

Media and Society

- Media fulfills a number of important societal roles:
 - Socialization; education; entertainment; information processing; etc.
 - Mass Media has a very wide reach and can cross race, class, and gender boundaries
- Media are a crucial source of beliefs and values and “experts” can disseminate “cultural truths”

Mass Media

The mass media are technology-driven and usually profit-driven methods of communicating meaningful information between one source and many recipients or between many sources and many recipients (O’Shaughnessy and Stadler, 2012).

- **Technology-driven:** differ from face to face communication because technology is used to send and receive messages
- **Link many people:** Use of various forms – newspapers, books, magazines, radio, movies, tv, internet – qualify as mass media
- **Traditionally involved one-to-many communication:** previously transmitted messages from single, fixed sources to large audiences
- **New media involve many-to-many communication:** anyone can now communicate with many other people
- **Commercial interests influence mass media:** main goal is to earn profits for shareholders

How much time do you spend:

- + watching/streaming TV shows
- + listening to music
- + going to movies
- + watching funny cat or dog videos
- + playing video games
- + shopping online
- + “doomscrolling”
- + doing school and/or paid work online
- + posting on social media

Love-Hate Views of the Media

Key Positive Points:

1. Coordinating the operation of industrial and post-industrial societies.
2. Socialization – Transmission of norms, values, and culture.

3. Social control – Ensures stability.
4. Provide entertainment.

Key Negative Points:

1. Mass media favour the interests of dominant classes and political groups.
2. Broadcasts beliefs, values, and ideas, creating widespread acceptance of the status quo (inequality).
3. Mass media (and social media) are owned by a small select group of people.

Media and Politics

Fear about media use for political gains

- (i.e. Alleged Russian interference with 2016 Presidential Election, etc, etc, etc, etc, etc)

State controlled media:

- Lack of criticism about state policies
- No freedom of the press

Socio-political agendas:

- Marginalization of people of colour
- Selling a white middle-class lifestyle (in addition to whatever product is being sold)

Media and Morals

- Observational Learning Theory
- Desensitization Theory

Women are often objectified in ads, with focus on only one part of the body

Women often shown in “silly” poses and depicted as submissive

Men tend to be afforded dignity and are made “stronger” when they are objectified

Moral Panic:

“A public campaign in which some person, group, or series of events is constructed as an imminent threat to “normal civilized society” ...Public opinion is mobilized through agencies of social control such as the media, the police, and the courts, in order to challenge and remove the threat” (Henry & Tator 2010)

- 1) Heightened level of concern of a certain behavior
 - Excessive media attention
- 2) Hostility
 - Creation of “us” versus “them”
- 3) Consensus that the threat is real
 - Do we all agree this is a problem?
- 4) Disproportionality
 - How much does evidence support the panic?

5) Volatility

- May erupt suddenly or lie dormant for long periods of time

Media and Advertising

Advertisements are:

- discourses that socially and culturally construct a world – they have been carefully crafted
- discourses that disguise and suppress inequalities, injustices, irrationalities and contradictions.
- discourses that promote a normative vision of our world and our relationships
- discourses that reflect the logic of capital.
- In constructing different images, ads also ask us to choose our identities out of our consumption choices.