



**SRINIVASAN COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCE**  
**(Affiliated to Bharathidasan University, Trichy)**  
**PERAMBALUR-621212**



**DEPARTMENT OF JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION**

**Course: B.A - Journalism**

**Year: II**

**Semester: IV**

**Course material on : Mas Media and Society**

**Course code : Allied Course – II (AC)**

**Sub Code (BDU given) : 16AACJM2**

**Prepared by : S.Vinothini, M.A., M.Phil.,B.Ed.,**  
**Assistant Professor/ Journalism**  
**and Mass Communication**

**Month & Year: March 2020**

**ALLIED COURSE – II (AC)**  
**MASS MEDIA AND SOCIETY**

**Unit I:** Mass Media – Introduction – Print Media, Electronic media, History and Development – Functions – Usage of mass media by the people.

**Unit II:** Journals – Classification – Function (Educating, Informing, Entertaining) – Relationship between journals and the people - participation of readers and viewers in the media - kinds of journals- Small Journals (SITRITHALGAL), Women journals, Children journals - Youth journals – Net journals.

**Unit III:** Radio – Development of AIR – Radio in Tamil Nadu – Functions – Types of programmes for children, women, youth society, Farmers, labourers all – Development of FM in Tamil (including kodai FM) programmes – private provides (Sun, Hallo etc.,) Listenership survey

**Unit IV:** Television and Films – Television and National Development – Television and Higher Education – Television programmes Genres – Influence of Cinema and Television – Cable Television – DTH – Satellite Television – Types of programmes in Television cinema in Tamil – Documentary and short Films – Indian Newsreel - Film Division – Film Censorship.

**Unit V:** Media and Society – Effects of journals on Society – Effects of Media on Education, Indian family, children and younger Generation – Violence in the Media and Violence in Society – Impact of Radio, TV and Cinema on society – change of culture by Media.

**Prescribed Book:**

Mass Communication in India - Keval J Kumar, JAICO Publishing House, Mumbai

**Reference Books:**

1. Mass Communication and Society – David Clark & William Blanken Burg

You and Media, New York, Canfield 1973

2. Towards a Sociology of Communication – Denis Mcquail Collieg Macmillan London 1975

# MASS MEDIA AND SOCIETY

## UNIT-I

### **Institutions introduction**

For any individual or group to survive it is important that certain human functions are kept in mind. Like the function of controlling the process of reproduction. For the society to exist it's important that the members of this society itself keep supplying societal members with a nurturing environment. And this is possible only through reproduction.

And these reproduced members exist as a part of the institution of the family which again is a part of the larger institution which is the society. Other functions include law and order because these are what guide the families to live in an orderly fashion.

To make sure that the members of the family and society can support theirs and their family's financial requirements, the economic institution is created. This depends on the education of the person for which education is supplied through the educational institution. In this way, many institutions exist with the aim of providing the specific details required to live.

### **Meaning of Institutions:**

Institutions are established ways of doing things. It refers to those rules and regulations which in their abstractness focus on the practicality of them by maintaining social interaction and regulated behavior pattern. It involves discipline and curbing the human emotions and behavior. Recognized usage and procedures are known as institutions of Sociology.

These established rules help create unity among the members which takes the institution forward.

There are norms set for and by every society. Even though these norms differ from society to society, the members of a particular society stick to their norms. Only then can the institution prosper. If each one will focus only on themselves then the essence of the institution will be lost and there could be a chaos. Say the parents need a steady support without which they cannot look after their children because the institution of a family does not teach one that it is their responsibility to look after their children.

### **Characteristics of an Institution:**

A cluster of social usage:

A cultural system exists and all follow the same cultural practices and traditions.

The relative degree of permanence:

The beliefs are laid out and tried and tested over time. If they sustain then they become the fundamental beliefs of the institution and gain a permanent recognition.

Well-known defined Objectives:

The Objectives resonate with the cultural norms. It is kept in mind that the people are made to understand the difference between the Objectives and the functions.

Cultural Objects of Utilitarian Value.

Institutions are Transmitters of Social Heritage.

They are resistant to social changes due to the rigidity of beliefs.

## **Types of Institutions:**

### Crescive Institution

These include matters of property, religion, and marriage and are unconsciously originated.

### Enacted Institutions

These include business and credit Institutions that are related to profits and economy and hence are consciously established.

### Basic Institutions

These are simply those that are regarded as important to maintain social order in the society. The Family institutions, Political Institutions, Educational Institutions, Religious Institutions etc.

### Subsidiary Institutions

These Institutions are a bit complex in the way that they aren't necessarily so much in order to maintain social order. Like recreational activities and clubs come under these Institutions.

Further Institutions can also be classified into Operative Institution and Relative Institution.

Operative is those whose function is to organize patterns which are necessary to attain any objective. E.g. institution of Industrialism.

Relative Institutions are those which aren't a part of the regulatory institution themselves but help in controlling the custom and other types of behavior.

### **Functions of Institutions:**

They simplify the actions and work of the individual.

They provide a means to control the society and people who constitute it.

Every individual is assigned a role depending on which he can achieve and regulate his status.

They help to maintain the order in the society.

They act as stimulants by giving the required freedom.

Create harmony and unity amongst the members of the society.

Association and institution both differ for it depends on the kind of roles and positions the members acquire in the setup.

Association and institution both differ for it depends on the kind of roles and positions the members acquire in the setup.

### **Basic Concepts**

Association: Meaning, definition, Characteristics and Overview

An association can be called a group of people who come together to achieve any particular purpose or goal and that too for a limited period of time. An association is different from a normal group or team in the way that it sticks to formal space.

Where a group is just a collection of people who do not have any common purpose a team is a group with purpose but not necessarily working in formal space. It also differs from the community, for in a community people keep adding spontaneously unlike in association where all men work under the supervision of a person.

It's concrete structure:

Because the people come together to fulfill one common aim, it keeps them united and thus gives the concreteness for no one backs out

before the accomplishment of the task or work in hand. This teaches the members how to take up different roles according to their capabilities and work responsibly.

It is established:

Like a community, the association does not grow in size spontaneously rather the specified number of people are only decided upon and finalized who then work in progress within the frame of time. Also, they all work under a head whereas in the community each person is independent of their ideas. The association sets their rules and regulations, usually, the head may give the outline of these rules in consensus with other experienced members of the association. The remaining members or subordinates then work around these rules to satisfy their motive.

Thus they have to follow a 'code of conduct.' However, these rules are flexible and can go under required changes if the creator of the association desires to in case he finds that the desired result is not being obtained.

The aim is determined:

In order to maintain the identity of their association, they always set aim. Basically, they find solutions to problems. For example, a dramatic association's aim naturally will be to perform plays and dramas on stage.

4. Followers are the members:

No association's head can work with disobedient members. There's a code of conduct to be followed which shouldn't be breached. Only those who stick to the guidelines are made a part in the pursuit of the aim for they manage to achieve the trust of their superior as employees. And they are given the recognition as the members.

Anyone who disowns the obligations as a member usually causes a loss of his membership by being expelled. It is important to support the association's laws and not criticize them. Members should know to cooperate with one another otherwise there's no point of keeping such a member of the group.

Membership is voluntary:

No one can be forced to participate in the working of the association. A person does it only because he wants to hence it's a voluntary decision. This is because an association is not like any other state's or society's essential organization where a person becomes liable to work for it. Neither do they feel responsible to participate after knowing that its based on common ideology and natural ground?

Because of being a voluntary action, every person is answerable for his own deeds and results. Also, the person is free to back out if he thinks that the purpose for which he joined is not being seriously worked for.

For example, a sports association is there which is not working looking after the players' needs and a considerate person joins it with a purpose to help the players. But finding that he's not been given the liberty to execute plans in a benefit for the players, he might back out for he realizes he can work more freely without being associated with it. The person can also freely change his political party or an organization if he wants to.

Mass Media- Agency of Socialization



## **Socialization**

Socialization is a process by which culture is transmitted to the younger generation and men learn the rules and practices of social groups to which they belong. Every society builds an institutional framework within which socialization of the child takes place. Mass Media has seemed to be an effective agency of socialization. This is true to some extent because now children are spending more time in front of the television than mingling with their parents and other family members

Mass Media:

Mass media—newspapers, magazines, comic books, radio, video games, movies, and especially television—present a very different form of socialization than any other, because they offer no opportunity for interaction.

The mass media are the means for delivering impersonal communications directed to a vast audience. The term media comes from Latin meaning, “middle,” suggesting that the media’s function is to connect people. Television shows, movies, popular music, magazines, Web sites, and other aspects of the mass media influence our political views; our tastes in popular culture; our views of women, people of color, and gays; and many other beliefs and practices.

The mass media include many forms of communication—such as books, magazines, radio, television, and movies—that reach large numbers of people without personal contact between senders and receivers. In an ongoing controversy, the mass media are often blamed for youth violence and many other of our society’s ills. The average child sees thousands of acts of violence on television and in the movies before reaching young adulthood. Since mass media has

enormous effects on our attitudes and behavior, notably in regards to aggression, it is an important contributor to the socialization process.

The mass media of communication, particularly television, play an important role in the process of socialization. The mass media of communication transmit information's and messages which influence the personality of an individual to a great extent. In the last few decades, children have been dramatically socialized by one source in particular: television. Studies have found that children spend more time watching TV than they spend in school. Television is an influence on children from a very young age and affects their cognitive and social development.

Children also learn about current themes and issues, both from newscasts and dramas—issues such as kidnapping, the homeless, and the spread of AIDS. Most of these issues and themes are not happy ones, and many are very frightening, especially when children watch programs that are intended for adults.

Research also suggests that young children obtain considerable political and social information from television.

Winn (1977) suggests that the experience of watching television itself is limiting. When people watch television, no matter what the program, they are simply watchers and are not having any other experience.

In addition to this, communication media has an important effect in encouraging individuals to support the existing norms and values or oppose or change them. They are the instrument of social power. They influence us with their messages.

In media studies, media psychology, communication theory, and sociology, media influence and media effects are topics relating to mass media and media culture's effects on individual or an audience's thoughts, attitudes, and behavior. Whether it is written, televised, or spoken, mass media reaches a large audience. Mass media is known as being one of the most significant forces in modern culture.[citation needed]

The influence of mass media has an effect on many aspects of human life, which can include voting a certain way, individual views and beliefs, or skewing a person's knowledge of a specific topic due to being provided false information. Media is an ever-changing field and is being critiqued now more than ever by the general public.[citation needed] The overall influence of mass media has increased drastically over the years, and will continue to do so as the media itself improves.[1] Media influence is the actual force exerted by a media message, resulting in either a change or reinforcement in audience or individual beliefs. Media effects are measurable effects that result from media influence or a media message. Whether a media message has an effect on any of its audience members is contingent on many factors, including audience demographics and psychological characteristics. These effects can be positive or negative, abrupt or gradual, short-term or long-lasting. Not all effects result in change; some media messages reinforce an existing belief. Researchers examine an audience after media exposure for changes in cognition, belief systems, and attitudes, as well as emotional, physiological and behavioral effects.[2]

There are several scholarly definitions of media. Bryant and Zillmann defined media effects as "the social, cultural, and psychological impact of communicating via the mass media".[3] Perse stated that media effects researchers study "how to control, enhance, or mitigate the impact of the mass media on individuals and society".[4] Lang

stated media effects researchers study "what types of content, in what type of medium, affect which people, in what situations".[5]

### **Powerful media effects phase**

During the early 20th century, developing mass media technologies, such as radio and film, were credited with an almost irresistible power to mold an audience's beliefs, cognition, and behaviors according to the communicators' will.[6][7] The basic assumption of strong media effects theory was that audiences were passive and homogeneous. This assumption was not based on empirical evidence but instead on assumptions of human nature. There were two main explanations for this perception of mass media effects. First, mass broadcasting technologies were acquiring a widespread audience, even among average households. People were astonished by the speed of information dissemination, which may have clouded audience perception of any media effects. Secondly, propaganda techniques were implemented during war time by several governments as a powerful tool for uniting their people. This propaganda exemplified strong-effect communication. Early media effects research often focused on the power of this propaganda (e.g., Lasswell, 1927[8]). Combing through the technological and social environment, early media effects theories stated that the mass media were all-powerful.[9]

After entering the 21st century, the rapid development of the Internet and Web 2.0 technology is greatly reforming media use patterns. Media effects studies also are more diverse and specified. After conducting a meta-analysis on micro-level media effects theories, Valkenburg, Peter & Walther (2016) identified five main features:[1]

Selectivity of media use

There are two propositions of this selectivity paradigm: (1) among the constellation of messages potentially attracting their attention, people only go to a limited portion of messages; (2) people are only influenced by those messages they select (Klapper 1960,[45] Rubin 2009[46]). Researchers had noticed the selectivity of media use decades ago and considered it as a key factor limiting media effects[citation needed]. Later, two theoretical perspectives, uses-and-gratifications (Katz et al. 1973,[47] Rubin 2009[46]) and selective exposure theory (Knobloch-Westerwick 2015,[48] Zillmann & Bryant 1985[49]), were developed based on this assumption and aimed to pinpoint the psychological and social factors guiding and filtering an audience's media selection. Generally, these theories put the media user in the center of the media effect process, and conceptualize media use as a mediator between antecedents and consequences of media effects. In other words, users (with intention or not) develop their own media use effects.

#### Media properties as predictors

The inherent properties of media themselves are considered as predictors in media effects.

**Modality:** Media formats have been evolving ever since the very beginning. Whether the modality is text, auditory, visual, or audiovisual is assumed to be affecting the selection and cognition of the users when they are engaging in media use. Known for his aphorism of "The medium is the message," Marshall McLuhan (1964) is one of the best-known scholars who believe it is the modality rather than the content of media that is affecting individuals and society.[50]

**Content properties:** The majority of media effects studies still focus on the impact of content (e.g. violence, fearfulness, type of character, argument strength) on an audience. For example, Bandura's (2009) social cognitive theory postulates that media depictions of rewarded

behavior and attractive media characters enhance the likelihood of media effects.[51]

Structural properties: Besides modality and content, structural properties such as special effects, pace, and visual surprises also play important roles in affecting audiences. By triggering the orienting reflex to media, these properties may initiate selective exposure (Knobloch-Westerwick 2015).[48]

## UNIT-II

### **Media effects are indirect**

After the all-powerful assumption of mass media was disproved by empirical evidence, the indirect path of the media's effect on audiences has been widely accepted. An indirect effect indicates that an independent variable (e.g., media use) affecting the dependent variables (e.g., outcomes of media use) via one or more intervening (mediating) variables. The conceptualization of indirect media effects urges attention to be paid to those intervening variables to better explain how and why media effects occur. Additionally, examining indirect effects can lead to a less biased estimation of effects sizes in empirical research (Holbert & Stephenson 2003).[52] In a model including mediating and moderating variables, it is the combination of direct and indirect effects that makes up the total effect of an independent variable on a dependent variable. Thus, "if an indirect effect does not receive proper attention, the relationship between two variables of concern may not be fully considered" (Raykov & Marcoulides 2012)[53]

### **Media effects are conditional**

In correspondence with the statement that media effect is the result of a combination of variables, media effects can also be enhanced or reduced by individual differences and social context diversity. Many media effects theories hypothesize conditional media effects,

including uses-and-gratifications theory (Rubin 2009),[38] reinforcing spiral model (Slater 2007),[54] the conditional model of political communication effects (McLeod et al. 2009),[55] the elaboration likelihood model (Petty & Cacioppo 1986).[56] Take the elaboration likelihood model as an example: the variable of "need for cognition", indicating users' tendency to enjoy effortful information processing, is considered as a moderator of media effects on attitudes.

Media effects are transactional

Many theories assume reciprocal causal relationships between different variables, including characteristics of media users, factors in the environment, and outcomes of media (Bandura 2009).[41]

Transactional theories further support the selectivity paradigm (Feature 1), which assumes that the audience shapes their own media effects by selectively engaging in media use; transactional theories make an effort to explain how and why this occurs. Transactional media effects theories are the most complex among the five features. There are three basic assumptions. First, communication technologies (e.g., radio, television, internet) function as reciprocal mediators between information producers and receivers, who engage in transactions through these technologies (Bauer 1964).[57] Second, the effect of media content is reciprocal between producers and receivers of media content, meaning they influence each other. Producers can be influenced by receivers because they learn from what the audience needs and prefers (Webster 2009).[58] Third, transactions can be distinguished as interpersonal.

However, these features are only limited within micro-level media effects studies, which are mostly focused on short-term, immediate, individual effects.[59]

Political importance of mass media and how mass media influence political decisions      Edit

The images that media create carry the weight of social responsibility and the right side of social value.[clarification needed] Audiences learn their political points of view from reading, listening to political analysis, and evaluation.[clarification needed] The mass media is a powerful guardian of proper political behavior because audiences tend to trust the press, who they believe should inform them about government wrongdoing and provide proper suggestions[vague]. All mass media is politically important because of its potential to reach large audiences. However, the influence of each media source varies depending on its characteristics, ease of access, and the size of the audience reached.[60] Print media, including newspapers, articles, and news from internet sources, usually reach readers who are literate at appropriate[definition needed] levels and understand the political environment.[clarification needed] Electronic media, especially television broadcasts, may appear more realistic and lend more credibility to a message than other forms of media, in turn influencing the audience more. Moreover, large segments of the U.S. population have limited reading skills[citation needed] and better understand the physical images, conversations, and interviews between people conveyed in electronic media. They[which?] are especially well suited to attract viewers' attention and arouse their emotions.[citation needed][61][irrelevant citation]

In the era of the Internet, the relationship between organizations and public opinion has been influenced by new media.[clarification needed] New media include online newspapers, blogs, and social media. More people prefer new media over traditional media because of the limitations of traditional media, such as time limitation and space limitation. For people with a cell phone or computer, news can be obtained at any time in any location. As a result, new media has a greater impact on people.[citation needed] Politicians have also noticed new media is a more effective way to convey their message, and have begun to use it to attract supporters. For example, both



Barack Obama and the White House have a Facebook page and a Twitter account. They can easily communicate with the public and gather them together, which can benefit their political activities.[further explanation needed] One study concluded that social media is allowing politicians to be perceived as more authentic, with a key finding showing voters feel politicians are more honest on social media compared to in interviews or on TV shows. This is the case especially among young voters, who predominantly use these type of media.[clarification needed] This opens up a new voter base for politicians to appeal to directly.[62] Public opinion also affects politics through new media. New media provides two-way communication which allows for greater interaction. People can directly send messages to the government and politicians can comment online.[63] If people are dissatisfied with the government, they can express their thoughts through social media and discuss them with other people online. Many comments of this type gathered together can draw public opinion to focus on the wrongdoings of the government. Since new media has a large user base, political activity is followed by more people than before.[citation needed] New media lets people better supervise government behaviour. Additionally, governments can know public opinion through new media as a reference for decision making. Although new media has both positive and negative effects on politics, it narrows the relationship between the public and politicians. The public is no longer solely a recipient of information. Through new technology, people can give their advice and opinions to the government.[64][better source needed]

The media play an indispensable role in the proper functioning of a democracy. Without mass media, openness and accountability are made much more difficult in contemporary democracies.[clarification needed] The media can inform the public of how effectively the current government or candidates have performed in the past and help hold them accountable. Nevertheless, mass media can also hinder

political transparency. Firstly, the very benefits that new media platforms provide, such as efficiency, ease of access, and wide reach, are often advantageous to those who misuse these platforms for the output of fake and unsubstantiated information. Though new media allows for direct voter-politician interaction and transparency in politics, this potential to subvert information on a wide scale is particularly harmful to the political landscape. According to a 2018 report from Ofcom, 64% of adults got their news from the internet and 44% from social media.[65] With so many people reliant on the internet and social media, manipulation of information and mass spreading of fake news becomes easy, maintaining the power to perpetuate misinformation and alter political agendas in the process.[clarification needed] Features distinct to social media, such as likes, retweets, and shares, can also build an ideological echo chamber with the same piece of fake news recirculating.[66] The anxiety of fake news has surrounded elections as of late[citation needed], in particular the 2016 EU referendum, with a general concern that the leave campaign and Brexit supporters may have been misled by erroneous information regarding the vote. This contention was further fuelled by a whistleblower coming forward in 2018 claiming that political consulting firm Cambridge Analytica "cheated a Brexit result through the misuse of data and subsequent targeted ads", something not unique to this election.[citation needed][67] Politicians and political operatives can simulate transparency through rhetorical and media manipulation. There are three major societal functions that mass media perform to political decisions raised by the political scientist Harold Lasswell: surveillance of the world to report ongoing events, interpretation of the meaning of events, and socialization of individuals into their cultural settings. The mass media regularly present politically crucial information on huge audiences and also represent the reaction of the audience rapidly through the mass media. The government or the political decision-

makers have the chance to have a better understanding of the real reaction from the public to those decisions they have made.

### UNIT –III

Basic Concepts: Social Groups: Meaning, Characteristics, Classification SOCIAL GROUP 1. Social Group is any collection of persons who share common interest and reason for being together. Some groups are formed naturally; others are organised for a particular purpose. 2. A true group exhibits some degree of social cohesion and is more than a simple collection of individuals, such as people waiting at a bus stop, or people waiting in a line.

Characteristics shared by members of a group may include interests, values, representations, ethnic or social background or kinship ties

DEFINITIONS “A group is any collection of human beings who are brought into social relationships with one another .” MacIver and

Page “Whenever two or more individuals come together and influences influences one another another they may be said to

constitute constitute Social Group” Ogburn and Nimkoff “A social group is a number of people who define themselves as members of a group; who expect certain behaviour from members that they do not expect from outsiders and whom others define as belonging to a

group” Robert K. Merton CHARACTERISTICS • Collectivity • Interaction • Mutual Awareness • Reciprocity • We Feeling

Collectivity

1. The basic pre – requisite of a group is the existence of more than one individual . Groups vary in size from two members to several hundred million. 2. These members are aware of the fact that they belong to the same group. Interaction 1. The most important characteristics of a group is the distinctive interaction that occurs among its members. 2. When the patterns patterns of interaction interaction become more involving , we can think of

a group. 3. For e.g. in a class –room, students exchange greetings and share information with each other and they are treated as a group by teachers.

**Mutual Awareness** 1. There is physical and symbolic interaction among the members of a group. They are aware of the existence of other members. 2. Mutual awareness makes them respond and behave in a particular particular ways and thus, influence one another. 3. Each member recognizes that he is a part of the group. Greater importance is given to the group life in comparison with individual life. 4. It indicates that members derive their meaning and significance only in relation to one another.

**Reciprocity** 1. Members are not only aware of one another, but also respond or behave in particular ways. 2. Their relations are reciprocal. 3. They are in a position position to stimulate stimulate each other meaningfully and are in a position to respond meaningfully to any common stimulus. 4. Members are aware of the roles, duties and obligations, as well as the privileges resulting from group membership.

**We - Feeling** 1. We –feeling means that group members have common loyalties. They share some similar values and see as well as set themselves apart from the rest of the world because of their membership in one particular group. 2. In this sense, citizens citizens of a nation, nation, who are united by common political processes and who share a number of similar loyalties, a common history and a sense of common future, are considered a group. 3. Among the members of the group, there is as sense of belongingness which is exhibited through common ideas, values, goals and activities. **Classification of Groups** There is an extraordinarily large number of groups and there is a great

diversity among them. Groups vary in size. The number of groups in every society is countless; It surpasses the number of individuals because each individual belongs to more than one group. Various sociologists have considered different bases for classifying groups.

**Classification by MacIver and Page** According to MacIver and Page, Groups are classified on the basis of: 1. Size 2. Quality of Social Interaction 3. Degree of intimacy 4. Range of group interests 5. Duration of Interests 6. Degree of Organization

**Classification by Sorokin** According to Sorokin, social groups are divided into two major types: Vertical and Horizontal

1. Vertical Vertical groups are large inclusive groups, such as Nations, Religious Organisations, Political Parties etc.
2. Horizontal groups are smaller divisions such as economic classes which give the individual the status and rank in society.

**Classification by Sumner** According to Sumner, social groups are divided into two major types: In Group and Out Group

1. The groups with which the individual identifies himself are his in groups for instance, his family, friends and peers etc.
2. The groups to which the individual does not belong. For instance, other sex, others' families, other Nations etc are Secondary Groups.

**Reference Group** Reference group is the group to which the individual refers in the sense that he identifies himself either consciously or unconsciously with it.

**Herbert Hayman A Reference** Reference group is one to which the individual refers and with which he identifies himself, either consciously or sub consciously. The central aspect of the reference group is psychological identification.

**Sherif A Reference** group that group whose outlook is used by the actor as the frame of reference in the organization of his perceptual field.

**Shibutani Classification by C.H. Cooley**

According to Sumner, social groups are divided into two major types: Primary and Secondary Groups

1. The groups characterized by intimate face – to-face association and cooperation are primary groups. For instance, family, friends etc.
2. On the contrary, secondary groups are less intimate, personal and inclusive. It involves indirect interaction. For instance, one's work place

Characteristics of Primary Group

1. Physical Proximity: The members of a group share close relationship and they have intimate contact with each other.
2. Small in size
3. Stability in nature: Stability promotes closeness.
4. Continuity in relationship: By meeting frequently and by exchanging thoughts, intimacy increases.
5. Common commitments among members
6. Maximum control over group members: Family members control over family affairs.

Importance of Primary Group

1. To develop the personality
2. The efficiency of members increases and persons of the group get help, inspiration and cooperation from one another.
3. Satisfaction of total needs of the individuals: Primary groups help fulfilling physical, emotional, psychological, social and spiritual of the individual.
4. Group members provide love, security, belongingness and companionship to one another.
5. Socialization process initiates within the primary group.

Characteristics of Secondary Group

1. Position of a member depends upon their role and status.
2. Individuality develops in the persons because their relations are based on self-interest.
3. Self-dependence among members.
4. It is large in size.
5. No physical closeness.
6. Formed for some purpose after attaining that it may dismantle.
7. Group cannot exercise control to that extent due to large size.
8. Lacks stability and personal relationships.
9. Has limited acquaintance and responsibility.
10. Members play active and passive roles
11. Possibility of development in individualism
12. It is formed

with definite objective, its function is not spontaneous

Importance of Secondary Groups 1. The needs are satisfied in the group with the advance of technology and associated with social change. 2. This group satisfies the changing needs of society and individual. 3. Rules formed by the group, will increase increase the efficiency of the work. 4. Delegation of the authority, coordination and planning of the activities will be implemented. 5. Secondary groups accommodate large number of members/localities which widens the outlook of groups. Conclusion Therefore we can say that a social group is any number of people who share common goals and/or beliefs.

A true group exhibits some degree of social cohesion and is more than a simple collection collection or aggregate aggregate of individuals, individuals, such as people waiting at a bus stop, or people waiting in a line. Characteristics shared by members of a group may include interests, values, representations, ethnic or social background.

## UNIT - IV

### POPULAR CULTURE AND MEDIA

#### Learning Outcomes

At the end of this chapter you will be able to do the following.

- Define popular culture.
- Identify the three major theoretical views on popular culture:

Functionalist,

Critical and Interpretation.

- Define Interpretive Communities.
- Define Class distinction.
- Evaluate claims for Authenticity.
- Define the 'Sleeper Curve.'
- Define mass media.
- Apply theories of media to US society.
- Describe how perpetual discontent is used by advertisers.
- Describe editorial strategies used by the media.

#### WHAT IS POPULAR CULTURE?

The idea of popular culture is one that is undoubtedly very familiar to you. You probably consume lots of media content in the form of music, tv, movies and the internet. The sociologically fascinating part about this is the ubiquity (that is, it is everywhere) of the mass media and our popular culture. Everywhere you turn you will find ads, billboards, clothing, screens of various sizes to rest your eyes on. But how often have you critically analyzed this omnipresent socializing force in your life? What meanings do people attribute to popular culture? What are the patterns to these interpretations? What effect does this powerful institution serve? These are some of the topics we'll discuss below. But as we do, think about your favorite artist or TV show or movie and see how the concepts we'll go over help explain its appeal to you.



So, to start, we'll need a working definition of popular culture. Popular culture refers to the aesthetic products created and sold by profit-seeking firms operating in the global entertainment market. You'll notice from this definition that culture itself is designed to be sold and consumed for profit globally. This is why summer blockbusters like Battleship or the latest Transformers movie follow predictable formats that often involve clearly defined enemies (good versus evil; human versus alien, etc.), minimal dialogue (for instance Arnold Schwarzenegger as the terminator only utters 147 words in Terminator), and lots of explosions, fights and car chases. Movies designed this way will attract the largest audiences possible because the content has been simplified and translates easier to any language for the overseas markets. One thing to remember when thinking about popular culture: it is ultimately (despite how we as audiences might perceive and consume it) designed to make money. To make the most money possible means to make the sure-fire hit, the blockbuster film with uncontroversial content. The end result of which is a

## 2 | Popular Culture and Media

predictable and standardized formulaic product (this by the way is true of most popular culture content, not just movies).

### HOW WE MAKE SENSE OF POPULAR CULTURE: THEORIES

There are usually two components to the study of any popular culture: the perspective of the culture creators (for profit mass media companies, individual auteurs, filmmakers and artists) and the perspective of the consumers (you and me and other audiences). Sociologists look at this issue from both perspectives and somewhere in between. Do musical notes, lighting schemes and articles of clothing carry meaning embedded within them? Or do we interpret them symbolically and derive meaning from our own experiences, backgrounds and selves?

## The Critical

Theorists (who take their cue from Marx and conflict theory) say that the mass media is an industry and designed to indoctrinate and subordinate the masses (audiences) into passivity and acceptance of the capitalist mode of consumption through our popular culture consumption<sup>2</sup>. Why challenge the normative order when you've got an iPhone to pacify your discontent? Sure unemployment rate is high and those in the middle and lower social classes are still reeling from the great recession but at least we have YouTube and the like. The critical theorists maintain that we literally buy into our own domination through the popular culture we consume which ultimately supports the status quo and capitalism itself.

According to the Functionalists however, the purpose (or, function) of culture is not so sinister and self-serving after all. Instead, they argue that popular culture serves the same purpose culture has always served in societies; it is the social glue that binds together members of that social group and creates feeling of solidarity and group cohesion<sup>3</sup>. In societies characterized by what Durkheim called mechanical solidarity this was easy; the numbers were low, the division of labor was less complex and the focus culturally was already on the society<sup>4</sup>. Where the functionalist's explanation is useful, is in using this same idea to explain the way large, diverse and heterogeneous societies like ours are held together. Think about the way contemporary collective rituals—high school football games, parades, pep rallies—serve to forge emotional bonds of recognition, identity, and trust within communities and social groups<sup>5</sup>. It is through these events that we (re)establish our connections to one another. Sharing the same popular culture allows strangers to communicate in public with one another. Have you ever struck up a conversation

with a stranger simply because they were wearing your favorite team's jersey? Or your favorite band's logo on a t-shirt? Knowing the same logos and sharing the same norms allows us to feel connected to strangers and creating a unifying feeling amongst those who know. This feeling of emotional connectedness to others manifests in what sociologists call emotional energy<sup>6</sup>. Emotional energy is that warm and fuzzy feeling you get when hanging out with good friends or engaging in stimulating conversation with classmates or professors. This is one of the reasons we maintain relationships with

### 3 | P o p u l a r C u l t u r e a n d M e d i a

others, including imagined others who also enjoy the same popular culture we do. Have you ever been to a Dodger, Lakers, or Kings game (any home team sporting event) and felt oddly connected to the total strangers around you? Maybe after the game-winning home run or three point at the buzzer to win the game you stood up, simultaneously with the tens of thousands of others attendees and cheered, highfived and hugged those you (even the complete strangers)? Or have you been there, singing or chanting along with hundreds of other concert attendees to your favorite artist's favorite song? This intense form of emotional energy can only come from large groups of people with a shared focus (the athletes participating, the singer singing, etc.) and it is what Durkheim called Collective Effervescence<sup>7</sup>. Collective effervescence is the reason why we pay money to hear music we already have or attend the game we can watch for free on tv. Like all popular culture, it is inherently social and its meaning comes from others, not embedded magically in the celluloid of movies or the ones and zeroes of an mp3. Finally, the interactionists focus on the way that we use popular culture to make sense of ourselves but also emphasize how others shape our tastes, values and ultimately identity. Have you ever noticed that your friends tend to like similar music, sports and tv shows as you do? Is this simply a coincidence? Interactionists

would argue that it is not and that this is indeed evidence of the interaction between our individual tastes and our peers'. Depending on the popularity of your name when you were born you may find many others with your name or very few. But what influenced your parents when they named you? Chances are those around your parents shaped your parents' attitudes towards particular names and away from others. We call these groups of people that tend to interpret, understand and enjoy popular culture in similar ways as interpretive communities. Therefore, interpretive communities are consumers whose common social identities and cultural backgrounds (whether organized on the basis of nationality, race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion, or age) inform their shared understandings of culture in patterned and predictable ways<sup>8</sup>.

One of the most important ways interpretive communities play out in everyday life is in determining taste and consumption. Taste can be defined as a preference for particular fashion, movies, music etc. Though we think taste, and therefore 'good taste' is universal, it is far from it. There are varied beliefs about what 'good music' is or isn't, what is fashionable and what is not depending on which interpretive community we come from (you'll notice all black clothing in the goth subculture is desirable but not so much in any other interpretive community). What we prefer then determines at least in part, our consumption, how we receive and make sense of popular culture. Do you suppose that what we prefer to consume has anything to do with what is available to us and also what those around us consume? Think about your favorite foods. It is likely that you grew up eating them or your friends eat them. We are heavily influenced by those around us.

Several decades ago the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu analyzed French culture in terms of how important distinction from other social classes.

#### 4 | Popular Culture and Media

sociologists have used this analysis to understand social class and popular culture in America. In the early days of the United States there wasn't much distinction

between people in terms of their social class. Indeed, since the U.S. was so new there wasn't yet an entrenched upper class and there was certainly no aristocracy like in Europe. No, these Americans mostly immigrated with little to their names.

But it wasn't long before entrepreneurs and robber barons began to accumulate wealth they also sought ways to distinguish themselves from the lower social classes. This process is called boundary maintenance and it serves as a method to keep lower classes out and maintain the exclusivity of the upper classes. As would come to define the U.S. in the twentieth century and beyond, the main course this took was purchasing goods and services that those without money could simply not afford. Buying things to show that you can afford to spend money came to be known as conspicuous consumption (status displays that show off one's wealth through the flagrant consumption of goods and services, particularly those considered wasteful or otherwise lacking in obvious utility)

10. Sometimes this meant purchasing a large mansion with a large guest house for the servants even though you had a family of four. Whatever form it took, its purpose was not utilitarian but rather status oriented. Over time, these habits, tastes and values of a certain social class become entrenched as cultural capital. Cultural capital is one's store of knowledge and proficiency with artistic and cultural styles that are valued by society, and confer prestige and honor upon those associated with them. This knowledge is passed down generational and learned through socialization. Each social class develops skills and values that help their members survive in society. But, not all cultural capital is created equal. Are these the

droids you're looking for? If not, you may not share that bit of cultural capital! So, the 'correct' social capital is important because it can literally be transmitted into social advantages and even financial wealth.

The interesting part about conspicuous consumption was that the upper classes took great pains to dissociate themselves from the lower classes while the lower classes tried desperately to emulate the wealthy through their buying patterns. For a brief time, average Americans came close to having similar standards of living as the upper classes. Fueled by television commercials extolling the virtues of consumption of commodity items to indicate status this could only last so long. The upper classes with their considerably larger bank accounts were able to afford things the middle and working classes could not.

The financial sector had the answer to this newfound dilemma in the form of consumer credit and credit cards. Consumerism became our way of life during the twentieth century fueled by easy access to credit so much so that by 2011, consumer debt had ballooned to \$2.43 trillion and the average household carried an average

## 5 | Popular Culture and Media

### THE SEARCH FOR AN AUTHENTIC IDENTITY

By the 1960s the consumer lifestyle was in full swing. For the first time in the nation's history there was material comfort and infrastructure for popular culture to flourish. It came to the point however, for America's youth that middle class life and consumer goods seemed boring and bland and the desire for something new was growing stronger. Since middle class suburban existence seemed vanilla, subcultures offered an alternative; they offered a promise of the real deal. This drive for authenticity paradoxically helped to

further fuel consumerism. For those who didn't like the youth culture on tv or the radio could turn to alternative sources for youth culture that prided themselves on being authentic by their opposition to mainstream banality. So buying the right goods could distinguish one and foster a 'unique' identity. How unique can your store-bought identity ever be? The other notable paradox inherent in the search for authenticity is its elusiveness.

Authenticity can refer to a variety of desirable traits: credibility, originality, sincerity, naturalness, genuineness, innateness, purity, or realness<sup>12</sup>. The thing about authenticity is that it can never be truly authentic, instead must always be performed, staged, fabricated, crafted or otherwise imagined. The performance of authenticity always requires a close conformity to the expectations set by the cultural context in which it is situated. Once again we see others' perceptions as a crucial element in popular culture.

## POPULAR CULTURE IS GOOD FOR YOU?

You've probably hear popular culture disparaged. Maybe you yourself have disparaged it. But is it all bad for us? Clearly popular culture comes in many varieties and flavors and some perhaps more so than others promote values some might find objectionable, but to what degree, if at all, is the popular culture of today making us smarter? According to Steven Johnson, author of *The Sleeper Curve*, popular culture is doing just that<sup>13</sup>. Through increased storyline complexity (more multithreading, several storylines at once that pick up and subside for a time but always return later), decline of flashing arrows (obvious references designed to clue the viewer in to what's about to happen) and video games that provide a mental workout (not unlike a good math problem), the popular culture of today is forcing us to become more intelligent. Of course, this says nothing about the coarse and

sometimes off-putting content of popular culture (which again, is more a matter of taste and which interpretive community you belong to than some objective indicator of goodness), but as sociologists we're not trying to ascertain the essence or 'true meaning' of popular culture but instead how people interpret, understand and make sense of popular culture.

## 6 | Popular Culture and Media

### MASS MEDIA

In other chapters we have discussed the main agents of socialization. As you recall we discussed family, peers, schools and mass media. It is this last agent of socialization that we'll turn our attention to in this chapter. Traditionally the mass media has referred to television, newspapers, magazines, films, and now the internet and mobile devices. Unlike other agents of socialization, mass media's disseminators have a different motivation for influencing and socializing people.

This of course is referring to the fact that commercial media, like all other business and corporations, seek to make profit. This is different than how we usually think of our favorite film studio or television channel or web site and what's more, is that this motive affects their operation and consequently our reception and consumption. Today, the mass media is heavily concentrated in the hands of a few multinational corporations<sup>14</sup>. Let's start with an example of someone you may know (or Jill's equivalent in your social network).

### JILL, A TYPICAL COLLEGE STUDENT?

Jill's clock radio goes off at 6:15am. She listens carefully to the traffic and weather

while she brushes her teeth. She unplugs her cell phone from the charger and text

messages an alert to Leigh who drives her carpool. Sometimes Leigh sleeps in, so Jill



sends a regular wake up text. Jill turns on the desktop computer and takes a quick shower. Once dressed she gets about five minutes to check her e-mails and instant messages from last night.

When Leigh honks the horn Jill grabs her heavy backpack and forwards all her personal unanswered e-mails to her university e-mail. She'll get to these during class. During the 15 minute commute she navigates with the GPS system in the car and pays close attention to the radio traffic and weather, letting Leigh know if there are any problems with breakdowns or accidents.

Jill gets out of Leigh's car on the corner and walks into the coffee shop where she works 5 days a week. Her first duty is to turn on the morning news on both of the shop's big screen TV's. She waves to the manager who's ordering supplies online while he sets up the Latte machine. Jill puts in her earphones, checks her cell phone for any critical texts, turns off her phone and starts stocking the supplies for the big rush of caffeine and carbdeprived customers that flows in and out of the coffee shop for the next 2-3 hours.

Once the stocking is finished, Jill removes one ear piece and listens to a lecture from 2 days ago which was posted to the Web by her professor. During the last hour,

7 | P o p u l a r C u l t u r e a n d M e d i a

while she waits on customers, she jams to her music. When her shift ends, she puts the music away and answers text messages while she walks the 7 blocks to campus.

In her first class Jill sits in the very back row, then she silences her phone and turns on her notebook computer, capturing the campus-wide wireless Internet. She logs in. While the professor lectures she types actively on her computer, stopping occasionally to text on her cell phone. Her professor thinks she's taking copious notes. She's actually chatting live with her friends. The professor mentions a Website he heard about but can't remember the name of it, so Jill Googles it and raises her hand to share the URL with him. He thanks her. She smiles and watches the professor clumsily locate and then display the Website for the entire class to see.

There are 15 notebook computers in this classroom. Only one of the students in front of her is actually taking notes. Two have an ear piece in and are watching YouTube. The rest basically do what Jill is doing. Jill attends her two other classes then heads back to the coffee shop to clean up and get set up for the after work rush.

Leigh eventually picks her up later on the same corner and she finds herself at home at about 6:15 pm. Jill turns on the TV, plugs in her cell phone, glances at the campus newspaper headlines then reads the personals. During dinner she texts, watches her shows, does an Internet assignment, and shops online for a half-priced textbook she

needs for class. She opens her notebook computer because it has a built in web cam

and gets Leigh online to ask her to see if her iPod fell out in the car during their

commute home. Leigh already found it.

Jill e-mails her mother. She'd rather text but her mother prefers e-mail. She finishes

her homework while watching reality TV. At 9:00 pm, Leigh honks the horn and Jill

takes a small purse for her phone and heads out to the car. Leigh and two other

friends are going dancing. Jill gets her iPod back and then texts their guy friends

who said they were going to the same club, but who knows if they'll show up or not.

Jill, Leigh, and their friends make a short video at the club and post it to their

Facebook the next morning.

Does any of this sound familiar to you and your daily routine? Jill's day and use of

technology and media are very common among college students.

Junco and

Mastrodicasa (2007) found that in a survey of over 7,000 college and university

students 9 out of 10 owned a computer and cell phone; three out of four instant

message and already have a Facebook account; six out of ten have a portable music

player; 44% read blogs; and 34% use the Internet as their primary source for

news.<sup>15</sup>

Never in the world's history has there been such a vast availability of media than

today. Online newspapers, satellite TV, cell phones, e-books, satellite radio, Blue Rays, and e-zines are some newer media that people of all ages use to access news and information. We are surrounded by and figuratively swim in mass media every day of our lives.

## 8 | Popular Culture and Media

Mass media are technological modes of communication in society, especially electronic and print media. Media can be found in artifacts from lost civilizations thousands of years ago. Paintings on cave walls, pottery, or even field sculptures of stones all represent some of these ancient forms. Etchings on metal plates or writings on skin or paper scrolls were made at great expense in the past. They were rare then and only a few are still available today.

### THE BIRTH OF MASS MEDIA

In the early 1400s Johannes Gutenberg, who was a goldsmith, invented the world's first mechanical press. The Gutenberg Bible was the first ever mass produced book and its introduction into society marked the beginning of printed media. Gutenberg not only invented a printing press, he facilitated the ability of the masses to learn how to read. He also created a logical cultural process in Western Civilization wherein most of us learned how to read, think, store, and process information. Top

to bottom, left to right, punctuation, spelling, and grammar considerations all became part of the mainstream culture. Many cultures have different rules about how to read and write, yet all follow a logical and linear pattern of reading and writing. This pattern remained in place, unchallenged until the Internet came onto the scene. Over the last 30 years, technology that lead up to the Internet as we know it today changed the rules of reading and gathering information through the media. The Internet currently connects over a billion online users worldwide. Whereas the paper form of media is bound by its physical mass, the Internet form of media is limitless because it is based on light and electricity, both of which travel very fast and facilitate information sharing in nearly limitless volumes and rates of speed. In the 20th century, students had to ask a teacher or other authority figure for answers to questions they had. We had to pay for encyclopaedias and books that could teach and inform us. Today, one need only turn on the computer or handheld device and connect to the Internet. All the information in the world that is on the Internet can be obtained free, instantly, non-linearly, and without the direct involvement of an authority figure. It is fascinating how information for the masses has transformed in such a short amount of time.

The media fulfills a function for society. First, it disseminates information. Not all of that information is created equally. Some media is the focus of tremendous protest and outcry while other forms of media are less conspicuous and controversial. The media also mold and shape public opinion while reporting current events. Because media corporations have rather strict control over the stories they tell, we in the U.S. often don't even find out about many salient international issues. These issues may be crucial to non-U.S. citizens, but are not reported by U.S. media outlets. Often the U.S. is criticized for its narrow world view.

#### 9 | P o p u l a r C u l t u r e a n d M e d i a

When the news media select a story, they monitor the opinions of those who watched it and the indicators which show public interest in it. If it proves to be of enough interest then they will provide more coverage. If not they let it go.

Competition between news shows and outlets makes the coverage of specific news stories relevant from a business rather than an information dissemination point of view.

#### TELEVISION VIEWING

We in the U.S. love media in all its forms. Nielsen Media Research regularly reports on how much TV people in the U.S. typically watch. The average U.S. person in 2006

watched about four and a half hours per day of TV, including nearly two hours

during prime time.<sup>16</sup> These 2006 data represent a 26 minute increase over 1995-

1996 hours of TV viewed. Nielsen based its estimates on a very carefully selected

sample of 10,000 viewers.

If they are pretty close on their

estimate and each of us watches about

four hours per day, then that's a great

deal of TV in a lifetime. Multiply four

hours by seven days then 52 weeks,

you'll find that we watch an estimated

1,456 hours of TV per year. If we

maintained that every year from

Kindergarten through 12th grade we'd

end up having watched about 17-19,000 hours of TV by the time we

graduated high

school (give or take a few hours per week). Interestingly, K-12

typically equals

about 16-17,000 hours of at school learning by the time of graduation.

<sup>17</sup> Not only do

we watch TV shows but we also watch TV commercials-perhaps a

quarter million by

the time we graduate high school. Estimates vary but we also use the

Internet, radio,

cell phone, video games, and big screen movies as forms of daily

media

consumption.

Television viewing is not completely without affect upon the viewer.

George

Gerbner (1919-2005) was a professor of communications who

founded the

Cultivation Theory which claims that the types of TV viewing we watch accumulate within us and impact our world view. In other words, if we only watched crime, detective, and forensic shows we would have the additive effect of these shows on our perception of how the world really is. The types of TV we watch passively, yet persistently shape our world view.

The Mean World Syndrome is the tendency to view society as being meaner and more violent than it really is because of the violent and harsh TV shows one has watched over the years.

18 If someone limited his daily TV viewing to soap operas then Gerbner would say that that person would have a world focus that

10 | P o p u l a r C u l t u r e a n d M e d i a

overemphasized soap opera-melodramatic themes. The same could be said of

anyone who watches mostly police shows, pornography, sports, news, or reality TV.

Keep in mind that TV is not produced by people who simply want to entertain us. So,

what is the main purpose of media in our day? Money, Entertainment, access to

information, advertising, and or attitude shifting is at the core of most media-based

ventures. Companies pay money for the commercial time or product placement.

What they really want is for you to watch the shows and see the advertisements and



buy a product or service because you were watching. The online Television

Advertising Bureau (TAB)<sup>19</sup> reported that US TV stations sold more than \$1 billion

in interactive sales in 2008.

20 This report also noted the continuing gain of TV and website ads over printed newspaper ads as part of the explanation for the death of

the local and national newspaper that is being witnessed in today's mass media marketplace.

The TAB report also noted that most people pay for television, but non-cable

providers had as much as 32% of that market in 2008.

21 Most importantly as we

focus on the for-profit advertising issue, in 1970, over \$3.59 billion was spent on US

television advertising alone. In 2007 that was up to \$70.84 billion. In total, between

1970 and 2007 there was \$1.1 trillion spent on all forms of TV advertising.

22

## ADVERTISINGS' NEGATIVE EFFECTS

One has to focus on the impact media can have with that level of revenue at stake.

Perpetual discontent is a two-pronged advertising theme which emphasizes 1. how

broken and flawed we are and 2. how we can buy hope in the form of a product being

sold. Women in the U.S. are bombarded daily with advertising images that point out

their flaws. They are constantly having it brought to their attention how they are

too: thin, fat, short, tall, round, wrinkled, blond, brunette, red, dark, light, pale, freckled, etc. This trend is exceptionally cruel for teen and young adult women, but men are not exempt from the abuse of perpetual discontent. In fact, most argue the media has created an unrealistic feminine ideal resulting in the desire to fulfill this impossible standard. This media-created ideal has commonly been blamed for the skyrocketing numbers of eating disorders as well as the rising numbers of cosmetic surgical procedures in the U.S. (especially among young women). Many argue that this has led not only to discontent with our body images, but also discontent with every aspect of our spending life (products, houses, cars, computers, clothes, etc.). One ironic note is the fact that many millions of people don't get enough food to eat every day while we in the United States have become so conscious of the self we portray to others that we self-limit our food intake and resort to drastic measures in diet, exercise, and surgery. Every year millions pay vast sums of money to acquire surgical beauty enhancements.

#### 11 | P o p u l a r C u l t u r e a n d M e d i a

Figure 1 shows data from the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery (ASAPS) for the 11 years between 1997 and 2007. There were nearly 12 million clients of aesthetic plastic surgery in the U.S. in 2004 and only slightly less for 2005

through 2007. Figure 2 shows that nearly 13 billion dollars were spent for the six

years between 2002 and 2007. The ASAPS also reported that their most common

client is a White female between the ages of 20 and 50.

Figure 1. Numbers in Millions of Plastic Surgery Procedures between 1997-2007.<sup>23</sup>

Figure 2. Expenditures in Billions for Plastic Surgery Procedures between 2002-2007.<sup>24</sup>

## 12 | P o p u l a r C u l t u r e a n d M e d i a

The media is perhaps one of the most underestimated elements of society. At the

personal level people think of it in terms of convenience and entertainment rather

than political influence, power, and control. The media is mostly controlled by

wealthy people and at the national and world level is tightly controlled in terms of

the political ideologies of those who decide what we get to watch, hear, and read.

The owners and managers seek profits while promoting their own political agenda,

selecting and shaping advertisement, and providing exposure to political and special

interest groups they favor. This means we (the masses) are exposed to not only

what the owners want us to see, but also how we see it.

### THE POWER ELITE IN THE MEDIA

Do you personally know someone who owns a TV station, radio station, newspaper,

or magazine? Most of us don't unless we happen to fall into a wealthy income

category. C. Wright Mills recognized that wealth and power are unevenly distributed in society and that it is the relatively wealthy privileged few (the power elite) that control the power. The other argument (contrary to Mills' power elite) is called pluralism, which claims that power is diffused among many diverse interest groups and that not all wealthy elite people unite on the same side of most issues. The accurate description of today's society-level power structures is that there is a large, unconnected category of powerful people, each exerting their own wills upon others, either against or in cooperation with other powerful people. In Figure 3 you can see that the top ten percent of society's members are the wealthy elite and own or control the corporations, military, and political offices. The next 20% are also relatively wealthy and connected to the power elite. This class runs the government, political scene, and interest groups. They often are given coverage in the media and are considered among our "famous" members of society. Then there's us. We are among the 70% of the common people who comprise the masses. Most of us enjoy politics and other newsworthy topics but rarely understand the reality of their day-to-day functioning and influence on our lives. We are uneducated about the power elite's actions that often harm us in the long-run

(take the recent mortgage and financial market schemes that have made the top two classes very wealthy at the expense of the bottom 70% for an example). Mills also described false consciousness, which is when members of groups which are relatively powerless in society accept beliefs that work against their self-interests.

Typically our ignorance is played upon and erroneous information is provided in a calculated manner by the power elite for the further gain of their goals.

You can learn a great deal about the power of media by studying societies outside of the United States. A totalitarian government is a political system where a small power elite controls virtually every aspect of the personal and larger social levels of society. Some examples include Nazi Germany, North Korea, Russia in Stalin's era, and a few eastern European countries that were once part of the former Soviet

13 | P o p u l a r C u l t u r e a n d M e d i a

union. In these systems the media was strictly controlled and some systems failed once media control was lost.

Figure 3. C. Wright Mills' Power Elite Model.<sup>25</sup>

The media have tremendous political power, especially in the national election coverage they provide. The journalists who provide our media have distinct goals and values which motivate them to typically take a more negative position towards

a candidate than the candidate would prefer. Many sources officially give or withhold their support for a candidate while other news and media sources continue to work in a more objective manner. In the 2008 Presidential campaign, literally hundreds of polls were taken and reported on via TV, radio, Internet, and printed news. The very presence of poll results can actually influence the choices made by voters who are undecided and others who have made their choice, but might be influenced to change their minds. Many feel that their candidates were treated with bias by the media.

The media have editorial strategies which easily coincide with the goals of the power elite. Framing involves placing the news story into a pre-existing frame of reference for the public so that they understand it as journalists would have it be understood. The protestors were freedom fighters, martyrs, or courageous. Even though two people died, the frame changes them from terrorists to saints.

Formatting is the design and construction of the news story. One might see a story that includes an introduction about the sacrifices made by the protesters which runs for 45 seconds. This story might end with a 15 second summary of their protest actions as being martyr-like.

Sequencing is ordering news stories in such a way as to present a thematic message.

An example of this would be to run the story about the protesters right after the

story about the military occupants who were allegedly guilty of raping and torturing

inmates. Agenda setting is the process of selecting and screening topics which will be

presented to the general public. An example of this might be the omission of

successes on the battlefield and the inclusion of crimes by soldiers, losses by

civilians, and outcry by the country's political enemies.

#### THE COFFEE FILTER, POWER ELITE METAPHOR

Figure 4 shows the coffee filter metaphor of the power elite as it has broken into

two semi-oppositional schools of thought often referred to as the left and right. If

you consider the power elite model over the pluralism model of power in society,

you can see how the elite who control media, military, and corporations shape

politics and laws. Mill's model fits just as well now as it did in his day, but there is a

twist on the polarized culture between left and right wing influences in society.

Figure 4 shows how the elite form a type of filter that shapes the flow of political

and legal outcomes in the form of laws, treaties, and legal precedence.

Although not

formally unified into one centralized political social movement, the left and right

shakers and movers each influence this filtering process for their own interests and goals.

Figure 4. The Coffee Filter Metaphor of the Power Elite's Influence over Politics and Laws.<sup>26</sup>

15 | Popular Culture and Media

On the left side of the spectrum, feminism, sexual politics (same-sex, transgendered, and bisexual), anti-natalism, environmental protection, and general

secularism share many overlapping values that prove to be mutually beneficial if

mutual support is given. For example, a protest at the United Nations building in

New York City against a less-developed country's refusal to let their girls and

women receive formal education could also be supported by antinatalists (the

more education a woman gets the fewer the babies she has), environmentalists (the

fewer the babies the less pressure on the physical environment), and secularists

(the more education a woman gets the less religious she tends to be).

On the right hand side of the cultural continuum lobbying for a continuation of tax

breaks for parents and marrieds would serve all interest groups in multiple ways.

One of the premier social movements to illustrate this has been the battle over the

legalization of same-sex or gay marriage. It's been on the referendum ballots of a

number of states. It's been considered for discussion at the federal legislation level,



but returned to the state-level since states have the right to legally sanction marriages and divorces. It's been considered in a few state supreme courts with preemptive strikes by states which went ahead and codified marriage as being exclusively between a man and a woman. Other state supreme courts have preemptively ruled in favor of same-sex marriages. Billions of dollars, millions of volunteer hours, and countless and immeasurable levels of personal frustration are involved in this social issue. What both the left and right have understood and utilized for decades is to use their elite contacts to accomplish their goal-driven political and legal changes. The media will continue to play a central role in this and other heated political issues.

## UNIT -V

### **Globalization of Media**

#### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Identify three ways that technology has helped speed globalization.

Explain how media outlets employ globalization to their advantage.

Describe some advances that can be made in foreign markets.

The media industry is, in many ways, perfect for globalization, or the spread of global trade without regard for traditional political borders.

As discussed earlier, the low marginal costs of media mean that reaching a wider market creates much larger profit margins for media companies. Because information is not a physical good, shipping costs are generally inconsequential. Finally, the global reach of media allows it to be relevant in many different countries.

However, some have argued that media is actually a partial cause of globalization, rather than just another globalized industry. Media is largely a cultural product, and the transfer of such a product is likely to have an influence on the recipient's culture. Increasingly, technology has also been propelling globalization. Technology allows for quick communication, fast and coordinated transport, and efficient mass marketing, all of which have allowed globalization—especially globalized media—to take hold.

### Globalized Culture, Globalized Markets

Much globalized media content comes from the West, particularly from the United States. Driven by advertising, U.S. culture and media have a strong consumerist bent (meaning that the ever-increasing consumption of goods is encouraged as an economic virtue), thereby possibly causing foreign cultures to increasingly develop consumerist ideals. Therefore, the globalization of media could not only provide content to a foreign country but may also create demand for U.S. products. Some believe that this will “contribute to a one-way transmission of ideas and values that result in the displacement of indigenous cultures.” Josefine M. C. Santos, “Globalisation and Tradition: Paradoxes in Philippine Television and Culture,” *Media Development*, no. 3 (2001): 43–48.

Globalization as a world economic trend generally refers to the lowering of economic trade borders, but it has much to do with culture as well. Just as transfer of industry and technology often encourages outside influence through the influx of foreign money into the economy, the transfer of culture opens up these same markets. As globalization takes hold and a particular community becomes more like the United States economically, this community may also come to adopt and personalize U.S. cultural values. The outcome of this spread can be homogenization (the local culture becomes more like

the culture of the United States) or heterogenization (aspects of U.S. culture come to exist alongside local culture, causing the culture to become more diverse), or even both, depending on the specific situation. Terhi Rantanen, *The Media and Globalization* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2005).

Making sense of this range of possibilities can be difficult, but it helps to realize that a mix of many different factors is involved. Because of cultural differences, globalization of media follows a model unlike that of the globalization of other products. On the most basic level, much of media is language and culture based and, as such, does not necessarily translate well to foreign countries. Thus, media globalization often occurs on a more structural level, following broader “ways of organizing and creating media.” Mirza Jan. “Globalization of Media: Key Issues and Dimensions,” *European Journal of Scientific Research* 29, no. 1 (2009): 66–75. In this sense, a media company can have many different culturally specific brands and still maintain an economically globalized corporate structure.

### Vertical Integraton and Globalization

Because globalization has as much to do with the corporate structure of a media company as with the products that a media company produces, vertical integration in multinational media companies becomes a necessary aspect of studying globalized media. Many large media companies practice vertical integration: Newspaper chains take care of their own reporting, printing, and distribution; television companies control their own production and broadcasting; and even small film studios often have parent companies that handle international distribution.

A media company often benefits greatly from vertical integration and globalization. Because of the proliferation of U.S. culture abroad, media outlets are able to use many of the same distribution structures

with few changes. Because media rely on the speedy ability to react to current events and trends, a vertically integrated company can do all of this in a globalized rather than a localized marketplace; different branches of the company are readily able to handle different markets. Further, production values for single-country distribution are basically the same as those for multiple countries, so vertical integration allows, for example, a single film studio to make higher-budget movies than it may otherwise be able to produce without a distribution company that has as a global reach.

### Foreign Markets and Titanic

Worth considering is the reciprocal influence of foreign culture on American culture. Certainly, American culture is increasingly exported around the world thanks to globalization, and many U.S. media outlets count strongly on their ability to sell their product in foreign markets. But what Americans consider their own culture has in fact been tailored to the tastes not only of U.S. citizens but also to those of worldwide audiences. The profit potential of foreign markets is enormous: If a movie does well abroad, for example, it might make up for a weak stateside showing, and may even drive interest in the movie in the United States.

One prime example of this phenomenon of global culture and marketing is James Cameron's 1997 film *Titanic*. One of the most expensive movies ever produced up to that point, with an official budget of around \$200 million, *Titanic* was not anticipated to perform particularly well at the U.S. box office. Rather, predictions of foreign box-office receipts allowed the movie to be made. Of the total box-office receipts of *Titanic*, only about one-third came from the domestic market. Although *Titanic* became the highest-grossing film up to that point, it grossed just \$140 million more domestically than *Star Wars* did 20 years earlier. Box Office Mojo, "All Time Domestic Box Office Results," <http://boxofficemojo.com/alltime/domestic.htm>.

The difference was in the foreign market. While Star Wars made about the same amount—\$300 million—in both the domestic and foreign markets, Titanic grossed \$1.2 billion in foreign box-office receipts. In all, the movie came close to hitting the \$2 billion mark, and now sits in the No. 2 position behind Cameron’s 2009 blockbuster, Avatar.

One reason that U.S. studios can make these kinds of arrangements is their well-developed ties with the worldwide movie industry.

Hollywood studios have agreements with theaters all over the world to show their films. By contrast, the foreign market for French films is not nearly as established, as the industry tends to be partially subsidized by the French government. Theaters showing Hollywood studio films in France funnel portions of their box-office receipts to fund French films. However, Hollywood has lobbied the World Trade Organization—a largely pro-globalization group that pushes for fewer market restrictions—to rule that this French subsidy is an unfair restriction on trade. Roman Terrill, “Globalization in the 1990s,” University of Iowa Center for International Finance and Development, 1999,

<http://www.uiowa.edu/ifdebook/ebook2/contents/part3-I.shtml#B>.

In many ways, globalization presents legitimate concerns about the endangerment of indigenous culture. Yet simple concerns over the transfer of culture are not the only or even the biggest worries caused by the spread of American culture and values.

What is the thing or person that everyone must get access to everyday? It is probably not your parents or your friends, but the media. Teenagers listen to pop music and read magazines so that they will have same topic with their friends. Middle-aged people read newspapers to know about the current affairs. The elderly are entertained through watching soap operas. Through various forms of

media such as television, newspaper, magazine, internet, radio, film, advertisement, music and video games, people get to know about what is happening around us and it facilitates communication.

Don't use plagiarized sources.

Get Your Custom Essay on

Why media is termed “consciousness industries”?

Just from \$13,9/Page

### GET CUSTOM PAPER

To have a deeper understanding of media, this essay concerns itself with examining why media will be termed “consciousness industries” and followed by that, it will discuss how the media construct social and political attitudes and values with examples. It will also look at the influence that this has on an individual’s perception of their social world.

Media is termed to be “consciousness industries” and it is not the same as any other industries.

Like any other industries, media helps the advertisers sell products and services to its potential consumers. However, other than that, the media sells something else that is intangible but more fundamental to its audience and that is ways of thinking, seeing and talking about the world around us. The conception of the world that we gain through media has a great impact on what we think, how we think and what we think about and thanks to this reason; media is called “consciousness industries” and it does play an important role in constructing social and political attitudes and values. (Graeme Turner and Stuart Cunningham)As I have mentioned before, social and political attitudes and values are constructed by the media and it is closely related to the impact of ideology. Ideology can be defined as the influence of ideas on people’s beliefs and actions.

The concept can be divided into two strands: the neutral conception of ideology and the critical conception of ideology. The neutral conception of ideology refers to the “science of ideas” while the critical one regards ideology as “false consciousness” which means powerful groups are able to control the beliefs and actions of the powerless by dominating the ideas circulating in the society. As a result, the powerful groups of people can keep their power and their status can be justified and strengthened. (Giddens A. 2001) Take television as an example to prove this.

Television is a common appliance which every household would probably have one. Everyday, there are thousands and thousands of different sorts of television programs like news roundup, soap operas, commercials, films and music videos broadcast and the information is sent to every household. In this situation, audiences who sit in front of the television everyday are assumed that they are primarily powerless in the face of television messages and after the continuous repetition of programs, people’s conception such as class, wealth, poverty, racism and male-dominant gender roles are fostered. As a consequence, such objectionable ideologies are developed and social attitudes and values are constructed.

Another theory that is concerned about how the media construct social and political attitudes and values is McDonaldisation. It is ‘the process by which the principles of the fast-food restaurant are coming dominate more and more sectors of American society as well as the rest of the world.’ (Ritzer) McDonald’s is a very popular symbol in the society today and they are located everywhere, with more than 30,000 in the United States and shops in 119 countries out of the United States. (Newman) Everyone living in the society knows the McDonalds.

However, McDonaldisation is not only a business model, but also applies to the media. Information can be sent to everywhere of the world very quickly thanks to the development of technology and common access to different forms of media. This is just like McDonaldisation. This efficient transfer of information benefits the whole world as all the people are able to know what is happening around us so that we can make the right decision in particular field. Nevertheless, this can also be problematic when the information spread are false or biased, especially when it comes to current affairs. False information may cause instability in stock market, public panic. This would possibly affect individual's perception towards the society and politics.

The social and political attitudes and values in a society will have an impact on one's perception of the society and politics. Firstly, due to the ideology theory in media, individuals would develop social conceptions like sexism, racism, class, wealth and poverty. Because of these concepts, individual may consider the wealthy are noble while the poor should be looked down. This will probably form an unhealthy society. Secondly, as everyone can acquire news and entertainment from the media, people can get to know more about around us and there are same topics for individuals to talk about. However, if wrong information is spread, individual may be affected and they may make wrong decision and cause troubles.

To conclude, media, the social and political attitudes and values and the perception of individual are very closely connected and they are interacted to each other. Media is a very special industry that it is selling their audience intangible goods like thoughts and feelings. The ways that media construct social and political attitudes and values are elaborated by the media theories ideology and McDonaldisation. And this would influence individual's perception toward their social world.

**THANK YOU**