critical Theory

For the wider development of ideas about mass communication and the character of media culture, within an internationalized framework , the various national debates about cultural quality have probably influential than a set of ideas, owing much to **Marxist thinking, which developed and diffused in the post-war years.**

The term critical theory serves to this long and diverse tradition which owes its origin to the work of group of post 1933 scholars from the Marxist school of Applied social research in Frankfurt.

The most important members of the group were Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno but other including Herbert Marcuse and Walter Benjamin played an important role. The school was engaged in a critique of the enlightenment. It thought that the promise of the enlightenment, the belief in the scientific and rational progress and the extension of human freedom, had turned into a progress and the extension of human freedom, had turned into a nightmare the use of science and rationality to stamp out human freedom. In this regard Adorno said:

Enlightenment impedes the development of autonomous, independent individuals who judge and decide consciously for themselves... while obstructing the emancipation for which human beings are as ripe as the productive forces of the epoch permit.

This theory not only rejects the false hope of rational emancipation offered by the enlightenment but also involves a critique of Marxism. The school had been established **originally to examine the apparent failure of revolutionary social change as predicted by Marx**, and in explanation of the failure they looked to the capacity of the superstructure (especially ideas and ideology represented in the mass media) to subvert historical forces of economic changes also the promise of the historical forces of economic change (and also the promise of the enlightenment).

History as interpreted by Marx seemed to have gone wrong, because ideologies of the dominant class had come to condition the economic base, especially by promoting a 'false consciousness' among the working masses and helping to assimilate them to capitalist society.

The school sees a durability in capitalism which others have doubted, and argues that this rests upon affluence and consumerism, and the more rational and pervasive forms of social control afforded by the modern state, mass media and popular culture. The universal and commercialized mass culture was seen as one important means by which this success for monopoly capital had been achieved.

The affluence and consumerism generated by the economies of capitalist societies, and the levels of ideological control possessed by their culture industries, have ensured that the working class has been thoroughly incorporated into the system.

Its members are more financially secure, can buy many of the things they desire, or think they desire, and no longer have any conscious reasons for wanting to overthrow capitalism and replace it with a classless and stateless society. The idea that the working class has been pacified into accepting capitalism is central to the theory of the school. It links up with the critique of the enlightenment in that rational domination is the domination of masses in modern capitalist societies.

Its debt to the theory of commodity fetishism is also evident in that commodities of all kinds become more available and therefore more capable of dominating peoples consciousness. This fetishism is accentuated by the domination of money which regulates the relationships between commodities. In keeping with these ideas is the school's concept of false needs, which connects what has been said so far with the concept of the culture industry.

False Needs

The concept of false needs is identified particularly with the work of Marcuse. It is based upon the assumption that people have true or real needs to be creative, independent and autonomous, in control of their own destinies, fully participating members of meaningful and democratic collectivities for themselves. The school says that these true needs are suppressed by false need. The false needs which are created and sustained, can in fact be fulfilled, like the desires elicited by consumerism, but only at the expense of the true needs which remain unsatisfied. This occurs because people do not realize their real needs remain unsatisfied. As a result of the stimulation and fulfillment of false needs, they have what they think they want. The cultivation of the false needs is bound up with the role of culture industry. It is so effective that the working class is no longer likely to pose a threat to the stability and continuity of capitalism.

The whole process of **mass production** of goods, services and ideas had more or less completely sold the system of capitalism, along with its devotion to technological rationality, consumerism, short-term gratification and the myth of 'classlessness'.

The commodity is the main instrument of this process since it appeared that both art and oppositional culture could be marketed for profit at the cost of losing critical power.

Marcuse later in 1964 gave the description of 'one dimensional man' to the mass consumption society founded on commerce advertising and spurious egalitarianism (false sense of equality). The media and culture industry as a whole were deeply implicated in this critique. The school contained a sharp and pessimistic attack on mass culture, for its uniformity, worship of technique, Monotony, uniformity and repetitiveness escapism and Production of false needs, its reduction of individuals to customers and the removal of all ideological choice. The emphasis of critical theory was on the culture of the mass media as powerful influence for preventing fundamental change. In general the consciousness industry (media) has been an object of sustained critical attention.

The theory of 'commodification' originated in which the objects are commodified by acquiring an exchange value instead of having merely an intrinsic use value.

In the same way cultural products (in the form of image, ideas and symbols) are produced and sold in media markets as commodities. These can be exchanged by consumers for psychic satisfaction, amusement and illusory notion of our place in world, often resulting in the obscuration of the real structure of society and our subordination in it (false consciousness).

This is an ideological process largely conducted via our dependence on commercial mass media. The theory of commodification applies especially well to the interpretation commercial advertising, but it a wider reference. In general the more art and culture are commodified the more they lose any critical potential, and intrinsic value distinctions are replaced by or equated with market criteria of cost and demand.

HEGEMONY

The concept of hegemony borrowed by critical theorists from Gramsci's term for a ruling ideology helps to bring a lot of different idea about how the culture of media (news, entertainment, fiction) and helps to maintain the class-divided and class-dominated society. According to Raymond Williams in 1977 the development of the concept of hegemony as one of the major turning points in Marxist cultural theory.

In common usage, hegemony means domination or rule by one state or nation over another. Marxists use the term in a different manner; rule is based on overt power and at time on coercion, but hegemony is subtler and more pervasive.

The 'normal' exercise of hegemony on the now classical terrain of the parliamentary regime is characterized by the combination of force and consent, which balance each other reciprocally, without force predominating excessively over consent. (Gramsci 1971, p.215 in Storey (1994

This consent is not always peaceful, and may combine physical force or coercion with intellectual, moral and cultural inducement; can be understood as "common sense", a cultural universe where the dominant ideology is practiced and spread.

Gramsci describes two different modes of social control:

1. **Coercive control:** manifested through **direct force** or its threat (needed by a state when its degree of hegemonic leadership is low or fractured);
2. **Consensual control:** which arises when individuals **voluntarily assimilate** the worldview of the dominant group (=hegemonic leadership).

A class had succeeded in persuading the other classes of society to accept its own moral, political and cultural values. The concept assumes a plain consent given by the majority of a population to a certain direction suggested by those in power. Gramsci said that it can never be taken for granted; in fact during the post-revolutionary phase (when the labour class has gained control) the function of hegemonic leadership does not disappear but changes its character. Hegemony is readjusted and re-negotiated constantly. Something which emerges out of social and class struggles, and serve to shape and influence peoples minds. It is a set of ideas by means of which dominant groups strive to secure the consent of subordinate groups to their leadership. Hence, having everything we just said in mind, one could take it that, first, you have a class "building" a specific and concrete ideology -- based in its specific and concrete interests – that will dominate the rest of the society because of the unavoidable influence of capitalist relations.

According to Williams, rule is political and in critical times is based on coercion or force. Hegemony, on the other hand, a complicated intermeshing of forces of a political social and cultural nature.

Hegemony transcends but also includes two other concepts:

Culture, which is how we shape our lives and ideology, which from a Marxist perspective, expresses and is a projection of specific class interests. Hegemony transcends culture as a concept because culture can be seen as being tied to specific distributions of power and influence, or the mode of production and relations that stem from it. Hegemony transcends ideology as a concept because ideology is limited to systematized and formalized meanings that are more or less conscious.

Ideology may be masked and camouflaged in films and television programs and other works carried by mass media, but the discerning Marxist can elicit these ideologies and point them out.

So Hegemony refers to a loosely interrelated set of ruling ideas permeating a society but in such a way as to make the established order of power and values appear natural, taken –for-granted and

common-sensical. A ruling ideology is not imposed but appears to exist by virtue of an unquestioned consensus. Hegemony tends to define unacceptable opposition to the status quo as dissident and deviant. In effect, hegemony is constantly reasserted definition of a social situation, by way of discourse rather than political or economic power which becomes real in its consequences.

What exactly is the meaning of "hegemony"?

"...Dominant groups in society, including fundamentally but not exclusively the ruling class, maintain their dominance by securing the 'spontaneous consent' of subordinate groups, including the working class, through the negotiated construction of a political and ideological consensus which incorporates both dominant and dominated groups." (Strinati, 1995: 165)

'Hegemony' in this case means the success of the dominant classes in presenting their definition of reality, their view of the world, in such a way that it is accepted by other classes as 'common sense'. The general 'consensus' is that it is the *only* sensible way of seeing the world. Any groups who present an alternative view are therefore marginalized:

According to Williams, hegemony is then not only the articulate upper level of 'ideology seen as 'manipulation' or indoctrination. It is a whole body of practices and expectations, over the whole of living: our senses, our assignments of energy, our shaping perceptions of ourselves and our world, it is lived system of meanings and values- which as they are experienced as practices appear as reciprocally confirming.

It thus constitutes a sense of reality for most people in the society. A sense of the absolute because experienced reality beyond which it is very difficult for most members of the society to move, in most areas of their lives.

Hegemony thus is what might be described as that which goes without saying, or the givens or commonsense realities of the world, which, it turns out, serve an ultimate purpose – that of maintaining the dominance of the ruling class.

Different authors (Foucault, Althausser, Feminist theories, etc.) have taken Gramsci's idea of a prominent discourse, reinterpreting and proposing it as a suitable explanation about our culture, the construction of our beliefs, identities, opinions and relations, everything under the influence of a dominant "common sense".

CULTURE INDUSTRY

On our previous sessions we discussed two neo-Marxist approaches to media studies. One is Frankfurt school and the other is media hegemony theory. Frankfurt school was engaged in a critique of the enlightenment. The extension of human freedom had turned into a nightmare the use of science and rationality to stamp out human freedom. It also involves a critique of Marxism. The school had been established originally to examine the apparent failure of revolutionary social change as predicted by Marx, and in explanation of the failure they looked to the capacity of the superstructure (especially ideas and ideology represented in the mass media) to subvert historical forces of economic changes.

The emphasis of critical theory was on the culture of the mass media as powerful influence for preventing fundamental change. In general the consciousness industry (media) has been an object of sustained critical attention because ideologies of the dominant class had come to condition the economic base, especially by promoting a 'false consciousness' among the working masses and helping to assimilate them to capitalist society. The affluence and consumerism generated by the economies of capitalist societies, and the levels of ideological control possessed by their culture industries, have ensured that the working class has been thoroughly incorporated into the system. Its members are more financially secure, can buy many of the things they desire, or think they desire, and no longer have any conscious reasons for wanting to overthrow capitalism and replace it with a classless and stateless society. It links up with the critique of the enlightenment in that rational domination is the domination of masses in modern capitalist societies. Its debt to the theory of commodity fetishism is also evident in that commodities of all kinds become more available and therefore more capable of dominating people's consciousness. The concept of false needs is identified particularly with the work of Marcuse. It is based upon the assumption that people have true or real needs to be creative, independent and autonomous, in control of their own destinies, fully participating members of meaningful and democratic collectivities for themselves. The false needs which are created and sustained, can in fact be fulfilled, like the desires elicited by consumerism, but only at the expense of the true needs which remain unsatisfied. The cultivation of the false needs is bound up with the role of culture industry. It is so effective that the working class is no longer likely to pose a threat to the stability and continuity of capitalism.

Culture Industry

According to the Frankfurt school, the culture industry reflects the consolidation of commodity fetishism, the domination of exchange value and the ascendancy of state monopoly capitalism. It shapes the tastes and preferences of the masses, thereby molding their consciousness by inculcating the desire for false needs.

It therefore works to exclude real or true needs alternative and radical concepts of theories, and politically oppositional way of thinking and acting. According to Adorno the commodities produced by the culture industry are governed by the need to realize their value on the market. Industrially, cultural production is a process of standardization whereby the products acquire the form common to all commodities. This means that the more cultural products are actually standardized the more they are appearing to individualize. Its effects are profound and far-reaching:

The power of the culture industry's ideology is such that conformity has replaced consciousness. The drive to conformity tolerates no deviation from, or opposition to, nor an alternative vision of, the existing social order. Deviant, oppositional and alternative ways of thinking and acting become increasingly impossible to envisage as the power of the culture industry is extended over people's minds.

The culture industry deals with falsehoods not truths, in false needs and false solutions, rather than real need and real solutions. It solves problems only in appearance not as they should be resolved in

the real world. These masses in Adorno's eyes become completely powerless. Power lies with the culture industry.

Its products encourage conformity and consensus, which ensure obedience to authority and the stability of the capitalist society system. The ability of the culture industry to replace the consciousnesses of the masses with automatic conformity is more or less complete. Example: pop music produced by the culture industry is dominated by two processes:

Standardization and Pseudo-Individualization

The theory of 'commodification' originated in which the objects are commodified by acquiring an exchange value instead of having merely an intrinsic use value.

In the same way cultural products (in the form of image, ideas and symbols) are produced and sold in media markets as commodities. These can be exchanged by consumers for psychic satisfaction, amusement and illusory notion of our place in world, often resulting in the obscuration of the real structure of society and our subordination in it (false consciousness).

This is an ideological process largely conducted via our dependence on commercial mass media. The theory of commodification applies especially well to the interpretation commercial advertising, but it a wider reference. In general the more art and culture are commodified the more they lose any critical potential, and intrinsic value distinctions are replaced by or equated with market criteria of cost and demand.

Gramscianism on Communications Matters

From a "Gramscian" perspective, the **mass media** have to be interpreted as an instrument to spread and reinforce the dominant hegemony... although they could be used by those who want to spread counter-hegemonic ideas too.

Hegemony and the Media

This set of ideas will constitute the hegemony that will be expressed as the nucleus of culture. If these assumptions are correct, we can conclude that the media are the instruments to express the dominant ideology as an integral part of the cultural environment.

The works carried out by the mass media can be seen, then not merely as carriers of ideology that manipulate and indoctrinate people with certain views. The media, as unwitting, instruments of hegemonic domination, have a much broader and deeper influence- they shape people's very ideas of themselves and the world, they shape peoples worldviews.

POLITICAL ECONOMIC THEORY I

Political economic theory is an old label that has been revived to identify a socially critical approach which focuses primarily on the relation between the economic structure and dynamics of media industries and the ideological content of media.

It directs research attention to the empirical analysis of the structure of ownership and control of media and to the way media market forces operate. From this point of view, the media institution has to be considered as part of the economic system with close links to the political system.

In the early 1970s Golding and Murdock, two of Britain's leading political economists document the concentration and consolidation of ownership in publishing, print, broadcasting, film and recording industries in UK. They found that the top five companies in each industry held considerable power. They accounted for 86 % of circulation of morning newspapers in Britain, 88% of the Sunday papers, 73% of ITV network production, 86% of all paperbacks sold.

This work was one of the earliest systematic analyses of commercial power of the media it highlighted the increasing control of the large companies over a particular media sector, or even several sectors, but also the increasing influence over popular leisure time. Since 1974 the authors have continued to document the consolidation of corporate power in the media industries. In the United States such documentation is associated with the work of Ben Bagdikian in his book 'the Media Monopoly' in 1983. He first published that about 50 media companies dominated the American media. The latest edition of his book, published in 1997, argues this figure had fallen to ten with around another dozen in a position of secondary standing.

Herman and Chomsky in 1988 developed this point identifying concentration and nature of media ownership as one of the essential ingredients in their propaganda model. They argue a range of political economic and organization filters constrain the reporting of international news in United States. Their first filter is the 'size, ownership and profit orientation of the mass media'. Similarly, in Europe the growing power of media moguls has been subject to examination. Researcher have shown the ability of media owners in Britain, France, Germany and Italy to deliver partisan support at national elections and actively influence the evolving national political agenda through their ownership of newspapers and TV channels.

Three economic processes that have increased the reach of media corporations are:-

1. Internationalization
2. Integration and
3. diversification

Internationalization

Corporations are ceasing to be simply national in their operations and are becoming global. This trend of internationalization was noted by Murdock and Golding who consider it another aspect of how concentration contributes to consolidation the necessary commercial constraints on cultural production. In media firms are extending their influence into overseas markets while foreign companies, mainly American, are consolidating their interests in the British media. Today British media interests increasingly are part of large global empires. In every part of the global media industries the dominance of a few corporations is document, e.g. the pop music industry. By 1994 90% of the gross sales of recorded music world wide came from albums, singles and music videos owned or distributed by 6 multi-national companies. The power to decide what is played on 'global jukebox' rests in the hands of these organizations. Scholars note that at the end of 1980s the combined revenue of the five largest global media firms was estimated at 18 % of the worldwide information industry.

Integration

Contemporary statistics show that fewer and fewer large companies increasingly own what we see, hear and read. A specter is haunting the media around the world today and that specter is Rupert Murdoch. He is the archetypal media owner whose interests have attracted a considerable degree of comment and political concern.

Integration takes two forms

1. Vertical
2. Horizontal

Vertical Integration

Vertical integration refers to the process by which one owner acquires all aspects of production and distribution of a single type of media product. Scholars discuss how global media giants such as Sony, Bertelsmann, the News Corporation and Time Warner have through vertical integration, extended their power to control the creation, production and distribution of world-wide information and communication.

The Japanese electronic multi-national, Sony in 1989 bought Columbia Pictures and Guber-Peter's entertainment, two leading US production companies who made films and TV series for worldwide distribution, to combine their capacity to make video/audio equipment with the ability to manufacture cultural products. The previous year the company had purchased CBS records for the same reason. Such purchase enabled Sony to increase control over the market by reducing its dependency on American programme-making companies.

Horizontal integration

Horizontal integration is the process by which one company buys different kinds of media, concentrating ownership across different kinds of media. Cross-media ownership has developed at a rapid pace in recent years.

POLITICAL ECONOMIC THEORY II**Diversification**

The trend to the concentration of ownership dates back to the end of the nineteenth century. However, cross-media ownership control by non-media companies, the integration of media companies and the internationalization of ownership have widened and deepened media concentration to an unprecedented degree.

One commentator puts it more graphically when he states *the* great media empires spanning the world have subjugated more territory in a decade than Alexander the Great or Genghis Khan did in a lifetime.

The expansion these empires has been furthered by attendant political factors. Freeing media companies from regulations on what they can own and control has been done in the name of competition, choice and quality.

The arguments forwarded has been that emergence of more channels and outlets, increase access to information and knowledge, and more control over when and what people watch and listen to appears to confirm the argument that free market brings more choice for the individual.

Thus any concerns about the increased concentration of ownership are offset by more choice. Supporters of the free market see the explosion of choice as making redundant old – fashioned anxieties about media monopoly as deregulation encourages competition, investment and a growing diversity of product. Critics such as Graham Murdock acknowledge that the more choice argument is highly plausible and seductive, but he argues a distinction must be made between plurality and diversity. He says, “*There may be more communication goods and services in circulation but many of them are versions of the same product in a variety of packages*”.

While there may be more television channels, they are increasingly broadcasting the same programmes. Murdock argues there are **four ways** in which media owners limit diversity and thereby pose a threat to democracy.

Four ways in which media owners limit diversity

1. The consequences are to be observed in the reduction of independent media sources, concentration on the largest markets. They use their power to shape the terms and nature of the competition of the markets in which they are major players.
2. Avoidance of risks reduced investment in less profitable media tasks (such as investigative reporting and documentary film-making they can insist their outlets support their general business interests by giving publicity to success, and suppressing coverage that is potentially embarrassing.
3. Neglect of smaller and poorer sectors of the potential audience and by attempting to maximize the complementarities or ‘synergies’ between various components of their media and business operations, media owners can limit peoples perspectives.

The effects of economic forces are not random, but as Murdock and Golding puts it:

“consistently to exclude those voice lacking economic power or resources... the underlying logic of cost operates systematically, consolidating the position of groups already established in the main mass-media markets and excluding those groups who lack the capital base required for those least likely to criticize the prevailing distribution of wealth and power. ..

Conversely those most likely to challenge these arrangements are unable to publicize their dissent or opposition because they cannot command resources needed for effective communication to a broad audience.”

4. Often a politically unbalanced range of news media they use their resources to support certain political or ideological causes. Murdock cites the case of Time Warner and Batman. By owning the

rights the comic character the multi-media giant can orchestrate the development of the product to maximize its profits. Batman developed into a film publicized by Time Warner through its magazines and promoted via its cable and television networks, the soundtrack of which was released on its record labels and whose merchandising included children's toys produced through its manufacturing interests.

The predominant character of what the media produce can be largely accounted for by the exchange value of different kinds of content, under conditions of pressure to expand markets, and by the underlying economic interests of owners and decision-makers.

Economic interests of owners and decision-makers

These interests relate to the need for profit from media operations and to the relative profitability of other branches of commerce as are result of monopolistic tendencies and processes of vertical and horizontal integration.

How ownership is linked with control. For political economists such as Murdock and Golding who have documented the expansion of the global media giants there is a direct relationship between ownership and control.

Two approaches analyzing the relationship between ownership and control Murdock in 1980 identifies two approaches in Marxist thought to analyzing the relationship between ownership and control – what he labels as:

1. Instrumental: direct intervention
2. Structural: economic structures shape the activities of media owners

Instrumental: direct intervention

In its most crude form instrumentalism focuses on 'conspiracy and direct intervention.' Owners and managers are seen to conspire to determine which person, which facts, which versions of the facts and which ideas shall reach the public. The policy of the owners is seen as working as a whole to produce a press that strongly defends private enterprise... and may be bias towards the political leanings of the proprietors. Sometimes the impact of the views and prejudices of those who own and control the capitalist media is immediate and is direct by the constant and every day interventions. Political economist scholar Miliband does not simply examine how owners influence particular papers but focuses on the ways in which the press as a whole represent the interests of the ruling class. According to him there are a number of pressures apart from capitalist ownership e.g. advertising censorship, the consensual values of people working in the media, the official climate-which all work in the same conservative and conformist direction. Thus instrumental approaches focus on the control exercised by individual capitalists to extend their own interests, and ways in which the media as a whole work to reinforce the general interests of a capitalist class.

Structural: economic structures shape the activities of media owners

Critics see such analysis too simplistic. It presents the mass media as 'servants'- or more graphically as the 'cudgel of oppression' – of a ruling class with little or not autonomy. The media simply act as a conveyor belt for the ideas of the ruling capitalist class. This ignores the ability of journalists and media workers to resist intervention of owners. Researches have shown that while owners often try to exercise control over editorial content they do not often do not succeed.

Similarly researchers have also doubted the ability of a single individual to oversee the empires of the contemporary global firms. So the other strand of Marxist thought is the structural approach which locates discussion of ownership and control in the context of the mode of production of political economy. And the limits it places on the choices and actions of press proprietors and personnel, whatever their origins, social connections or personal commitments. Analysis is not centered on the activities and interests of individual owners but on the constraints and limitations placed on owners, managers and workers by nature of the capitalist economy.

So structuralists in the word of Murdock ‘examine the ways in which the policies and operations of corporation are limited by the general dynamics of media industries and capitalist economies.

Economic structures shape the activities of media owners, controllers and workers and pressures under which they work. These pressures emanate from the emphasis on the need to maximize profit and the demands of competition. Thus Murdock argues that there is no need for owners to intervene directly because the logic of the prevailing market structures ensures that by and large the output endorses rather than opposes their general interests.

POLITICAL ECONOMIC THEORY III

Graham in 1990 argues that it is only by understanding the organization of the industry that we can comprehend why certain media products are made and Distributed as well as their content and form. Graham says that the process of production, the deployment of media worker, the division of labour, the means of distribution need to be considered in order to make a decision about ‘who can say what to whom’.

Graham identifies a number of features of the media industries that are determined by their specific means of production and distribution e.g. he points out the unique nature of the product manufactured by the media industries, which has shaped the methods used to find markets. They are unlike most other products in that they need to have novelty value – a newspaper has to be new every day, while music recordings have to have different sounds; and they are not destroyed in the process of consumption-reading a book or watching a film does not make it unavailable to other people.

Media products are then, costly to produce with a high degree of initial investment, but cheap to reproduce, which encourages the industries to seek to maximize their audiences as the preferred profit maximization strategy. He argues that this is the reason for the concentration, internationalization and diversification of ownership.

- Concentration allows owners relative freedom in their attempts to maximize audience.
- Internationalization allows them to search for market across the globe.
- Diversification allows them to reproduce the same product across a variety of media.

Curran and his colleagues in 1980 illustrate the relationship between economic and market factors and media content through their analysis of the growth of the human interest story in the press .They trace how such stories have increasingly replaced public affairs and political coverage in the press but in particular tabloid press .So to remain commercially viable tabloid newspapers have to attract the maximum number of readers they can and to do this they concentrate on human stories, which are popular amongst their target audiences. Thus the economic realities of tabloid newspaper production necessitate proprietors and workers adopting a product that presents consumers with a particular way of learning about events.

This is not deliberate act by owners to spread particular views but the out come of economic necessity. So what structuralists claim is that media workers do have control over the output of the media but they have to operate within economic environment, which shapes their decisions and actions the nature of this environment is such that the decisions they make and actions they undertake are conditioned to producing views that are by and large pro-capitalists, pro-business and hostile to alternative or minority opinion.

Criticism

First let’s compare the position of political economy from the traditional liberal-pluralist approach.

1. Liberal-pluralist approach represents the media as independent of state and political, economic and social interests...
2. Workers in the industry are seen as possessing a high degree of autonomy or reflector to represent what is going on in society.
3. Even ownership and control is not seen as trying to account for the output of the media.
4. It agrees that owners and managers are constrained in how they can represent to the world.
5. It also sees the market as an important mechanism determining the content to the media .

However, it argues the content and form of the media is determined not by the actions and options of the owners but by the choice of the consumers. It believes that the broad shape and nature of the press is ultimately determined by no one but its readers.

Liberal-pluralists see the concentration of ownership as irrelevant; the most significant factor is the ability of the audience to ensure that its needs and wants are reflected in the output of the media. Some even see this concentration of ownership as beneficial to the performance of the media in meeting consumer demand. As they believe that the concentrated media organizations tend to bring the resources required for comprehensive high quality reporting.

Liberal-Pluralist also reject the Marxist approach on two other grounds. Liberal-pluralists argue that Marxists fail to distinguish between different kinds of media, especially between private and publicly owned. They point out public organizations are not driven by profit motives. BBC is not financed by commercial activities but through the license fee and is therefore free from the need to make profit and satisfy shareholders. They are regulated by statutory bodies which commit them by law and practice to impartiality in their output.

Secondly, liberal-pluralists point out that the media regularly report minority interests critical of capitalism. Not only are there radical programmes but also channels which are committed to creating space in its schedules for alternative and minority views. The scholars of political economy theory reject these criticisms.

They argue public and private media may be differently constituted but they are both subject to the pressures of the market e.g. Compete with the market, improve the ratings of their programmes in order to justify their fee.

Public institutions such as BBC are dominated by those who represent the establishment. Those who control the BBC are drawn from the ranks of the good and the great. The elite has run the BBC in the interests of the capitalist class. They are not representative of the British people but the class that runs the country.

Power of Advertising

Many of the decisions media owners and managers make about the commercial viability of their operations are influenced by the growing dependency of the media on advertising. For instrumentalists advertisers intervene directly into the operation of the mass media to ensure their interests are preserved or promoted.

Herman and Chomsky in 1988 in their propaganda model highlight how advertisers discriminate against certain political messages and viewpoints appearing in the media. Whereas the structuralists, like Golding and Murdock in 1991 criticized the propaganda model for concentrating on 'strategic intervention' by advertisers and owners while overlooking the contradiction within the system.

According to them both advertisers and owners operate within structures that contain as well as facilitate, imposing limits as well as offering opportunities. They argue that analyzing these limits is the key task for a critical political economy.

Constraints and choices are internalized and enforced by the sutures of power within which the media operate.

Other scholars point out that since media depend on two sources for their revenue; sales and advertising. So media with small sales can only survive if their audiences are seen as possessing sufficient purchasing power to attract advertisers. As scholar Curran in 1978 pointed out that advertisers are not interested in reaching all the people as some people have more disposable income or greater power over corporate spending and are consequently more sought after by advertisers. E.g. the best-selling quality newspapers continue to survive in spite of relatively small circulations because their readers are mainly drawn from wealthier sectors of society.

Similarly scholars say that advertising also accounts for the bias of media products to certain kinds of audiences. E.g. women's magazines focus their attention on the lives and loves of women

between the ages of 16 and 34 because their spending power makes them the most attractive to advertisers. Thus it is argued there is a bias in the mass media towards more affluent class. Similarly it is argued that the relationship between supply and demand for media products are more problematic as it is the demand from advertisers for particular kinds of audiences that is the major determinant of supply

The preference of consumers is thus secondary to the need for media to satisfy their major source of revenue, advertisers. Scholar Curran presents ways in which advertising finance has shaped the nature and content of the press.

Not only have newspapers adjusted their content to attract the kind of readers that advertisers want, but have also introduced specialized features... in order to segregate readers into the groups that advertisers want to reach and to direct their attention to particular parts of a paper where they can be efficiently picked out by advertisers.

A variant of the political – economic approach

While the approach centers on media activity as an economic process leading to the commodity (the media product or content), there is a variant of the political – economic approach which suggests that media really produce audiences, in the sense that they deliver audience attention to advertisers and shape the behavior of media publics in certain distinctive ways.

New media and old owners

The development of new media technology such as the Internet is seen as shaking off the shackles of the problem of ownership. The net is one example of how new technology combines old – fashioned , face-to-face communication with mass communication, and as a result allows individuals more control over what they say, what they are told and whom they talk to. Scholars like Howard Rheingold advocates that Internet is a means by which the domination of information flow by large corporations and state can be repelled, and the management of public opinion can be resisted. The internet provides the potential of the unlimited and unrestricted flow of information. Every one can have access to the internet and its riches of information and the opportunity to use the technology to criticize freely government policy and the actions of the state and powerful interests in society. The Internet and other technologies are seen as spelling the end of the large monopolistic media corporations by widening choice and empowering individuals. Similarly digital television is seen as expanding the number of media outlets from which people can information and enjoy entertainment. Expansion is tied to the enhancement of the capabilities of viewers to select programmes they want to watch at the time they want to watch them. Interactive services, as one media manager argues, are taking people where they want to be, when they want to go there and with people they want to be with.

Counter arguments

Political economists are skeptical of such promises and the rosy picture of the digital future. They reject the optimistic beliefs that new media technologies will bring about more choice and the empowerment of media consumer. They claim that it is the affluent that have greatest access to the new technology .A position aggravated by the process of de-regulation and privatization of the media industries, which represents a shift in the provision and distribution of cultural goods from being public services to private commodities. There has been a decline in the public sector of mass media and in direct public control of telecommunication, under the banner of ‘deregulation’, ‘privatization’ or ‘liberalization’.

Similarly to pay for new television services will make it more difficult for those on low incomes to afford the services and will, increasingly, reduce the diet of material available to them. One scholar notes that internet usage shows not only a bias to the wealthy but also to men and America. Like only 12% of internet usage is the global South where two thirds of the world’s population live. Political economists warn about the new technologies becoming increasingly absorbed by the existing media corporation and incorporated into their commercial world.

Scholars argue the convergence of the media, computer telecommunications markets and the de-regulation and privatization of the media industries around the world are encouraging the further concentration of ownership. There has been a growing global 'information economy' involving an increasing convergence between telecommunication and broadcasting.

Mergers and acquisitions are the name of the game as the larger media giants seek to control the transmission of three basic communication products- voice, data and video. The merger between Time Warner and America Online in 200 indicates that in a market-driven system control of new technology will be dominated by large media conglomerates, only now they will be large than before. The euphoria of those who celebrated the internet and the digital revolution is seen as misplaced as large corporation develop new means to exert their control. The future of new media is, according to political economists, 'a subject to be determined by politics not technology'. (Herman and McChesney, 1997)

Relevance of political economic theory in today's time

The relevance of political –economic theory has been greatly increased by several prominent trends in media business and technology .First there has been a growth in media concentration worldwide, with more and more power of ownership being concentrated in fewer hands and with tendencies for mergers between electronic hardware and software industries.

Critical political- economy theory in brief

- Economic control and logic is determinant
- Media structure tends towards concentration
- Global integration of media develops
- Contents and audiences are commodified
- Diversity decreased opposition and alternative voices are marginalized
- Public interest in communication is subordinated to private interests
- Strength of the approach - The main strength of the approach lies in its capacity for making empirically testable propositions about market determinations although the latter are so numerous and complex that empirical demonstration is not easy.

AGENDA SETTING THEORY

Initially agenda setting was understood in a relatively straightforward way. Agenda setting as laid out by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw was that ‘agenda-setting is the process whereby the news media lead the public in assigning relative importance to various public issues.

A change in thinking

The agenda-setting hypothesis came about when researchers became dissatisfied with the dominant theoretical position in mass communication research during the 1950s and the 1960s- the limited effects model. Joseph Klapper stated in his book effects of mass communication in 1960 when he wrote:

“Mass communication ordinarily does not serve as a necessary and sufficient cause of audience effects, but rather functions among and through a nexus of mediating factors and influences.”

For many years, the approach used in communication research was to look for attitude change and most of the research had found that the mass media have little effect in this area. However, researchers were looking at the wrong target. Maybe the mass media had their effects on people’s perceptions –their views of the world- rather than their attitudes. The media agenda influences the public agenda not by saying this issue is important in an overt way but by giving more space and time to that issue and by giving it more prominent space and time. That is, if headlines of newspapers and lead stories of television newscasts all highlight a study. Example touting the role of cholesterol in increasing heart disease this issue is likely to be seen as an important item on the public agenda.

The modern concept of agenda setting is often attributed to Walter Lipmann in 1922, who in his book Public Opinion , argued that the mass media create images of events in our minds and that policy makers should be cognizant (aware) of those ‘pictures in people's heads.’ Lipmann emphasized that the pictures of reality created by the news media were merely reflections of actual reality and therefore were, sometimes distorted. He said that news-media projections of the world create a pseudo-environment for each news consumer. The pseudo-environment exists in addition to the actual environment , and people react to this pseudo-environment. “For the real environment is altogether too big, too complex, and too fleeting for a direct acquaintance.”

Other scholars also described the concept of agenda setting in their writings prior to empirical assessment of the concept in the early 1970s. In 1958, Norton Long wrote:

“In a sense, the newspaper is the prime mover in setting the territorial agenda, it has a great part in determining what most people will be talking about, what most people will think the facts are and what most people will regard as the way problems are to be dealt with.”

In 1959 Kurt and Lang wrote that the mass media force attention to certain issues. They build up public images of political figures. They are constantly presenting objects suggesting what individual in the mass should think about, know about, and have feelings about. Lang summarized the role of the news media in building the agenda in these words:

First the news media highlight some events, activities, groups, personalities and so forth to make them stand out. Different kinds of issues require different amounts and kinds of coverage to gain attention. This common focus affects what people will think or talk about.

Second the object is, the focus of attention still needs to be framed, it must come to stand for something- some problem or concern. The media can play up or down the more serious aspects of a situation. The third step is the build up links the object or events to secondary symbols, so that it becomes a part of the recognized political landscape.

Something like interest aggregation is involved, since the line of division on the particular issue does not always coincide with the cleavage between the organized political parties or between other sharply defined groups.

Finally, spokesmen who can articulate demands must make their appearance, their effectiveness stems in good part from their ability to command media attention.

First empirical test

First empirical test of Lipmann's ideas about agenda setting was published in 1972 by two University of North Carolina researchers, Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw, in what came to be known as the Chapel Hill study. They designed a study to test the influence of election campaign coverage on public perceptions of the importance of issues. Prior to election they asked Chapel Hill voters "what are you most concerned about these days?"

The issues they identified – were found almost identical agendas on the –part of news media. Hence, they found an incredibly strong correlation. the public agenda was a virtual reflection of media agenda. They named this 'transfer of salience' of issues from the media to the public "the agenda setting influence of mass communication.

After this ground breaking study in 1972, agenda –setting research caught fire among communication investigators, with hundreds of studies being conducted throughout the ensuing 25 years. These researches included replication of the original study conducted by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw.

Contingency Factors

The second phase of agenda setting research began when researcher started looking into a causal direction for agenda setting effects and contingent conditions for such effects. Researchers found that voters with a greater need for orientation to their world and voters who used the mass media more frequently than others were more likely to have agendas that corresponded to the news media agenda.

Weaver proposed the finding in 1977 who called this contingency factor an individual's 'need for orientation'. Thus, an individual might believe that economic policy is interesting but might know little about the topic. Such an individual will be led to active use of the media and would thus be more likely to be influenced by the specific agenda items highlighted in the press and on television.

Other extensions of the theory in this area have included the notion that educational level and political interest might moderate the extent to which the media set the agenda for particular individuals. Other scholars considered the ways in which some issues might be more prone to the agenda setting effect than others.

Most important extension in this regard is the concept of issue obtrusiveness. An issue is obtrusive if most members of the public have had direct contact with and less obtrusive if audience members have not had such direct experience .e.g. foreign policy.

It is argued that agenda-setting results should be strongest for unobtrusive issues because audience members must rely on the media for information on these topics.

There have also been debates about how various types of media influence the public agenda. Studies have revealed that broadcast media have a quicker impact on the public agenda; the agenda-setting function is more long lived for print media.

In an attempt to provide stronger evidence for causal direction the next major study of agenda setting was conducted in a laboratory setting where the researchers manipulated videotaped net work television newscasts to vary the placement and emphasis given to the stories.

Two levels of agenda setting

In addition to considering contingency factors that might influence agenda setting, other theorists have extended the theory to consider different levels of agenda setting. McCombs, Shaw and Weaver in 1997 make the distinction between first and second level agenda setting.

FRAMING & SPIRAL OF SILENCE**Two levels of agenda setting**

In addition to considering contingency factors that might influence agenda setting, other theorists have extended the theory to consider different levels of agenda setting. McCombs, Shaw and Weaver in 1997 make the distinction between first and second level agenda setting.

First level agenda setting

First level agenda setting examines the amount of coverage an object receives, while second –level agenda setting examines how that object is presented. First level agenda setting deals with the objects on the media and public agendas. This is the traditional domain of agenda-setting research in which media are seen as influencing what issues are included on the public agenda.

Second-level agenda setting

Second-level agenda setting considers attributes of these objects. At this level , the media not only suggest what the public think about but also influence how people should think about the issue. Thus, the ‘agenda of attributes’ covered in the media sets the ‘agenda of attributes’ for the public. Limited by time and space, news directors often have to select only a handful of stories, while leaving dozens of news stories off the air.

News selection is at the heart of the agenda-setting process since the issues that fail to pass through the gatekeepers of the news also fail to give salience cues regarding the relative importance of the issues. This is particularly true of international news events that happen beyond the direct experience of most news consumers.

Framing

The concept of framing is central to a consideration of second-level agenda setting. In the context of agenda setting framing is a process through which the media emphasize some aspects of reality and downplay other aspects.

Framing is "the subtle selection of certain aspects of an issue by the media to make them more important and thus to emphasize a particular cause of some phenomenon".

To frame, according to Entman, is to “select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communication text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, casual interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described. Framing can be accomplished through the consideration of a particular subtopics, through the narrative form and tone of the presentation, and through particular details included in the media coverage. It is as a result of factors such as framing that Dearing and Rogers conclude "under certain conditions the media of mass communication tell us how to think about issues and, therefore, what to think".

This conclusion - stronger than the traditional agenda-setting outlook - indicates the importance of the media agenda, and consequently the power associated with those who influence this agenda.

The literature on agenda setting is voluminous and wide ranging. Rogers, Dearing and Bregman in 1993 note over 200 articles onto topic in their bibliographic review, and many more have been published since then. This review, however, points out that there are a number of ways to define the boundaries of the agenda –setting tradition.

These could be referred to as broad scope definitions of the theory or narrow –scope approaches. The broad-scope definition of agenda setting involves the consideration of three related agendas:

1. The media agenda is the set of topics addressed by media sources e.g. newspapers television, radio.
2. The public agenda is the set of topics that members of the public believes is important.

3. Finally, the policy agenda represents issues that decision-makers (e.g. legislators and those who influence the legislative process) believe are particularly salient.

Spiral of Silence

A somewhat more controversial theory of media and public opinion is the concept of spiral of silence. This can be regarded as a form of agenda-setting but one that is focused on Macro-level rather than micro-level consequences.

In the words of its originator Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann:

“observations made in one context the mass media spread to another and encouraged people either to proclaim their views or to swallow them and keep quite until , in a spiraling process, the one view dominated the public scene and the other disappeared from public awareness as its adherents became mute , this is the process that can be called a spiral of silence’.

In other words, because of people’s fear of isolation or separation from those around them, they end to keep their attitudes to themselves when they think they are in the minority. The media, because of a variety of factors, tend to present one (or at most two) sides of an issue to the exclusion of others, which further encourages those people to keep quiet and makes it even tougher for the media to uncover and register that opposing viewpoint.

So Noelle-Neumann’s focus is not on micro-level conceptualizations of how average people come to perceive the public agenda; rather she is concerned with the macro-level, long-term consequences of such perceptions.

If various viewpoints about agenda items are ignored , marginalized , or trivialized by media reports, then people will be reluctant to talk about them .As time passes, those viewpoints will cease to heard in public and therefore cannot affect political decision-making. She argued that her perspective involves a return to the concept of powerful mass media. During the summer and fall of 1965, Elisabeth Noelle-Neuman, the head of a prominent public opinion research institute in Germany, observed an interesting phenomenon. They observed the two major parties election in German election.

The phenomenon in which predictions about the outcome seemed to sway the attitudes and behaviors of voters, led Noelle-Neumann to formulate the theory that has come to be known as the spiral of silence theory.

The theory was first formulated and tested to explain puzzling findings in German politics where opinion poll findings were inconsistent with other data concerning expectations of who would win an election and signally failed to predict the result.

The explanation offered was that the media were offering a misleading view of the opinion consensus. They were said to be leaning in a leftist direction, against the underlying opinion of the silent majority. The concept of the spiral of silence from a larger body of theory of public opinion which was developed and tested by Noelle-Neumann over a number of years. The relevant theory concerns the interplay between four elements:

1. Mass media
2. Interpersonal communication and social relations
3. Individual expressions of opinion
4. And the perceptions which individuals have of surrounding climate of opinion in their own social environment.

Fear of Isolation

So the main assumptions of the theory are as follows:-

Society threatens deviant individuals with isolation. Individuals experience fear of isolation continuously .This fear of isolation causes individuals to try to assess the climate of opinion at all times.

The results of this estimate affect their behavior in public, especially their willingness or not to express opinions openly.

Noelle-Neumann begins by proposing that individuals have a strong need to be connected to a social collective and that cohesiveness within that collective must be constantly ensured. She bases some of this reasoning on the experiments done in social psychology which demonstrate that individuals will not express opinions and behavior in ways that they know are wrong in order to avoid social censure (disapproval) and criticism and to remain part of the crowd. She notes that this force is one driven by fear of ostracism (exclusion) and fear of isolation, not by desire to be part of the winning team or on the bandwagon.

Assessing public opinion

Given this fear of isolation it is important for individuals to be able to gauge public opinion, for in order to fit in on a particular issue, you need to know what others think about that issue; ideas relevant to an individual's assessment of public opinion.

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She develops several ideas relevant to an individual's assessment of public opinion. First she proposed that individuals have a natural ability to judge the climate of public opinion. She calls this the quasi-statistical sense and finds evidence for this ability in both the willingness of individuals to make predictions about public opinions and the uncanny accuracy of many of those predictions. However she acknowledges that assessments of opinions are not always accurate. She blames much of this pluralistic ignorance on the mass media.

She argues that media presentations *influence individual assessments of public opinions because the media are ubiquitous and continuous (i.e. they are everywhere in terms of both time and space and cannot be avoided by the individual), and positions presented by media are consonant (i.e. various media sources present essentially the same image of a given topic).*

Three characteristics of the news media that produce this scarcity of perspective

She identified three characteristics of the news media that produce this scarcity of perspective:

1. Ubiquity: the media are virtually everywhere as sources of information.
2. Cumulation: the various news media tend to repeat stories and perspectives across their different individual programs or editions, across the different media themselves and across time.
3. Consonance: the congruence or similarity of values held by news people influences the content they produce.

She identified six parts of working journalists' everyday lives as factors that produce this consonance:

1. The concurring assumptions and experiences held by all journalists at all levels and in all fields about the public's criteria for acceptance of their work in terms of both style and content.
2. Journalists' common tendency to confirm their own opinions, to demonstrate that theirs is the proper interpretation, and to confirm that predictions have indeed been correct.
3. Their dependence on common sources, such as the relatively few wire and news video services.
4. Their "reciprocal influence in building up frames of reference;" newspaper people watch what's on the television news, television news programs monitor one another, and broadcast news people scour (search) the newspapers for consensus and information.
5. Their striving for acceptance from colleagues and superiors.
6. Journalists' relative uniformity of views as a result of demographic and attitudinal attributes shared by the news profession's practitioners.

This view of media effects suggests that two different social processes, one macro-level and one micro-level, are operating simultaneously to produce effects.

Macro-level

Audience members, because of their desire to be accepted may choose to remain silent when confronted with what they perceive to be prevailing counter opinion.

Micro-level

News people, because of the dynamics of their newsgathering function and their need to be accepted, present a restricted selection of news, further forcing into silence those in the audience who wish to avoid isolation. These media images also influence an individual's sense of prevailing public opinion and sometimes lead to an inaccurate reading of the public climate.

Combining the first two factors Fear of isolation and the assessment of public opinion Leads to the key prediction spiral of silence theory. Noelle-Neumann argues that because individuals *fear isolation, when they believe prevailing opinion is opposed to their opinion or is moving in a direction away from their opinion, those individuals will not be willing to speak out.*

Noelle-Neumann argues that because individuals *fear isolation, when they believe prevailing opinion is opposed to their opinion or is moving in a direction away from their opinion, those individuals will not be willing to speak out.*

Noelle-Neumann sees the spiral of silence as a dynamic process. She believes that the *unwillingness* to speak out on a particular issue will further enhance media portrayals and personal assessments that prevailing opinion is against a certain opinion. As these portrayals and assessments become even more codified, some individuals will defect to the opinion that seems to be prevailing or will at least fail to recruit new people to the less-dominant position. As a result, actual opinion will follow predictions of opinions and spiral down.

In brief, the theory proposes that in order to avoid isolation on important public issues support, many people are guided by what they think to be the dominant or declining opinions in their environment. People tend to conceal their views if they feel they are in a minority and are more willing to express them if they think they are dominant. The result is that those views which are perceived to be dominant gain even more ground and alternatives retreat still further. This is the spiraling effect referred to.

Contingency Factors

Noelle-Neumann does not propose that the spiral is a universal process. She points to three caveats that limit the applicability of the theory to specific issues and people.

1. First, the theory will operate only when the issue at hand is a moral issue of good and bad, not a factual issue that can be argued and settled through rational and logical interaction. That is, the spiral of silence should occur with regard to public opinion about capital punishment or abortion but not with regard to public opinion about inflation rates.
2. Second, she notes that the unwillingness to speak out will be less pronounced in highly educated and more affluent portions of the population.
3. She contends that for any topic, hardcore of proponents will always be willing to speak out on an issue regardless of perceptions that prevailing opinion is in the opposite direction.

Extensions of spiral of silence theory

Extensions of spiral of silence theory have been developed in two major areas.

First, some scholars have developed theoretical predictions regarding the group that people consider when assessing prevailing opinion. Specifically it has been suggested that individuals do not look so much to overall societal opinions as to the opinions of relevant reference groups. Researchers have found out that perceived reference group opinions had a larger effect on opinion expression than perceived societal opinions.

In contrast to this some scholars have found out that individuals were more comfortable expressing dissenting opinions within a valued reference group.

Second area of development from the theory has involved further explication of the characteristics of those who are silenced –and those who still speak out- in the face of contrary public and reference group opinion.

Recall Neumann originally posited that the spiral of silence effect would not be as strong for highly educated and affluent portions of the population and that a hard core of individuals would always be willing to speak.

Researchers have identified many other additional variables which affect the willingness to speak out in the face of contrary public sentiment. These include Strength and certainty of opinion, political interest and extremity. The obtrusiveness of the issue and an individual's level of self-efficacy.

Summary of spiral of silence according to Elihu Katz in 1983

1. Individuals have opinions.
2. Fearing isolation, individuals will not express their opinions if they perceive themselves unsupported by others.
3. A “quasi-statistical sense” is employed by individuals to scan the environment for signs of support.
4. Mass media constitute the major source of reference for information about the distribution of opinion and thus the climate of support/nonsupport.
5. So do other reference groups...
6. The media tend to speak in one voice, almost monopolistically.
7. The media tend to distort the distribution of opinion in society, biased as they are by the ...views of journalists.
8. Perceiving themselves unsupported, groups of individuals-who may, at times, even constitute a majority-will lose confidence and withdraw from public debate, thus speeding the demise of their position through the self-fulfilling spiral of silence. They may not change their own minds, but they stop recruitment of others and abandon the fight.
9. Society is manipulated and impoverished thereby.

MARSHALL McLUHAN: THE MEDIUM IS THE MESSAGE AND MASSAGE

During the 1960s a Canadian literary scholar Marshall McLuhan, gained world-wide prominence as someone who had a profound understanding of electronic media and its impact on both culture and society. McLuhan was highly trained in literary criticism but also read widely in communication theory and history. He based much of his understanding of media's historical role on the work of Harold Innis, a Canadian political economist.

We should study him for two reasons. One because his work is important to the development of cultural theory because his work did much to inspire and legitimize macroscopic theories of media, culture and society in North America. He wrote at a time when the limited effects paradigm had reached the peak of its popularity among academics, a time when most American communication researchers regarded macroscopic theory with suspicion if not outright hostility. The second reason for our attention to McLuhan is that he and his ideas are again in vogue.

His theory is actually a collection of lots of intriguing ideas bound together by some common assumptions. The most central of these assumptions is *that changes in communication technology inevitably produce profound changes in both culture and social order.*

McLuhan had no links to any political or social movements; he seemed ready to accept whatever changes were dictated by and inherent in communications technology. McLuhan is said to be a technological determinist. Because he argued that technology inevitably causes specific changes in how people think, in how society is structured, and the forms of culture that are created, Harold Innis: the bias of communication. Harold Innis was one of the first scholars to systematically speculate at length about the possible linkages between communications media and the various forms of social structure found at certain points in history.

He argued that the early empires of Egypt, Greece, and Rome were based on the elite control for the written word. He contrasted these empires with earlier social orders dependent on the spoken word. Innis maintained that before elite discovery of the written word, dialogue was the dominant mode of public discourse and political authority was much more diffused. Gradually, the written word became the dominant mode of elite communication, and its power was magnified enormously by the inventing of new writing materials that is paper that made writing portable yet enduring. With paper and pen, small, centrally located elites were able to gain control over and govern vast regions, thus, new communications media made it possible to create empires. Innis argued that written word-based empires expanded to the limits imposed by communication technology, thus, expansion did not depend as much on the skills of military generals as it did on the communication media used to disseminate orders from the capital city.

Similarly, the structure of later social orders also depended on the media technology available at a certain point in time. For example, the telephone and telegraph permitted even more effective control over larger geographic areas thus the development of media technology had gradually given centralized elites increased power over space and time.

Innis traces the way Canadian elites used various technologies, including the railroad and telegraph, to extend their control across the continent. As a political economist, he harbored a deep suspicion of centralized power and believed that newer forms of communication technology would make even greater centralization inevitable. He referred to this as the inherent bias of communication.

Because of this bias, the people and the resources of outlying regions that he called the periphery are inevitably exploited to serve the interests of elites at the center.

Bias of communication

Innis' idea that communication technology makes centralization of power inevitable.

McLuhan: understanding media

Although he borrowed freely from Innis, McLuhan didn't dwell on issues of exploitation or centralized control. He was fascinated by the implications of Innis' arguments concerning the transformative power of media technology.

If media could create empires what else could they do?

Was it possible that media could transform our sensory experiences as well as our social order?

After all the acts of reading a book and viewing a movie or television program employ different sensory organs.

During the 1960s, we were clearly moving from an era grounded in print technology to one based on electronic media. McLuhan asked if communication technology plays such a critical role in the emergence of new social orders and new forms of culture, what were the implications of abandoning print media in favor of electronic media?

He outlined his vision of the changes that were taking place as a result of the spread of radio and television. He proclaimed that medium is the message (and the Message). In other words, new forms of media transform (message) our experience of ourselves and our society and this influence is ultimately more important than the content that is transmitted in its specific messages. He coined several phrases and terms that have become part of the common vocabulary we use to talk about media and society.

He suggested the term *Global village* to refer to the new form of social organization that would inevitably emerge as instantaneous, electronic media tied the entire world into one great social, political and cultural system.

Unlike Innis, McLuhan didn't bother to concern himself with questions about control over this village or whether village members would be exploited, to him these questions didn't matter, he was more concerned with microscopic issues, with the impact of media on our senses. He proclaimed media to be the extensions of man and argued that media quite literally extend sight, hearing, and touch through time and space. Electronic media would open up new vistas for average people and enable us to be everywhere, instantaneously.

But was this an egalitarian and democratic vision?

What would ordinary people do when their senses were extended in this way?

Would they succumb to information overload? Would they be stimulated to greater participation in politics?

Would they flee into the virtual worlds that were opened up to them by their extend senses?

In a series of books, he tossed out cryptic and frequently contradictory ideas that addressed such questions. Occasionally, his ideas were profound (deep, thoughtful) and prophetic, more often they were arcane (mysterious), mundane, (common) or just confusing.

His observations concerning the global village and the role of electronic media in it continue to be prophetic. At a time when satellite communication was just being developed, he seemed to foretell the rise of the cable news network with its ability to seemingly make us eyewitnesses to history as it's made on the battlefield or at the barricade. At a time when mainframe computers filled entire floors of office buildings, he seemed to envision a time when personal computers would be everywhere and the internet would give everyone instant access to immense stores of information. But as one media critic Meyrowitz noted, to be everywhere is to be nowhere- to have no sense of place, to have access to information is not the same thing as being able to select and use information effectively. The global village isn't situated in space or time. Is it possible to adjust to living in such a formless, ambiguous social structure? Or will the global village merely be a façade used by cynical elites to exploit people? Among the most popular of McLuhan's ideas was his conception of hot and cool media.

He argued that during the 1960s the United States was emerging from an era dominated by hot print media, in the future, the new, cool medium of television would prevail. According to him, the television is cool because it presents us with vague, shadowy images (remember this was 1960, reception was often bad, and sets were black and white).

To make sense of these electronic images, people must work hard to fill in missing sensory information; they must literally participate in creating fully formed images for themselves. He argued that this gets us involved and so we find the images very compelling and meaningful- this is the secret to the television's ability to attract vast audiences.

Print on the other hand, is hot. It supplies us with all the information we need to make sense of things. It does the work for us, offering predigested descriptions of the social world. We can't participate in creating meaning. So, according to him, hot media are out and cool media are in. He carried this notion a step further and argued that some forms of content are naturally suited to cool media whereas others are best communicate by hot media.

His most famous interpretation was that John F Kennedy had a cool image that was ideally suited to television. Richard Nixon, on the other hand, had a hot image. Thus, in their famous presidential debates of 1960 the attractiveness of Kennedy's image was greatly enhanced by television while Nixon's hot image was impaired, this assessment was widely accepted by political consultants and has become an important basis for selecting candidates and molding their public personae.

Initially his ideas achieved enormous public popularity. He became the darling of the media industries- their prophet with honor. For a brief period he commanded huge fees as a consultant and seminar leader for large companies. His ideas were used to rationalize rapid expansion of electronic media with little concern for their negative consequences. So what if children spend most of their free time in front of television sets and become functionally illiterate? Reading is doomed anyway, why prolong its demise? Eventually we will all live in a global village where literacy is unnecessary as it was in preliterate tribal villages. He propounded that linear, logical thinking is far too restrictive. If the triumph of electronic is inevitable why not get on with it? No need for government regulation of media. No need to complain to about television violence adopt McLuhan's long-term global perspective.

KNOWLEDGE GAP THEORY**Criticism on Marshal McLuhan**

Criticism within academia was that his ideas were too diverse and inconsistent.

They were astounded by his notion that literacy was obsolete and found his praise of nonlinear thinking nonsensical or even dangerous. They thought nonlinear thinking was just another label for logically inconsistent random thoughts.

Empirical media researchers were also uniformly critical of McLuhan.

The early small scale empirical studies failed to support his assertions, these suspicions were confirmed, his was just another grand theorist whose ideas were overly speculative and empirically unverifiable.

Even critical cultural theorists criticized his work. These theorists found McLuhan's theory to be a perversion of Innis' ideas. Rather than attempt reform of the superstructure or lead a revolution to take control of the base, McLuhan was content to wait for technology to lead us forward into the global village.

He seemed to be saying that our fate is in the hands of media technology, and we are constrained to go where ever it leads. The political economists were this as encouraging and sanctioning the development of potentially dangerous new forms of electronic media, which might lead to a painful future- a nightmare global village in which one is constantly watched and coerced by remote elites. As long as existing elites remain in power, political economists saw little hope for positive change.

They condemned McLuhan for diverting attention from more important work and perverting the radical notions found in Innis' writing.

Knowledge Gap Theory

Scholars like Tichenor, Donohue, and Olien in 1986 developed a theory of society in which mass media and the use of media messages play a central role. This model focuses on the role played by news media in cities and towns of various sizes. These areas are conceptualized as subsystems within larger state and regional social systems. The team began by empirically establishing that news media systematically inform some segments of the population, specifically persons in higher socioeconomic groups, better than the media inform others theory.

Overtime, the differences between the better informed and the less informed segments tend to grow – the knowledge gap between them gets larger and larger. This team conducted numerous surveys for 25 years to develop and support its. But just how should these knowledge gaps be interpreted? Do they pose long term problems of subsystems or for the overall system? Could knowledge gaps actually be functional in some way? If we rely on classical democratic libertarian theory to answer these questions, knowledge gaps are troubling; we can be concerned that the people who are less well informed will not be able to act as responsible citizens. If they act at all they will do so, based on ignorance. On the other hand, if we use elite pluralism theory to speculate about the consequences of knowledge gaps, we are less concerned, after all there is a strong correlation between political ignorance and political apathy.

If the less informed don't vote, then they can't upset the system, as long as there is an active, informed minority of societal leaders, the overall system should function smoothly- problems should be resolved by this elite based on their superior knowledge

These scholars recognized that documenting the existence of knowledge gaps was only the first step in assessing media's role in social systems at various levels.

In the next phase of their research, the team explored the long-term implications of knowledge gaps for the operation of local communities by studying the role played by news media when communities confront social conflicts. Would news media enable communities to effectively resolve these conflicts or would the conflicts be exacerbated (intensified)? What would happen to knowledge gaps?

The researcher studied conflicts in 19 different cities that were debating environmental pollution, wilderness logging, and the construction of high voltage power lines; these conflicts could have been

resolved in several ways. If the elite pluralism perspective was accurate, news media would only inform a politically active minority and this group would control the conflict and resolve it. If classical democratic libertarian theory was accurate, news media would inform everyone and the conflict would be resolved through negotiation and public debate. In fact, neither of these older theories was very useful in predicting what happened, a more complicated, systems theory – based perspective proved useful in interpreting the empirical findings.

In nearly every case, conflicts were initiated by external agents, local leaders, including newspaper publisher, were often co-opted by powerful regional businesses such as electrical power companies or big manufactures , the research team found that as conflicts escalated, more and more groups were activated from all segments of a community, even normally apolitical or apathetic people were eventually drawn into as escalating conflict, news coverage of conflict-related issues increased, but within same communities, most of the information came from outside media local media either avoided reporting about conflicts or severely limited their reports, little useful information was provided, as time passed, ordinarily uninformed individuals made better use of outside news media related to the conflict.

Thus, the knowledge gap tended to narrow between those population segments that were initially well informed about these issues and those that were ignorant.

MEDIA SYSTEM DEPENDENCY THEORY

The knowledge gap findings are somewhat reassuring; they imply that all segments of community will become informed when:

(a) The relevancy of that knowledge has been increased by an escalating social conflict and (b) increased news coverage from either local or outside sources provides better access to information, closing the knowledge gap should increase the likelihood that a solution will be negotiated based on the best information available, these findings also indicate that news media can help close these gaps, as systems, communities appear to be capable of adapting the roles played by parts (population segments) so that the system as a whole changes its stability to adapt to the environment.

But these optimistic conclusions were tempered by other findings. The researchers also found evidence that within the larger social system, the smaller, rural communities were dominated by large urban centers. Most conflicts were not resolved through local negotiations. Rather, solutions were imposed by outside elites who found ways to control local negotiations and direct them toward conclusion favored by urban elites.

And in their more recent research, the team found that outside media, most notably major urban newspapers have ‘pulled back’ from their long-standing mission of serving a regional or statewide audience. This might be making it harder for less knowledgeable people in small communities to get access to the information they need to effectively address conflicts in their communities. So the knowledge gap research demonstrates the potential for using systems theory to guide and interpret empirical research.

Summary

The researchers demonstrated that knowledge gaps decreased when conflicts escalated, this should have facilitated informed, democratic, and decision-making at local levels.

But this didn’t happen because elite’s from the larger social system intervene.

These findings imply that social conflict might be functional within smaller social system because it can improve the flow and use of information.

But the escalation of conflict also motivates elites from the larger social system to intervene, and they ultimately control the conflict by imposing a solution.

Media System Dependency Theory

In its simplest terms, media system dependency theory assumes that the more a person depends on having his or her needs gratified by media use, the more important will be the role that media play in the person’s life and therefore the more influence those media will have on that person.

From a macroscopic, societal perspective, if more and more people become dependent on media, then the overall influence of media will rise and media’s role in society will become more central, thus, there should be a direct relationship between the amount of overall dependency and the degree of media influence or centrality at any given pointing time.

Melvin DeFleur and Sandra Ball-Rokeach have provided a fuller explanation in several assertions in 1975.

First, the “basis of media influence lays in the relationship between the larger social system, the media’s role in that system, and audience relationships to the media.”

Effects occur, not because all-powerful media or omnipotent sources will that occurrence, but because the media operate in a given way in a given social system to meet given audience wants and needs.

Second, “*the degree of audience dependence on media information is the key variable in understanding when and why media messages alter audience beliefs, feelings, or behavior.*” the ultimate occurrence

and shape of media effects rests with the audience members and is related to how necessary a given medium or media message is to them, the uses people make of media determine their influence.

Third, in our industrial society, we are becoming increasingly dependent on the media:

1. to understand the social world
2. to act meaningfully and effectively in society
3. for fantasy and escape

As our world becomes more complex we not only need the media to a greater degree to help us make sense, to help us understand what our best responses might be and to help us relax and cope, but also we ultimately come to know that world largely through those media. Note the emphasis on sense making in this assertion. As we use media to make sense of the social world, we permit media to shape our expectations.

Finally, fourth, *“the greater the need and consequently the stronger the dependency...the greater the likelihood” that the media and their messages will have an effect.* Not everyone will be equally influenced by media. Those who have greater needs and thus greater dependency on media will be most influenced.

These assertions can be illustrated by an example in involving use during a crisis situation. Think of your own media use the last time you found yourself in a natural crisis, in other words, in a time of change or conflict (earthquake, tornado, hurricane or serious rain or tsunami). You probably spent more time watching television news than you did watching comedy shows. But what if electricity fails, the number and centrality of television information delivery functions instantly would be reduced to a level below that of your radio. And as the crisis deepens your dependence would increase. And so also might your attentiveness and willingness to respond as directed by that medium and its messages.

DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach developed a model to show how the media dependency process works for individual audience members in relation to media. The model tries to show a logical connection between overt media content and the motives for attention. Here media user chooses a particular content based on a pre-existing dependency (need)

A non-selective, casual member of the audience may be caught up and have

- either motives activated or
- may leave the process

At step two the more intense the need or dependency experienced, the more cognitive arousal (attention) and affective arousal (liking and disliking) the greater the arousal, the greater involvement in information processing. The greater the involvement, thereafter the probability of cognitive, affective and behavioral effects from the media.

This model relates only to effects from particular media contents on individuals.

Merits

1. It avoids the claim of media effects as having all or none. It says that any given effect is dependent on a more or less unique set of circumstances which hold in a given situation
2. It directs attention to structural conditions historical circumstances rather than individual variables.
3. It takes into account that effects on audience may also lead to effects on the social system and other media system itself.

Summary

So media dependency theory assumes that individuals in modern society become increasingly dependent upon mass media as a source of news and information. The level of dependency relationship and the strength of the media effects hinge on the stability or instability of the society and the degree of societal importance placed upon mass media as an information source. Relationships and interactions among

media, society and audience are demonstrated, along with media effects. News in time of crisis serves as a good example of dependency theory in action.

USES AND GRATIFICATIONS THEORY

The uses and gratification perspectives takes the view of the media consumer. It examines how people use the media and the gratification they seek and receive from their media behaviors. Uses and gratification researchers assume that audience members are aware of and can articulate their reasons for consuming various media content.

History

The uses and gratifications approach has its roots in the 1940s when researchers became interested in why people engaged in various forms of media behaviour, such as radio listening or newspaper reading. These early studies were primarily descriptive, seeking to classify the responses of audience members into meaningful categories. For example, Herzog in 1944 identified three types of gratification associated with listening to radio soap, operas: emotional release, wishful thinking and obtaining advice. Berelson in 1949 took advantage of a New York news paper strike to ask people why they read the paper, the responses fell into five major categories: reading for information, reading for social prestige, reading for escape, reading as a tool for daily living, and reading for a social context. These early studies had little theoretical coherence; in fact many were inspired by the practical needs of newspaper publishers and radio broadcasters to know the motivations of their audience in order to serve them more efficiently.

The next step in the development of this research began during the late 1950s and continued during into the 1960s, in this phase the emphasis was on identifying and operationalizing the many social and psychological variables that were presumed to be the antecedents of different patterns of consumption and gratification.

Wilbur Schramm in 1954 asked the question, ‘what determines which offerings of mass communication will be selected by a given individual?’ the answer he offered is called the fraction of selection, and it looks like:

Expectation of reward

Effort Required

His point was that people weigh the level of reward they expect from medium or message against how much effort they must make to secure that reward.

His argument is we all make decisions about which content we choose based on our expectations of having some need met, even if that decision is to not make a choice. (When you have to decide between two comedy programs and the you don’t have a remote control, you might satisfy yourself with one, as all that you wanted was some change and background music)

For example, Schramm, Lyle, and Parker in 1961, in their extensive study found that children’s use of television was influenced by individual mental ability and relationship with parents and peers, among other things.

Gerson in 1966 concluded that race was important in predicting how adolescent use the media. These studies and many more conducted during this period reflected *a shift from the traditional effects model of mass media research to the functional perspective.*

According to Windhal 1981, a primary difference between the traditional effects approach and the uses and gratifications approach is that a media effect researcher usually examines mass communication from the perspective of the communicator, whereas the uses and gratification researcher uses the audience members as a point of departure. Windhal argues for a synthesis of the two approaches, believing that it is more beneficial to emphasize their similarities than to stress differences. He has coined the term *consequences* of media content and use to categorize observations that are partly results of content used in it and partly results of content mediated by use.

Windhal's perspective links the earlier uses and gratifications approach to the third phase in its development. Recently, uses and gratification research has become more conceptual and theoretical as investigators have offered data to explain the connections between audience motives, media gratifications and outcomes.

Rubin in 1985 notes several typologies of mass media motives and functions have been formulated to conceptualize the seeking of gratifications as variables that intervene before media effects.

He found a significant positive correlation between the viewing of television to learn something and the perceived reality of television content: those who used television as a learning device thought television content was more true to life.

These and many other recent studies have revealed that a variety of audience gratifications are related to a wide range of media effects. The new uses and effects studies have bridged the gap between the traditional effects approach and the uses and gratifications perspective.

In the last few years the uses and gratifications approach has been used to explore the impact of new technologies on the audience. For example Lin in 1993 posited that audience activity planning viewing, discussing content, remembering the program would be an important intervening variable in the gratification-seeking process because of the viewing options opened up by cable, VCRs and remote controls. Her results supported her hypothesis; viewers who were most active had a greater expectation of gratification and also reported obtaining greater satisfaction. They found that broadcast TV was the most diverse in serving the cognitive gratifications of the audience, whereas cable TV and the VCR were the most effective in meeting needs related to feeling and emotional states.

The advent of internet has spurred a renaissance in uses and gratifications research as investigators describe internet motivations and compare and contrast their results with the uses and gratifications from traditional media.

To illustrate researchers found that internet use among their sample of 8 to 13 years olds was most related to an enjoyment of using computers and finding information

Other researchers have found the World Wide Web as a functional alternative to TV and discovered that many of the motivations for using web were similar to those for viewing television. Finally researcher came up with a set of five motivations for using the internet: utility, passing time, seeking information, convenience, and entertainment.

So what the uses and gratifications approach really does then is, provide a framework for understanding when and how different media consumers become more or less active and what the consequences of the increased or decreased involvement might be.

The classic articulation of this framework remains that offered by Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch in 1974. These theorists described five elements of basic assumptions of the uses and gratification model.

1. The audience is active and its media use is a goal oriented. We have some confusion about exactly what is meant by active, by clearly, various audience members bring various levels of activity to their consumption.
2. The initiative in linking his or her need gratification to a specific media choice rests with the audience member.
3. The media compete with other sources for need satisfaction. Simply put, the media and their audiences do not exist in a vacuum. They are part of the larger society and obviously the relationship between media and audiences is influenced by events in that environment. If all your needs for information and entertainment are being satisfied by conversations with your friends, then you are much less likely to turn on a television set or go online for news. When students enter college, their media use tends to sharply decline. In this new environment, media don't compete as well.

4. People are self-aware enough of their own media use, interests and motives to be able to provide researchers with an accurate picture of that use.
5. Value a judgment of the audience's linking its needs to specific media or content should be suspended. For example, the harmful effects of consumer product advertising on our culture.

This synopsis of the perspective's basic assumptions raises several questions, what factors affect an audience member's level of activeness or her or his awareness of media use? What other things in the environment influence the creation or maintenance of the audience's needs and their judgments of which media use will best meet those needs.

The three scholars Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch in 1974 argued the social situations that people find themselves in can be involved in the generation of media – related needs in any of the following ways.

1. Social situations can produce tensions and conflicts, leading to pressure for their easement through media consumption.(party)
2. Social situations can create an awareness of problems that demand attention information about which might be sought in the media. (fashion)
3. Social situations can deprive real-life opportunities to satisfy certain needs. And the media can serve as substitutes or supplements. (show-biz channels or fashion channels)
4. Social situations often elicit specific values, and their affirmation and reinforcement can be facilitated by the consumption of related media materials.(keep on watching the fashion channels to get reinforcement)
5. Social situations can provide realms of expectations of familiarity with media, which must be met to sustain membership in specific social groups. (to be in the in group one should know the latest)

Methods

Uses and gratifications researchers have relied heavily on the survey method to collect their data , as a first step, researchers have conducted focus groups or have asked respondents to write essays about their reasons for media consumption.

This technique assumes that the audience is aware of its reasons and can report them when asked. The method also assumes that and active audience with goal-directed media behavior; expectations for media use that are produced from individual predisposition, social interaction, and environmental factors; and media selection initiated by the individual.

RECEPTION THEORY

At the same time that audience-centered theory was attracting the attention of U.S. empirical social researcher, British cultural studies researchers were developing a different but compatible perspective on audience activity.

Birmingham University Centre for Contemporary cultural studies headed by Stuart Hall is most prominent in this regard. Hall argued that the researchers should direct their attention toward:

- Analysis of that social and political context in which content is produced (encoding)
- The consumption of media content

The essence of the reception approach is to locate the attribution and construction of meaning (derived from media) with the receiver. Media messages are always open and polysemic (having multiple meanings) and are interpreted according to the context and culture of receivers.

Stuart Hall emphasized the stages of transformation through which any media message passes on the way from its origins to its reception and interpretation. It drew from the basic principles of structuralism and semiology which presumed that any meaningful message is constructed from sign which can have **denotative and connotative meanings**, depending on the choices made by an encoder.

He accepted some of the elements of semiology on these two grounds:

First, communicators choose to encode messages.

For ideological and institutional communicators choose to encode messages for ideological and institutional purposes and manipulate language and media for those ends (media messages are given a **preferred reading**, or what might now be **called spin**).

Secondly, receivers (decoders) are not obliged to accept messages as sent but can and do resist ideological influence by applying *variant or oppositional* readings, according to their own experience and outlook

In laying out his views about decoding, Hall proposed an approach to audience research that has come to be known as reception studies or *reception analysis*.

A central feature of this approach is its focus on how various types of audience members make sense of the specific forms of content.

Hall drew on Semiotic theory to argue that any media content can be regarded as a text that is made up of signs, these signs are structured; that is, they are related to one another in specific ways to make sense of a text- to read a text- you have to be able to interpret the signs and their structure. Example when you read a sentence you must not only decode the individual words but you also need to interpret the over-all structure of the sentence to make sense of the sentence as a whole.

Hall argued that most texts can be read in several ways but there is generally a preferred or dominant reading that the producers of a message intend when they create a message, as a critical theorist, Hall assumed that most popular media content will have **a preferred reading that reinforces the status quo**.

But in addition to this dominant reading, it is possible for audience members to make **alternate** interpretations.

They might disagree with or misinterpret some aspects of a message and come up with an alternative or negotiated meaning that differs from the preferred reading in important ways, and...

In some cases audiences might develop interpretations that are in direct opposition to a dominant reading. In that case, they are said to engage in *oppositional decoding*.

So media reception research emphasized the study of audiences as sets of people with unique, though often shared, experiences as in charge of their own lives.

The main features of the culturalist tradition of audience research can be summarized as follows:-

The media text has to be read through the perceptions of its audience, which constructs meanings and pleasures from the media texts offered.

The very process of media use as a set of practices and the way in which it unfolds are the central object of interest.

Audiences for particular genres often comprise “interpretative communities” which share much the same experience, forms of discourse and frameworks for making sense of media.

Audiences are never passive, nor are their members all equal, since some will be more experienced, or more active fans than others.

Methods have to be qualitative and deep, often ethnographic, taking account of content, act of reception and context together.

FRAMING AND FRAME ANALYSIS

While critical cultural researchers were developing reception analysis during the 1980s, a new approach to audience research was taking shape in the US. This approach had its roots in theories, Symbolic interaction and social construction of reality. Both these theories argue that the expectations we form about other people, our social world, and ourselves are one of the basic elements in social life.

All these concepts emphasize that:

1. Our expectations are based on previous experience of some kind, whether derived from a media message or direct personal experience- that is , we aren't born with them
2. Can be quite resistant to change even when they are contradicted by readily available factual information
3. Are often associated with and can arouse strong emotions such as hate, fear, or love
4. May be free of our conscious control over them, especially when strong emotions are aroused that interfere with our ability to make sense of new information available in the situation.

Developing and using expectations is a normal and routine part of everyday life. As human beings we have cognitive skills that allow us to continually scan our environment, make sense of it, and then act on these interpretations. Our inability to adequately understand these skills in no way prevents them from operating, but it does impede our ability to make sense of our own sense making. Sociologist Erving Goffman in 1974 introduced a theory of frame analysis to provide a systematic account of how we use expectations to make sense of every day life situations and the people in them. He argued that we constantly and often radically change the way we define or typify situations, actions, and other people as we move through time and space.

In other words, our experience of the world is constantly shifting from one world to another without noticing that a boundary has been crossed. According to him we don't operate with a limited or fixed set of experience daily existence as having order and meaning. According to Goffman we are always monitoring the social environment for social cue that signal when we are to make a change. He used the term frame to refer to a specific set of expectations that are used to make sense of a social situation at a given point of time.

Frames are like the typication schemes described by BERger and Lukman but they differ in certain important respects. When we move from one set of frames to another, we *downshift or upshift*. We reframe situations so that we experience them as being more or less serious.

For example if you were pretending to fight with a friend but one of you got hurt and the fight turned serious. You both downshifted. Suddenly, you no longer pulled punches but tried to make them inflict as much pain as possible, suddenly, you no longer pulled punches but tried to make them inflict as much pain as possible.

Many of the fighting skills learned during play were used but with a different frame-, you were trying to hurt your friend. Perhaps as you both tired, one of you told a joke and cued the other that you wanted to up shift and go back to a more playful frame.

According to Goffman, daily life involves countless shifts in frames and these shifts are negotiated by using social cues. Some cues are conventional and universal, others are very subtle and used by small groups. E.g. during the course of conversation, many up shift sand downshifts can occur.

So where do media come into this theory? In gender advertisements in 1979 he presented an insightful argument concerning the influence that advertising could have on our perception of members of the opposite sex. He argued that advertising that uses the sex appeal o women to attract the attention of men inadvertently teaches us social cues that could have serious consequences. He showed how women are presented a less serious and more playful than men in numerous advertisements. Women smile, wear

colorful clothing and in various ways signal deference and willingness to take direction from men. But could these representations of women be teaching social cues that have unexpected consequences?

We might be learning more than product definitions from these ads. We could be learning a vast array of social cues, some blatant but others quite subtle. Once learned, these cues could be used in daily life to make sense of members of the opposite sex and to impose frames on them, their action, and the situations in which we encounter them.

Goffman's theory provides an intriguing way of assessing how media can elaborate and reinforce a dominant public culture, advertisers did not create sex-role stereotypes, but Goffman argues that they have homogenized how women are publicly depicted.

Ads both teach and reinforce cues. The specific message that each of us gets from the ads will be very different, but their long-term consequence may be similar- dominant myths about women are retold and reinforced.

Information Processing Theory

For more than two decades, cognitive psychologists have been developing an innovative perspective on the way that individuals routinely cope with sensory information: information-processing theory. The theory is actually a large set of quite diverse and disparate ideas about coping mechanism and strategies and provides yet another way to study media audience activity. Researchers work to understand how people take in, process and store various information that are provided by media.

Closely related to systems theory information processing theory uses mechanistic analogies to describe and interpret how each of us takes in and makes sense of the flood of information that we receive from our senses every moment of each day.

This theory describes individuals as complex computers with certain built-in information handling capacities and strategies. Each day we are exposed to vast quantities of sensory information; we filter this information so that only a small fraction of it ever reaches our conscious mind; then only a tiny fraction of this information is singled out for attention and processing; and then we finally store a tiny fraction of this in long-term memory.

According to some cognitive theorists, we are not so much information handlers as information avoiders- we have developed sophisticated mechanisms for screening out irrelevant or useless information. Thus, very little of what goes on around us ever reaches our consciousness, and most of this is soon forgotten.

Examples while reading a book if you are good in focusing attention on reading, then you are routinely screening out most of these external and internal stimuli in favor of the printed words on the page. But just how many of these words are you actually noticing? How many will you remember ten minutes, or ten hours, or ten days.

Example viewing television is actually a rather complex task that uses very different information processing skills than does reading a textbook; you are exposed to rapidly changing images and sounds. You must sort these out and pay attention to those that will be most useful to you in achieving whatever purpose you have for your viewing.

But if this task is so complex, why does television seem to be such an easy medium to use?

Because the task of routinely making sense of television appears to be similar to the task of routinely making sense of everyday experience, and making sense of that experience is easy.

Information processing theory offers fresh insight into our routine handling of information. It challenges some basic assumptions about the way we take in and use sensory data. For example, we assume that we would be better off if we could take in more information and remember it better. However, more isn't always better in the case of information. Some people actually experience severe problems because they



have trouble routinely screening out irrelevant environmental stimuli. Such people are overly sensitive to meaningless cues such as background noise or light shifts.

Another useful insight from information processing theory is recognition of the limitations of consciousness awareness. Our culture places high value on conscious thought processes, and we tend to be skeptical or suspicious of the utility of mental processes that are only indirectly or not at all subject to conscious control.

We associate consciousness with rationality - the ability to make wise decisions based on careful evaluation of all available, relevant information. We associate unconscious mental processes with things like uncontrolled emotion, wild intuition, or even mental illness. We sometimes devalue the achievements of athletes because their greatest acts are typically performed without conscious thought. No wonder we are reluctant to acknowledge our great dependency on unconscious mental processes. According to information processing theory, we can never be conscious of more than a very small fraction of the information present in our environment, as we absorb large quantities of information, we are consciously aware of small fraction. We have to depend on routinized processing of information and must normally limit conscious efforts to only those instances when intervention is crucial. 

Information Processing Model

According to information processing theory, what we need is an ability to routinely scan our environment, taking in, identifying and routinely structuring the most useful stimuli and screening out irrelevant stimuli.

Then we must be able to process the structured stimuli that we take in, hold these structures in memory long enough so that we can sort out the most useful ones, put the useful ones into the right categories, and then store them in long-term memory.

Described in this way the process seems simple, but cognitive psychologists are finding that the process is quite complex with many different information screening skills and various processing stages.

Processing television news

Information processing theory has been used most extensively in mass communication research to guide and interpret research about how people decode and learn from television news broadcasts. Numerous studies have been conducted and useful reviews of this literature are now available. Remarkably similar findings have been gained from very different types of research, including mass audience surveys and small-scale laboratory experiments.

Though most of us view television as an easy medium to understand and one that can make us eyewitnesses to important events, television is actually a difficult medium to use. Frequently, information is presented on television in ways that inhibit rather than facilitate learning. Part of the problem rests with audience members. Most of us view television primarily as an entertainment medium.

We have developed many disinformation processing skills and strategies for watching television that serve us well in making sense of entertainment content but that interfere with effective interpretation and recall of news. We approach the news passively and rely on routine activation of schemas (more or less highly structured sets of categories or patterns; sets of interrelated conceptual categories).

We rarely engage in deep, reflective processing of news content, so most of it is quickly forgotten. Even when we do make a more conscious effort to learn from news, we often lack the schemas necessary to make in-depth interpretations of content or to store these interpretations in long-term memory.

Similarly, news broadcasters also bear part of the blame. The average newscast is often so hard to make sense of that it can be said to be biased against understanding. The typical broadcast contains too many stories, each of which tries to condense too much information into little time.

Stories are individually packaged segments that are typically composed of complex combinations of visuals and verbal content-all too often the visual information is so powerful that it overwhelms the verbal. Viewers are left with striking mental images but little contextual information. Often pictures are used that totally irrelevant to stories.

Likewise, stories with complex structure and terminology or powerful but irrelevant visual images were poorly understood. Human -interest stories with simple but dramatic storylines were well understood.

Summing up

The theories suggest that our use of media is actually much more complicated than we might like to assume. Our use of media is an infinitely complex process.

How does someone who believes in the concept of an active audience but who is also working to understand mass communication do so using contemporary audience theories?

Elihu Katz and Jay Blumler two of the creators of the original 1974 volume, *The Uses of Mass Communication* gave the following advices:

1. Rejection of audience imperialism. Our stress on audience activity should not be equated with a serene faith in the full or easy realization of audience autonomy.
2. Social roles constrain audience needs , opportunities and choices...the individual is part of a social structure and his or her choices are less free and less random than a vulgar gratifications would presume.
3. Texts are also to some extent constraining. In our zeal to deny a one to one relationship between media content and audience motivation, we have sometimes appeared to slip into the less warranted claim that almost any type of content may serve any type of function.
4. Their fourth assertion is that these three propositions inject into the uses and gratifications paradigm an essential element of realism, - without reducing ...our normative commitment to the would be active audience member and to the provision of media materials designed to enable him or her to realize his or her purposes.

TRENDS IN MASS COMMUNICATION I

As we discuss the theories do you know that by the year 2008 there will be 2,200-communication satellite circling the globe providing instantaneous worldwide telephone service, direct home and car reception of audio and video, and incredibly fast and expanded access to the internet and World Wide Web.

Our age is no different from the age when mass society theory, limited effects perspective or social cognitive theory and uses and gratifications theories were produced.

The introduction of new technologies, the interest in and efforts at controlling them and a concern that their use not conflict with democratic and pluralistic ideals gave rise to different mass communication theories. These theories initiated and shaped emerging ideas about the role of media in the lives of individuals and in the cultures and societies they occupy.

Contemporary mass communication theory must evolve – and in involving – to accommodate these rapidly moving and powerful alterations in the audience/ mass media relationship.

As we have discussed that mass communication, research has undergone a profound transformation in the past 40 years.

Some changes were the result of the rise of critical and cultural theories and challenge they posed to the limited effects paradigm, but change also came from within the limited effects paradigm as researchers moved away from a narrow focus on short-term, direct effects and developed active audience theories of mass communication. Still more change was initiated by researchers who argued that mass communication theory to create comprehensive theories of communication.

We will first consider communication science, a perspective that unites researchers who prefer to base their inquiry on quantitative, empirical research methods.

Then we will discuss recent critical and cultural studies scholarship and see that these scholars also are moving toward consensus. Recently Klaus Bruhn Jensen, a Danish scholar, has offered social semiotics theory as a unifying framework for mass communication research.

We will also discuss **the four major issues** which are of special concern to the communication scholars in building new communication theories.

1. The most obvious of the concern is the ongoing revolution in communications technology, one that shows no signs of weakening. This revolution is producing technologies and applications that fill every niche on the communications spectrum, ranging from the intrapersonal communication we carry on with ourselves to powerful forms of mass communication capable of simultaneously sending messages to every person on earth.

Each of these new media is likely to play different roles in society and in our personal lives. Some will quickly disappear and others will succeed – often for unexpected reasons.

Some older media will persist, but their role will be greatly altered or diminished. This is what happened to radio after the rise of television in the 1960s. Others will disappear entirely. Media researchers will struggle to keep pace with this rapidly changing media landscape.

2. The second concern/ force is closely related to the first. Since the end of the cold war, a new world order has been emerging. One to the primary attributes of this world order is globalization. More and more social organizations are being developed that have worldwide scope.

These include multinational government organizations such as the EU, multi-national corporations and world wide nongovernmental organizations.

Powerful communication technologies, such as satellites and the Internet enable these organizations to easily span space and time. As the power of these organizations expand, the power of individual nation states tends to contract.

3. The third force is less visible, but some futurists argue it is likely to be even more powerful than these first two in reshaping the social world. This third force involves a transition from modern forms of social order to postmodern forms.

French theorists have initiated many intriguing notions about significant changes in social organizations since the thirteenth century.

4. Fourthly rapidly expanding scientific insight into the powers and the limitations of the human organism will necessitate constant reformulation of media theories, in a variety of fields ranging from the biological sciences to cognitive psychology, research is likely to produce powerful insights into the way we deal with and act on information from both the physical and social environment.

5. Finally we will the discuss on media literacy , seen by many as not only necessitated by the rapid expansion and diffusion of new communication technologies, but also as one logical outcome of all these years of ferment in the field of mass communication.

Communication Science

By the 1980s some empirical media researchers concluded that the constant ferment of competing ideas and research methods was impeding the development of a coherent approach to communications research. One result of this awareness was the creation of communication science, a perspective on research that integrates all research approaches that are rounded in quantitative, empirical behavioral research methods.

Communication science effectively unites limited effects research with active audience and interpersonal communication research.

Communication science was initially defined in late 1980s by researchers who wanted to eliminate unfruitful fragmentation and provide defining core philosophy for the scientific study of all forms of communication.

This is an effort to be inclusive rather than exclusive, to reject many of the outdated assumptions of the limited effects paradigm while retaining its strong empirical focus- to unify under a single banner empirical researchers working in area of communication.

Initially the two scholars Charles Berger and Steven Chaffee understood communication science.

These scholars offered a restructure of the scientific study of communication based not on the usual narrow interest in specific aspects of the communication process as applied in individual circumstances or settings but, rather, based on the four levels at which communication phenomena occur:

1. Intrapersonal communication, the analysis of communication that occurs within the individual.
2. Interpersonal, the analysis of communication relationships between two or small groups of people.
3. Network or organizational: the analysis of large groups of people and the contexts of their continuing relationships
4. Macroscopic societal: the analysis of the communication characteristics and activities of large social systems.

Intrapersonal Communication

Is within yourself:

Feelings, attitudes hope for the future, internal problem solving, self esteem, evaluation of self or others... basically it is talking to yourself.

Intrapersonal communication is language use or thought internal to the communicator. Intrapersonal communication is the active internal involvement of the individual in symbolic processing of messages

The individual becomes his or her own sender and receiver, providing feedback to him or herself in an ongoing internal process. It can be useful to envision intrapersonal communication occurring in the mind of the individual in a model which contains a sender, receiver, and feedback loop.

Although successful communication is generally defined as being between two or more individuals, issues concerning the useful nature of communicating with oneself and problems concerning communication with non-sentient entities such as computers have made some argue that this definition is too narrow.

In *Communication: The Social Matrix of Psychiatry*, Jurgen Ruesch and Gregory Bateson argue that intrapersonal communication is indeed a special case of interpersonal communication, as "dialogue is the foundation for all discourse."

Intrapersonal communication can encompass:

1. Day-dreaming
2. Nocturnal dreaming, including and especially lucid dreaming
3. Speaking aloud (talking to oneself)
4. Reading aloud, repeating what one hears; the additional activities of speaking and hearing (in the third case of hearing again) what one thinks, reads or hears may increase concentration and retention. This is considered normal, and the extent to which it occurs varies from person to person. The time when there should be concern is when talking to oneself occurs outside of socially acceptable situations.
5. Writing (by hand, or with a wordprocessor, etc.) one's thoughts or observations: the additional activities, on top of thinking, of writing and reading back may again increase self-understanding ("How do I know what I mean until I see what I say?") and concentration. It aids ordering one's thoughts; in addition it produces a record that can be used later again. Copying text to aid memorizing also falls in this category.
6. Making gestures while thinking: the additional activity, on top of thinking, of body motions, may again increase concentration, assist in problem solving, and assist memory.
7. Sense-making) e.g. interpreting maps, texts, signs, and symbols. Interpreting non-verbal communication e.g. gestures, eye contact.
8. Communication between body parts; e.g. "My stomach is telling me it's time for lunch."

Interpersonal Communication

Interpersonal communication is a process of using language and nonverbal cues to send and receive messages between individuals that intended to arouse particular kinds of meanings.

Basic elements in Interpersonal Communication

The process involves four basic elements.

- Sender; person who sends information
- Receiver; person who receives the information sent.
- Message; content of information sent by sender
- Feedback; response from receiver

Communication Channels

Communication channels are the medium chosen to convey the message from sender to receiver.

Communication channels can be categorized into two main categories:

- Direct channels
- Indirect channels

Direct channels

Direct channels are those that are obvious, and can be easily recognized by the receiver.

They are also under direct control of the sender. In this category are the verbal and non-verbal channels of communication.

Verbal communication channels are those that use words in some manner, such as written communication or spoken communication.

Non-verbal communication channels are those that do not require words, such as certain overt facial expressions, controllable body movements (such as that made by a traffic police to control traffic at an intersection), color (red for danger, green means go etc), sound (sirens, alarms etc.).

Indirect channels

Indirect channels are those channels that are usually recognized subliminally or subconsciously by the receiver, and not under direct control of the sender...

This includes kinesics or body language that reflects the inner emotions and motivations rather than the actual delivered message.

It also includes such vague terms as "gut feeling", "hunches" or "premonitions".

TRENDS IN MASS COMMUNICATION II**Four Principles of Interpersonal Communication**

These principles underlie the workings in real life of interpersonal communication. They are basic to communication. We can't ignore them

Interpersonal communication is inescapable

We can't not communicate. The very attempt not to communicate communicates something. Through not only words, but through tone of voice and through gesture, posture, facial expression, etc., we constantly communicate to those around us.

Through these channels, we constantly receive communication from others.

Even when you sleep, you communicate. Remember a basic principle of communication in general: people are not mind readers. Another way to put this is: people judge you by your behavior, not your intent.

Interpersonal communication is irreversible

You can't really take back something once it has been said. The effect must inevitably remain. Despite the instructions from a judge to a jury to "disregard that last statement the witness made," the lawyer knows that it can't help but make an impression on the jury. A Russian proverb says, "Once a word goes out of your mouth, you can never swallow it again."

Interpersonal communication is complicated

No form of communication is simple. Because of the number of variables involved, even simple requests are extremely complex...

Theorists note that whenever we communicate there are really at least six "people" involved:

- 1) Who you think you are
- 2) Who you think the other person is
- 3) Who you think the other person thinks you are
- 4) Who the other person thinks /she is
- 5) Who the other person thinks you are
- 6) Who the other person thinks you think s/he is

We don't actually swap ideas; we swap symbols that stand for ideas. This also complicates communication.

Words (symbols) do not have inherent meaning; we simply use them in certain ways, and no two people use the same word exactly alike.

Communication Maxims

Osmo Wiio gives us some communication maxims similar to Murphy's Law (Osmo Wiio, *Wiio's Laws--and Some Others* (Espoo, Finland: Welin-Goos, 1978) :

If communication can fail, it will.

If a message can be understood in different ways, it will be understood in just that way which does the most harm.

There is always somebody who knows better than you what you meant by your message.

Communication takes place in a context that mixes interpersonal communication interactions with social clustering.

The more communication there is, the more difficult it is for communication to succeed.

These tongue-in-cheek maxims are not real principles; they simply humorously remind us of the difficulty of accurate communication.

Interpersonal communication is contextual

In other words, communication does not happen in isolation. There is:

Psychological context, which is who you are and what you bring to the interaction.

Your needs, desires, values, personality, etc., all form the psychological context. ("You" here refers to both participants in the interaction.)

Relational context, which concerns your reactions to the other person--the "mix."

Situational context deals with the psycho-social "where" you are communicating.

An interaction that takes place in a classroom will be very different from one that takes place in a bar.

Environmental context deals with the physical "where" you are communicating. Furniture, location, noise level, temperature, season, time of day, all are examples of factors in the environmental context.

Cultural context includes all the learned behaviors and rules that affect the interaction.

If you come from a culture (foreign or within your own country) where it is considered rude to make long, direct eye contact, you will out of politeness avoid eye contact.

If the other person comes from a culture where long, direct eye contact signals trustworthiness, then we have in the cultural context a basis for misunderstanding.

Barriers against Effective Interpersonal Communication

1. Emotions- Sometimes when people communicate an idea or matter across, the receiver can feel how the sender perceives the subject matter. Often messages are interpreted differently for different people in a clear manner.

Extreme emotions are most likely to hinder effective communication because the idea or message maybe misinterpreted.

It's always best to avoid responding or reacting to the subject matter when you're upset or angry because most of the time, you'll not be able to think.

2. Filtering- This is where the sender manipulates the information that he communicates to the receiver. The purpose of this is because sometimes people would shape and reform the message so that it appears and sounds favorable to the receiver.

Filtering information may mislead the receiver into thinking into something favorable and the let down may be upsetting if it's found out that information has been filtered.

3. Overloaded with Information- Too much information about the same subject matter may be confusing. For example, you have 50 e-mails on the same subject matter; each e-mail contains a little part of the subject matter.

It would be better to have one e-mail from the sender which includes all the information in clear and simple form with only the information you want that you asked for.

Normally, the human brain can only take in so much information to process, overloading it with information will exceed our human processing capacity and the receiver would often misunderstand or not understand at all what the sender is telling them.

4. Defensiveness- Humans tend to refuse for a mutual understanding when they feel that they are being threatened or are put in a position which they are at a disadvantage.

Defensiveness normally consists of attacking what the sender tells you, putting out sarcastic remarks, questioning their motives or being overly judgmental about the subject matter.

5. Cultural Difference- Sometimes our culture may be a huge hindrance for effective interpersonal communication.

When two people with different cultures communicate, they often do not understand each other's cultures and may misunderstand the true meaning of what each other are trying to convey through such a sense.

6. Jargon- Not everyone understands each other's jargon words. Jargon should be avoided when talking to someone who isn't familiar with you personally or within your organization.

Overcoming the Barriers of Effective Interpersonal Communication

1. Simplify Language- By structuring your language to clear simplistic sentences, the receiver would be able to easily understand what the sender is saying. For example, jargon can be used within your organization as it will only use one word rather than a whole sentence to explain what you are trying to communicate across.

2. Constrain Emotions- Hold back emotions whilst discussing a certain sensitive issue. By speaking through a neutral manner, it allows mutual understanding to occur and for both sender and receiver to communicate in a rational manner.

3. Listen actively- Often, when the sender says something, the receiver normally hears but does not listen.

Place yourself in the sender's position and try to understand exactly what they are trying to convey to you. The receiver is trying to understand fully what the sender is trying to say, so putting the receiver in the sender's point of view makes understanding much easier.

GLOBALIZATION AND MEDIA

Barriers against Effective Interpersonal Communication

4. Feedback - Done by the sender, as a word of confirmation by using closed ended questions such as "Did you understand what I just said?" or "Is what I said clear to you?", or using an open ended question to have the receiver summarize the message.

This results in the sender knowing the receiver has fully understood what is being communicated

Types of Interpersonal Communication

This kind of communication is subdivided into dyadic communication, Public speaking, and small-group communication.

Dyadic communication is simply a method of communication that only involves two people such as a telephone conversation or even a set of letters sent to and received from a pen pal. In this communication process, sender can immediately receive and evaluate feedback from the receiver. So that, it allows for more specific tailoring of the message and more personal communication than do many of the other media.

Small-group communication refers to the nature of communication that occurs in groups that are between 2 and 12 individuals.

Since this context involves three or more people, the degree of intimacy, participation and satisfaction tends to be lower than in two person communication.

Small group communication occurs in churches, in social situations, in organizations to name a few. Group dynamics is a well researched field of study and tends to focus on small groups that engage in problem solving and decision making.

Organizational Communication

It is defined as the flow of messages within a net work of interdependent relationships, here we are concerned with not only with the effectiveness of the individual communication but with the role of communication in contributing to or detracting from the effective functioning of the total organization.

Mediated Communication

Communication through mass media.

Their argument is straightforward- all communication can be best understood not in isolation, but two or more of these levels. Because all levels are necessarily interconnected, changes at one level must affect other levels. *Example-violence on tv modeling theory. Individual leanings. How in school it is dealt.*

Other scholars Pingree, Wiemann and Hawkins suggested a communication science based on two distinct stages in communication processes:

The first, *antecedents of communication*, would involve the study of “situations, personality traits, orientations, abilities and so on that lead to communication behavior,” resulting in ‘theories about selection and control mechanisms, and the norms and schemas that bring them into play.’

The second stage, *consequences of communication*, would involve the study of the results or outcomes of communication and result in theories about the necessary characteristics of communication, mechanisms of effect, and strength of effects.

Social Semiotics Theory

At the same time that communication science was being developed critical and cultural studies researchers faced problems partly caused by their success.

Globalization and Media

Since the end of the Cold war a new world order has begun to emerge, it is based on international capitalism and the unrestricted cross border flow of capitalism and information.

This flow is essential to the operation of multinational companies, but it also permits development of many other multinational organizations.

Unlike the previous world order the new order is being imposed through a quite that is widely referred to as globalization.

Examples

IMF- involves the spread of western social institutions.

NGO, food chains

Prominent multi national corporations specialize in communications commodities that they distribute to audiences around the world-CNN, Rupert Murdoch-FOX Michael Eisner –Disney

MTV- think global, act local

Globalization Problems

Promoting of foreign norms and values.

Undermining of the local culture, traditional ethnic movements.

Where individuals will find an identity in a world that seems to be exploding and where national boundaries are becoming irrelevant.

Post Modernism

Challenges from cognitive psychology and biological science

Media Literacy

To make sure that media remains functional (not dysfunctional) use of media is to increase individuals' media use skills. Scholars agree that to have greater control over their environments and lives.

Rubin offered the following definitions of media literacy:

1. The ability to access, analyze evaluate and communicate messages.
2. Understanding cultural economic, political and technological constraints on the creation production and transmission

Media Literacy Movement

1. An awareness of the impact of the media on the individual and society
2. An understanding of the process of mass communication
3. The development of strategies with which to analyze and discuss media messages
4. An awareness of media content as a text that provides insight into our contemporary culture and ourselves
5. The cultivation of an enhanced enjoyment, understanding and appreciation of media content

So we can say that:

1. Media literacy is a continuum not a category. It is not a categorical condition like being a high school graduate
2. Media literacy needs to be developed as we reach higher levels of maturation intellectually, emotionally and morally we are able to perceive more in media messages... maturation raises our potential, but we must actively develop our skills and knowledge structures in order to deliver on that potential.

Why study mass communication

It is the major source of acquiring about the world knowledge -a cognitive approach a mental reality about the world based on our experience with the media.

This mental attitude become the basis for all sorts of attitudes and behavior and has numerous effects on our lives.

Media is also a place where many affairs of public life are played out both nationally and internationally. The conduct of democratic or undemocratic politics, significant social issues are addressed.

Media is also a place where changing culture and values of societies and groups are constructed, stored and most visibly expressed.

Primary key to fame and celebrity status - Media has become the reality against which the real world is compared. The media view of the world has become more real to many people than the real world itself. Media are the single largest focus of leisure-time activity and means of entertainment. They help organize and interrelate the rest of leisure.

As a result, a major and expanding industry providing employment and wide range of political economic benefits.

That is why mass media is of wide interest and is subject to so much scrutiny and regulation as well as theorizing.

That is why we need to consider theories that deal primarily with the ways individual access and process media content and the ways with which mass media sources influence those individuals.

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That is why we need to consider theories that deal primarily with the ways individual access and process media content and the ways with which mass media sources influence those individuals.

Are there some essential public services that media should provide even if no immediate profits can be earned?

Should media become involved in identifying and solving social problems?

Is it necessary or advisable for media to serve as watchdogs and protect consumers against business fraud and corrupt bureaucrats?

What should we expect media to do for us in times of crisis?

REVISION

Challenge to limited effects paradigm came from ideas other than social cognitive learning and systems theories. Instead of focusing on specific effects on individuals we can focus instead on changes in culture, on how shared understandings and social norms change.

Instead of trying to locate hundreds of small effects and add them all up. We can ask whether the development of mass media has profound implications for the way we create, share, learn and apply culture.

Now we will trace the emergence of theories that directly address questions about the way media might produce profound changes in social life. These new perspectives argued that media might have the power to intrude into and alter how we make sense of ourselves and our social world.

These theories are quite diverse and offer very different answers to questions about the role of media in social life. But in all these theories, the concept of culture is central.

Cultural theories offer a broad range on interesting ideas about how media can affect culture and also provide many different views concerning the long-term consequences of the cultural changes affected by media.

Two Ways Used By Cultural Theorists

Now we will discuss the two widely used ways used by cultural theorists to differentiate the various theories of media.

Microscopic Theories

There are *microscopic, interpretive theories that focus on how individuals and social groups use media to create and foster forms of culture that structure everyday life.*

Macroscopic, Structural Theories

And there are macroscopic, structural theories that focus on how social elites use their economic power to gain control over and exploit to propagate hegemonic culture as a means of maintaining their **dominant position in social order; they are called political economy theories because they place priority on understanding how economic power provides a basis for ideological and political power.**

Differences between Microscopic and Macroscopic Theories

Microscopic cultural studies researchers prefer to understand what is going on in the world immediately around them.

They are intrigued by the mundane, the seemingly trivial, and the routine.

Macroscopic Researcher

Whereas macroscopic researcher are troubled by the narrow focus of microscopic theory. These researchers demand answers to larger questions.

How do media affect the way politics is conducted, the way that a national economy operates or the **delivery of vital social services?** 

Critical Theories

Some cultural theories and political economy theories are also referred to as critical theories because they openly espouse certain values and use these values to evaluate and criticize the status quo. However political economy theories are inherently critical but some cultural studies theories are not.

Those who develop critical theories seek to initiate social change that will implement their values. A critical theory raises questions and provides alternate ways of interpreting the social role mass media.

E.g., some critical theorists argue that media in general sustain the status quo. Then some critical theorists identify constraints on media practitioners that limit their ability to challenge established authority.

Mass media are criticized for aggravating or preventing problems from being identified or addressed and solved.

A common theme in critical of media is that content production is so constrained that it inevitably reinforces the status quo and undermines useful efforts for constructive social change

Mediation of Social Relations

Before we proceed we needed to discuss the role mass communication in a society -the mediation of social relations.

Mediation involves several different processes. It refers to the **Relying of second** – hand or third party version of events and conditions which we cannot directly observe for ourselves.

The media have been variously perceived as:

1. A window on events and experience, which extends our vision, enabling us to see for ourselves what is going on, without interference from others.
2. A mirror of events in society and the world, implying a faithful reflection, although the angle and direction of the mirror are decided by others, and we are less free to see what we want.
3. A filter or gatekeeper, acting to select parts of experience for special attention and closing off other views voices, whether deliberately or not.
4. A signpost, guide or interpreter, pointing the way and making sense of what is otherwise puzzling or fragmentary.
5. A forum or platform for the presentation of information and ideas to an audience, often with possibilities for response and feedback.
6. A screen or barrier, indicating the possibility that media might cut us off from reality by providing a false view of the world, thorough either escapist fantasy or propaganda.

These propositions give rise to following sub-questions:

1. Who controls the media and in whose interest?
2. Whose version of the world (social reality) is presented?
3. How effective are the media in achieving chosen ends?
4. Do mass media promote more or less equality in society?

In discussions of media power, two models are usually opposed to each other-

Dominant media

Pluralist media

Model of Dominant Media

This model see media subservient to other institutions, which are themselves interrelated.

Media organizations, in view are likely to be owned or controlled by a small of powerful interests and to be similar in type and purpose. The disseminate a limited and undifferentiated view of the world shaped by the perspectives of ruling interests.

Audiences are constrained or conditioned to accept the view of the world offered, with little critical response.

Pluralist Model

The pluralist model is, in nearly every respect, the opposite. It holds that there is no dominant elite, and change and democratic control are both possible.

Differentiated audiences are seen to initiate demand and are able to resist persuasion and react to what media offer.

The pluralist view is an idealized version of what liberalism and the free market will lead to.

Centrifugal tendencies

It includes the notions of change, freedom, diversity and fragmentation.

Centripetal tendencies

It includes the notion of order, control, unity and cohesion.

Four different theoretical positions relating to social integration**Centripetal Effect**

The positive version of the centripetal effect stresses the media as integrative and unifying (essentially the functionalist view).

The negative version represents this effect as one of homogenization and manipulative control (critical theory)

Centrifugal Effect

The positive version of centrifugalism stresses modernization, freedom and mobility as the effects to be expected from media (individualism)

While the negative version centrifugalism points to isolation, Alienation loss of values and vulnerability (dysfunctional view of change as social disorder).

Marxism

Karl Marx developed his theory in the latter part of the 19th century. For Marx social change was explained by the struggle between competing and antagonistic forces in society that he called-following the work of another German philosopher, George Hegel, on the historical development of ideas- the *dialectic process*.

This struggle was between the ‘haves’ and ‘have nots’ who Marx differentiated in terms of their possession of economic power.

He argued that the hierarchal class system was at the root of all social problems. The power of the bourgeoisie is exercised according to the material exploitation of the working classes through extracting their surplus value and making excess profit. He blamed ruthless, robber baron capitalists for exacerbating social problems because they maximized personal profits by exploiting workers. The workers would rise against capitalists and demand an end to exploitation.

Important principles used in Marxism**Materialism**

So For Marxists, materialism refers to a conception of history and the way society organizes itself. He suggests that beneath the superficial randomness of things there is a kind of inner logic at work. Everything is shaped, ultimately, by the economic system of a society, which in subtle ways affects the ideas that individuals have, ideas that are *instrumental* in determining the kinds of arrangements people will make with one another, the institutions they will establish and so on.

Economic Determination

Everything in life is determined by capital. The flow of money affects our relations with other persons, with nature and with the world.

Our thoughts and goals are the products of property structures. Every cultural activity (culture in its widest sense) is reduced to a direct or indirect expression of some preceding and controlling economic content

Men find themselves born in a process independent of their will, they cannot control it, they can seek only to understand it and guide their actions accordingly.

The base and the superstructure

Marx's deterministic economic conception divides the society in two layers or levels: base and superstructure.

Base

The first, upon which everything grows, is composed by the material production, money, objects, the relations of production and the stage of development of productive forces.

Superstructure

The overt and tangible world, plus the economic relations that capital generates.

What Marx has described as the 'base' represents the economic system found in a given society. This economic system, or mode of production, influences, in profound and complicated ways, the superstructure, or institutions and values, of a given society.

It means that how ideas are transmitted to human beings- through the institutions, philosophical system, religious organizations and arts found in a given society at a given time- that is, through the superstructure.

So superstructures are the institutions like

Legal system

Philosophy

Religion

Ideas (educational)

Arts (media)

Culture

False Consciousness and Ideology

The ruling class according to this theory propagates an ideology that justifies its status and makes it difficult for ordinary people to recognize. This notion that the masses of people are being manipulated and exploited by the ruling class is one of the central arguments of modern Marxist cultural analysis.

According to Marxist approach the mass media and popular culture are centrally important in the spread of false consciousness, in leading people to believe that 'whatever is, is right'.

Alienation

The term alienation suggests separation and distance; it contains within it the word alien, a stranger in a society who has no connections with other, no ties, or liens of any sort.

According to Marx, capitalism may be able to produce goods and materialist abundance for large numbers of people but it necessarily generates alienation, and all classes suffer from this, whether they recognize it or not

There is a link between alienation and consciousness. People who live in a state of alienation suffer from 'false consciousness that takes the form of the ideology that dominates their thinking.'

Besides this, alienation may be said to unconscious, in that people do not recognize that they are in fact alienated. One reason for this is that alienation is so all –pervasive that it is invisible and hard to take hold of.

Thus people become separated or estranged from their work, from friends, from themselves and from life. A person's work, which is central to identity and sense of self, becomes separated from him or her and ends up actually as a destructive force.

Role of mass media in alienation

Mass media plays a crucial role. They provide momentary gratifications for the alienated spirit, they distract the alienated individual from his or her misery and with the institution of advertising, and they stimulate desire, leading people to work harder and harder.

Advertising acts as the chief means of motivation people to work hard.

Consumer Society

As we have discussed advertising is an essential institution in advanced capitalist societies because it is necessary to motivate people to work hard so they can accumulate money, which they can use to buy things.

But in addition people must be driven to consume, must be made crazy to consume, for it is consumption that maintains the economic system.

One thing that advertising does is divert people's attention from social and political concerns and steer that attention toward selfish and private concerns.

The power of the advertising industry to use the appearance of products as a means of stimulating desire for them is now a worldwide phenomenon and have intervened in the imaginations of people through their cultures.

And so people have the illusion that they make their own decisions about what to purchase and what to do, but according to Haug, these decisions are made for them to a remarkable degree.

Neo Marxism

Contemporary incarnation of Marxist theory focusing attention on superstructure. Most British cultural studies theories can be labeled neo Marxist. They deviate from classic Marxist theory in at least one important respect- they focus concern on the super-structure issues of ideology and culture rather than other base.

Hegemony

So Hegemony refers to a loosely interrelated set of ruling ideas permeating a society but in such a way as to make the established order of power and values appear natural, taken –for-granted and common-sensical.

A ruling ideology is not imposed but appears to exist by virtue of an unquestioned consensus. Hegemony tends to define unacceptable opposition to the status quo as dissident and deviant.

What exactly is the meaning of "hegemony"?

"...Dominant groups in society, including fundamentally but not exclusively the ruling class, maintain their dominance by securing the 'spontaneous consent' of subordinate groups, including the working class, through the negotiated construction of a political and ideological consensus which incorporates both dominant and dominated groups." (Strinati, 1995: 165)

Gramscianism on Communications Matters

From a "Gramscian" perspective, the mass media have to be interpreted as an instrument to spread and reinforce the dominant hegemony... although they could be used by those who want to spread counter-hegemonic ideas too.

If these assumptions are correct, we can conclude that the media are the instruments to express the dominant ideology as an integral part of the cultural environment

The works carried out by the mass media can be seen, then not merely as carriers of ideology that manipulate and indoctrinate people with certain views. The media, as unwitting, instruments of hegemonic domination, have a much broader and deeper influence- they shape people's very ideas of themselves and the world, they shape peoples world views.

Frankfurt School and Critical Theory

The term critical theory serves to this long and diverse tradition which owes its origin to the work of group of post 1933 scholars from the Marxist school of Applied social research in Frankfurt.

The most important members of the group were Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno but other including Herbert Marcuse and Walter Benjamin played an important role.

The school was engaged in a critique of the **enlightenment**.

It thought that the promise of the enlightenment, the belief in the scientific and rational progress and the extension of human freedom, had turned into a progress and the extension of human freedom, had turned into a nightmare the use of science and rationality to stamp out human freedom.

The school had been established originally to examine the apparent failure of revolutionary social change as predicted by **Marx**, and in explanation of the failure they looked to the capacity of the superstructure (especially ideas and ideology represented in the mass media) to subvert historical forces of economic changes also the promise of the historical forces of economic change (and also the promise of the enlightenment).

The universal and commercialized mass culture was seen as one important means by which this success for monopoly capital had been achieved.

The affluence and consumerism generated by the economies of capitalist societies, and the levels of ideological control possessed by their culture industries, have ensured that the working class has been thoroughly incorporated into the system.

False Needs

The concept of false needs is identified particularly with the work of Marcuse. It is based upon the assumption that people have true or real needs to be creative, independent and autonomous, in control of their won destinies, fully participating members of meaningful and democratic collectivities for themselves.

The cultivation of the false needs is bound up with the role of culture industry. It is so effective that the working class is no longer likely to pose a threat to the stability and continuity of capitalism.

The media and culture industry as a whole were deeply implicated in this critique. The school contained a sharp and pessimistic attack on mass culture, for its uniformity, worship of technique, Monotony, uniformity and repetitiveness escapism and production of false needs, its reduction of individuals to customers and the removal of all ideological choice.

Political Economy Theory

It directs research attention to the empirical analysis of the structure of ownership and control of media and to the way media market forces operate.

Three economic processes that have increased the reach of media corporations

Three economic processes that have increased the reach of media corporations are:

- Internationalization
- Integration
- Diversification

Internationalization

Corporations are ceasing to be simply national in their operations and are becoming global. This trend of internationalization was noted by Murdock and Golding who consider it another aspect of how concentration contributes to consolidation the necessary commercial constraints on cultural production In every part of the global media industries the dominance of a few corporations is document.

Integration

Contemporary statistics show that fewer and fewer large companies increasingly own what we see, hear and read.

Integration takes two forms:

Vertical and horizontal

Vertical integration

Vertical integration refers to the process by which one owner acquires all aspects of production and distribution of a single type of media product.

Horizontal integration

Horizontal integration is the process by which one company buys different kinds of media, concentrating ownership across different kinds of media.

Diversification

However, cross-media ownership control by non-media companies, the integration of media companies and the internationalization of ownership have widened and deepened media concentration to an unprecedented degree.

Two approaches analyzing the relationship between ownership and control

Murdock in 1980 identifies two approaches in Marxist thought to analyzing the relationship between ownership and control – what he labels as

Instrumental: direct intervention

Structural: economic structures shape the activities of media owners

Instrumental: direct intervention

Sometimes the impact of the views and prejudices of those who own and control the capitalist media is immediate and is direct by the constant and every day interventions.

Structural: economic structures shape the activities of media owners

Analysis is not centered on the activities and interests of individual owners but on the constraints and limitations placed on owners, managers and workers by nature of the capitalist economy.

Economic structures shape the activities of media owners, controllers and workers and pressures under which they work.

Agenda Setting Theory

Agenda setting as laid out by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw is ‘*agenda-setting is the process whereby the news media lead the public in assigning relative importance to various public issues*’

Spiral of Silence

Its originator is Elizabeth Noelle-Neumann. She argued that her perspective involves a return to the concept of powerful mass media.

Because of people’s fear of isolation or separation from those around them, they end to keep their attitudes to themselves when they think they are in the minority.

So she identified three characteristics of the news media that produce this scarcity of perspective:

Ubiquity:

The media are virtually everywhere as sources of information

Cumulation:

The various news media tend to repeat stories and perspectives across their different individual programs or edition, across the different media themselves and across time.

Consonance:

The congruence or similarity of values held by news people influences the content they produce.

Marshall McLuhan: the medium is the message and message

Because he argued that technology inevitably causes specific changes in how people think, in how society is structured, and the forms of culture that are created.

He coined several phrases and terms that have become part of the common vocabulary we use to talk about media and society.

He suggested the term *Global village* to refer to the new form of social organization that would inevitably emerge as instantaneous, electronic media tied the entire world into one great social, political and cultural system.

He proclaimed media to be the extensions of man and argued that media quite literally extend sight, hearing, and touch through time and space.

Electronic media would open up new vistas for average people and enable us to be everywhere, instantaneously.

Among the most popular of McLuhan's ideas was his conception of hot and cool media.

He argued that during the 1960s the United States was emerging from an era dominated by hot print media, in the future, the new, cool medium of television would prevail.

According to him, the television is cool because it presents us with vague, shadowy images

To make sense of these electronic images, people must work hard to fill in missing sensory information; they must literally participate in creating fully formed images for themselves,

Print on the other hand, is hot. It supplies us with all the information we need to make sense of things. It does the work for us, offering predigested descriptions of the social world.

Knowledge Gap Theory

The team began by empirically establishing that news media systematically inform some segments of the population, specifically persons in higher socioeconomic groups, better than the media inform others theory.

Overtime, the differences between the better informed and the less informed segments tend to grow – the knowledge gap between them gets larger and larger

Uses and Gratifications Theory

The uses and gratification perspectives takes the view of the media consumer. It examines how people use the media and the gratification (satisfaction, pleasure) they seek and receive from their media behaviors.

Uses and gratification researchers assume that audience members are aware of and can articulate their reasons for consuming various media content.