

Media & Culture: A theoretical perspective of the inter-relationship

Nayeem Showkat

Research Scholar, Department of Mass Communication, Aligarh Muslim University, Uttar Pradesh, India

Abstract

Media, as a powerful social system, plays an important role in creating a person's sense of reality (Gergen, 1999). It proved to be influential on the belief that in its wider cultural sense, the media largely reinforced those values and norms which had already achieved a wide consensual foundation. The complimentary and independent media are the most substantial requirements for the utility of democracy (Bajohr, 2006). The mass media are less effective in this process if they use a hostile perception and more powerful when "persuasive press inferences" (Gunther & Christen 2002). The persuasive press inference depicts that individuals frequently presume public opinion from perceptions of the content of media coverage, and assumptions regarding the content that have considerable influence on people (Gunther, Christen, Liebhart, & Chia 2001). Culture is learned and transmitted from generation to generation. It "is an integrating mechanism" (Geertz, 1973; Schein, 1983), the social or normative glue that holds together a potentially diverse group of organisational members. Culture is manifested at different layers of depth and the culture of a particular group or organisation is desirable to distinguish three fundamental levels at which culture manifests itself: (a) observable artifacts, (b) values, and (c) basic underlying assumptions (Schein, 1984). Culture is learned, not inherited. The source of new cultural elements in a society may also be another society. The cultural elements of one culture borrowed and incorporated in recipient culture are called diffusion. The processes of diffusion and acculturation bring some kind of cultural changes or shift in the culture. Sometimes diffusion is due to intermediate contact that occurs through the third party. Mass media has a political and a persuasive power over us. Radio, TV, the 'press' etc. can manipulate whole societies. Political propaganda, advertising and the so-called 'mind-bending' power of the media are long-standing causes of debate and concern. Media has a great effect on our social behaviour which is a part of our culture. The study assessed various ways of effect of mass media on culture like cognitive, attitudinal, behavioural and psychological. The study aimed to elucidate the importance of media, culture and their relationship and influence over each other.

Keywords: media, culture, relationship, elements, psychological

1. Introduction

Mass Media are diversified media forms intended to reach the large audience/masses. Mass media refers to those means of diffusion that are designed to get in touch with a wider audience. The media is that authority of the society which scrutinizes all the three other powers of the state (executive, legislation & judiciary), and for that reason, it is considered the fourth power (Gormus, 2012).

The complimentary and independent media are the most substantial requirements for the utility of democracy (Bajohr, 2006) [7]. It is largely a media technology which is diversified by means of objective to reach a targeted audience with a memorandum.

The mass media are less effective in this process if they use a hostile perception and more powerful when "persuasive press inferences" (Gunther & Christen 2002). The persuasive press inference depicts that individuals frequently presume public opinion from perceptions of the content of media coverage, and assumptions regarding the content that have considerable influence on people (Gunther, Christen, Liebhart, & Chia 2001) [26].

Media have a tendency to produce more ideological and not completely true accounts for viewing by the general public (Cotterrell 1999) [15]. With the media discourse, there are some groups, potentially magnificently influential on public

opinions, ideologies and models (Altheide 1985; Altschull 1984; Paletz & Entman 1981; Lichter, Rothman & Lichter 1990) [3, 4, 44, 38].

Media endow with knowledge and news related to basic events necessary for coherent jurisdictions of people. At the same time, it also acts as a forum through securing the admittance to various category of information which people swap over (O'Neill, 1998) [43].

Inoue's (2011) explicates that the uses and the gratifications approach of the media depend on the convenience and existing habits of the audience rather than probing for a precise media channel. Media is not only confined to the four walls of news but, it also entertains, educates, informs and facilitates cultural transformation between generations (Smith, 2011) [53].

Culture is learned and transmitted from generation to generation. It "is an integrating mechanism" (Geertz, 1973; Schein, 1983) [21], the social or normative glue that holds together a potentially diverse group of organizational members. Berger and Luckman (1966) [10] were of the opinion that culture change depends on how one perceives and enacts culture.

Culture is manifested at different layers of depth and the culture of a particular group or organization is desirable to distinguish three fundamental levels at which culture manifests itself: (a) observable artifacts, (b) values, and (c)

basic underlying assumptions (Schein, 1984) ^[49].

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The media proved to be influential on the belief that, in its wider cultural sense, the media largely reinforced those values and norms which had already achieved a wide consensual foundation. Media, as a powerful social system, plays an important role in creating a person's sense of reality (Gergen, 1999) ^[22].

2. Relevance of the study

Media for most of us are entwined with almost every aspect of life and work. Understanding media will not only help us to appreciate the role of media in our day-to-day life but also helps us to be a more informed citizen, a savvy-consumer, and a more successful worker. Mass media has a political and a persuasive power over us. Radio, TV, the 'press' etc. can manipulate whole societies. Political propaganda, advertising and the so-called 'mind-bending' power of the media are long-standing causes of debate and concern. Media has a great effect on our social behaviour which is a part of our culture. The study assesses various ways of effect of mass media on culture like cognitive, attitudinal, behavioral and psychological. The study aims to elucidate the importance of media, culture and their relationship and influence over each other.

3. The idea of culture

Human potential can only be realized within the structure of human culture and through growing up in close contact with other humans. Culture affects behaviour and interpretations of behaviour as certain aspects of culture are physically visible, their meaning is invisible: their cultural meaning lies precisely and only in the way these practices are interpreted by the insiders (Hofstede, 2001) ^[31].

Culture can be differentiated from both universal human nature and unique individual personality. It derives from one's social environment, not from one's genes. Culture should be distinguished from human nature on one side and from an individual's personality on the other although exactly where the borders lie between human nature and culture, and between culture and personality, is a matter of discussion among social scientists (Hofstede, 1994) ^[30].

Culture influences biological processes as the effects of culturally produced ideas on our bodies and their natural process take many different forms. For example, instances of voluntary control of pain reflexes are found in a number of cultures throughout the world. The ethnographic examples are too numerous to cite, but whether we are looking at Cheyenne men engaged in the Sun Dance ceremony, Fiji firewalkers, or U.S. women practicing the Lamaze (psycho prophylactic) method of childbirth, the principle is the same: People learn ideas from their cultures that when internalized can actually later the experience of pain. In other words, a component of culture (that is, ideas) can channel or influence biologically

based pain reflexes (Ferraro, 1998) ^[19]. Culture is associated with social groups because it is shared by at least two or more people, and of course real, live societies are always larger than that. There is, in other words, no such thing as the culture of a hermit. If a solitary individual thinks and behaves in a certain way, that thought or action is idiosyncratic, not cultural. For an idea, a thing, or a behavior to be considered cultural, it must be shared by some type of social group or society (Ferraro, 1998) ^[19].

Culture is both an individual construct and a social construct. To some extent, culture exists in each and every one of us individually as much as it exists as a global, social construct. Individual differences in culture can be observed among people in the degree to which they adopt and engage in the attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors that, by consensus, constitute their culture (Matsumoto, 1996) ^[42].

Culture is always both socially and psychologically distributed in a group, and so the delineation of a culture's features will always be fuzzy. Culture is a 'fuzzy' concept, in that group members are unlikely to share identical sets of attitudes, beliefs and so on, but rather show 'family resemblances', with the result that there is no absolute set of features that can distinguish definitively one cultural group from another (Avruch, 1998) ^[6].

It has both universal (etic) and distinctive (emic) elements as humans have largely overlapping biologies and live in fairly similar social structures and physical environments, which create major similarities in the way they form cultures. But within the framework of similarities there are differences (Triandis, 1994) ^[57].

Culture is learned from the people you interact with as you are socialized. Watching how adults react and talk to new babies is an excellent way to see the actual symbolic transmission of culture among people. Two babies born at exactly the same time in two parts of the globe may be taught to respond to physical and social stimuli in very different ways. For example, some babies are taught to smile at strangers, whereas others are taught to smile only in very specific circumstances. In the United States, most children are asked from a very early age to make decisions about what they want to do and what they prefer; in many other cultures, a parent would never ask a child what she or he wants to do but would simply tell the child what to do (Lustig & Koester, 1999) ^[40].

It is homogeneous as it is free from internal paradoxes and contradictions. It is uniformly distributed among members of a group. Culture is a custom as it is structurally undifferentiated, that what you see is what you get (Avruch, 1998). Culture is not static; it is dynamic and we often move between cultures. It is broader than race and ethnicity. Gender, class, physical and mental abilities, religious and spiritual beliefs, sexual orientation, age and other factors influence our cultural orientations. Culture is subject to gradual change (Ferraro, 1998) ^[19].

4. Historical overview of culture

Even though it is notoriously difficult term to define, culture is often defined as that which is shared by and/or unique to a given organization or group (Clark, 1970; Schein, 1985; Smircich, 1983) ^[50, 12, 52]. In 1952, the American anthropologists, Kroeber and Kluckhohn, critically reviewed

concepts and definitions of culture, and compiled a list of 164 different definitions.

Apte (1994) ^[5] writing in the ten-volume *Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics*, summarized the problem as follows: "Despite a century of efforts to define culture adequately, there was in the early 1990s no agreement among anthropologists regarding its nature." Culture was broadly used in three ways;

First, as exemplified in Matthew Arnolds' *Culture and Anarchy* (1867), culture referred to special intellectual or artistic endeavors or products, what today we might call "high culture" as opposed to "popular culture" (or "folkways" in an earlier usage). By this definition, only a portion – typically a small one – of any social group "has" culture (The rest are potential sources of anarchy!). This sense of culture is more closely related to aesthetics than to social science.

The second, as pioneered by Edward Tylor in *Primitive Culture* (1870), referred to a quality possessed by all people in all social groups, who nevertheless could be arrayed on a development (evolutionary) continuum (in Lewis Henry Morgan's scheme) from "savagery" through "barbarism" to "civilization".

The third and last usage of culture developed in anthropology in the twentieth-century work of Franz Boas and his students, though with roots in the eighteenth-century writings of Johann von Herder. As Tylor reacted to Arnold to establish a scientific (rather than aesthetic) basis for culture, so Boas reacted against Tylor and other social evolutionists. Whereas the evolutionists stressed the universal character of a single culture, with different societies arrayed from savage to civilized, Boas emphasized the uniqueness of the many and varied cultures of different peoples or societies. Moreover, he dismissed the value judgments he found inherent in both the Arnoldian and Tylorean views of culture. For Boas, one should never differentiate high from low culture, and one ought to not differentially valorize cultures as savage or civilized (Spencer-Oatey, 2012) ^[54].

5. Cultural Shift: A theoretical analysis

The change in culture on wider ground is known as cultural shift. Change in external environment can be attributed to the good deal of change in culture. In the modern world, changes in the social environment are more frequent than physical environment. Discoveries and inventions, which may originate inside or outside a society, are ultimately the source of all cultural change. Using and accepting the inventions and discoveries bring changes in prevailing cultures.

Change of culture takes time and courage to reorganize power in society. Clifford (1975) ^[13] defined culture as a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and their attitudes towards life. Handy (1991) ^[27] was of the opinion "change is not what it used to be". Before change was continuous and comfortable, when the past acted as a guide for the future, but now we have moved into a period where circumstances tend to combine to the distress of the advocates of the status quo. Indeed, the changes we are experiencing are no longer foreseeable or comfortably cast into predictable patterns but rather

discontinuous, uncomfortable and tentional. Undoubtedly, the changeover from a preceding social order based on custom and tradition to one originated from rational calculation and control, seemed secured by the growth of bureaucratic organizations (Handy 1991) ^[27].

However, the current set of interrelated economic, technological, social and cultural changes is reflected, and reflects in turn, an underlying fragmenting dynamic in our organizations that has transformed the hierarchical structures and disciplinary practices of the traditional rational bureaucracies into more self-regulating, decentralized, diffuse and flexible arrangements (Reed, 1983) ^[46].

The era in which we live characterizes culture by the state of discontinuous change and consequently by deficiency of a stable world of meanings. Work motivation have widened the scope of changes in culture and these changes have inspired the development of new and softer 'means of controlling people' (Rose, 1989) ^[47], and the culture concept seems to offer the possibility of a more successful approach to this development.

Social scientists are still far from agreeing about what a cultural phenomenon is, what it means, what its characteristics are, what it is comprised of, what it does or how it should be studied. The definitions of culture variously include as components ideas, concepts, values, ideologies, attitudes, goals, norms, learned behaviours, symbols, rites, rituals, customs, myths, habits and/or artifacts. Underlying this diversity, we find various assumptions of what culture is and what its main components are.

There was no difference between cultural and societal boundaries: Culture or civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society (Taylor, 1958) ^[56].

Thus, the cultural and social realms appear integrated into a harmonic socio-cultural system where culture is manifested in the observable human practices and their products. Culture came to be seen not as a sequential manifestation of an unfolding saga, extending from Paleolithic hunters to modern civilization, but rather as 'what people do' collectively in different ways, places and times (Jenkins, 1993) ^[33].

As such, the interrelation of the different cultural components and the resultant social structure came to be seen as equal, or at least continuous (Malinowski, 1962) ^[41]. When it comes to the analysis of the different but interrelated components of culture and the role of the individual in the cultural process, two different perspectives emerge: the historical/adaptive and the cultural idealism schools (Allaire & Firsirotu 1984) ^[2].

The historical/adaptive school considers culture exclusively determined by technical or/and environmental factors (Khan, 2012) ^[35], whereas individuals are considered merely as carriers of culture not participating in its development (Kroeber, 1963) ^[37]. Culture is the special and exclusive product of mankind, and the quality which distinguishes it. The culture is at the same time the totality of the products of the social man and an enormous force which affects all human beings, socially and individually (Kroeber, 1963) ^[37].

Culture is a pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group has learned as it solved problems of external adaptation and

internal integration, which has worked well enough to be considered valid and therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems (Schein, 1992)^[51].

Waters (1995)^[60] claims cultural exchanges liberate relationships from spatial and geographical referents, and cultural symbols, which can be produced anywhere and at any time, are transported easily across geographical and physical boundaries. We need to be aware of the underlying understandings created by broader cultural ideas since they will also influence the ways in which people make sense of the problems they are facing and influence each other through direct interaction (Featherstone, 1990)^[18]. The historical dimension in cultural development and culture was addressed as a phenomenon difficult to change (Schein, 1988; Gagliardi, 1986)^[52, 20].

Cultural change has also been described as a learning process in which members act according to cognitive schemes, giving meanings to the events occurring within the setting (Bartunek, 1988)^[9]. When cultural change occurs, it is described in dramatic and painful terms: an established cultural unity has to cope with external factors, which oblige it to change and, so, it 'collapses'. This process is seen as entailing an organization-wide cultural transformation, whereby an old cultural unity is replaced by a new one.

Culture as the fabric of meanings, in terms of which we interpret our experiences and guide our actions (Geertz, 1973)^[21], then we need to look at cultural change in a different way. It follows that any community is able at every moment to reconstruct its past.

However, that past is usually 'distorted' in the process of reconstruction because even without the intention to distort its recollection always rests upon interpretative re-constructions. In any case, this reconstruction implies a certain degree of agreement since society can live only if there is a sufficient unity of outlooks among the individuals and groups comprising it (Coser, 1992)^[14].

One of the consequences is that a social group might 'delete' from memory all that distances groups from each other or brings about painful memories that are better forgotten (Pennebaker, 1992; Paez *et al.*, 1993s)^[45].

6. Mass Media: Uses and Gratification

Kitchens, Powell and Williams (2003) expound that media usage and political affairs are identifying that media usage is both a reason and result for political behaviour. They further explain that the cause of media usage is related to looking for information from various sources. Voter's community seeks information on political affairs via media and treats media as the source of political information. They identified four major factors for information seeking: openness, education, factual knowledge and political sophistication.

Barton (2009)^[8] quoting Lasswell's identification of media uses and gratifications explains that the major factors for media usage for gathering information are building relationship with the current social needs and events, environmental surveillance, and social heritage transmission.

On the other hand, Greenberg (1974)^[25], Lometti, Reeves and Bybee (1977)^[39] supported the contradictory thought that the gratification sought are not usually the gratifications acquired.

Therefore, the above mentioned two perspectives in media usage for gratifying psychological and social needs explain the drive for media exposure in order to satisfy the need for knowledge. The media lend a hand to create the consensus which politicians thankfully construe as the popular resentment they needed to democratically legitimate the gradually harsher immigration restrictions in Europe and North America or the social exclusion of minorities (Castles & Miller, 1993)^[11].

Researches also prove how most of the Western media were and are still engaged in the replica of stereotypes and prejudices against the others in or from the South (Hartmann & Husband 1974; Jager & Link 1993; van Dijk 1991)^[29, 32]. A socially oriented cognitive science endows us with insight into the structures and strategies of cognition, and hence recommend a foundation for a new understanding of the influential power of the media (Graber, 1984; Gunter, 1987; Harris, 1989; van Dijk 1988)^[24, 58, 28].

7. Media & Culture: Influence & Relationship

"Media and culture are interconnected; levels of understanding various cultures influence media contents, meanwhile media platforms and contents impact cultural and day-to-day practices" (Dakrouy, 2014)^[16].

The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis suggested that each culture had a different way of classifying the world. These schemes would be reflected, it argued, in the linguistic and semantic structures of different societies.

The media plays an important role of decision making framework which is a behavioral change and in opinion formation which is observable behaviour. A person closely monitoring the media consumption is not immune to media effects. After comparing various media channels, (Danaher and Rossiter, 2011)^[17] also acknowledged that people perceive different media channels differently. When communicating messages among different cultures, media on the other side also faces severe challenges.

According to Jenkins (2006)^[34] there is definite paradigm shift as how the content of media is being produced and circulated. Scholars theorizing the current trend to participatory culture emphasized user's strong preference to share knowledge and culture in communities.

Media has given new meaning to cultural sharing and communication. Louis Writh and Talcott Parsons have "emphasized the importance of mass media as instruments of social control." Media is basically a powerful presence in people's lives. Afsaneh (2012)^[1] concludes that TV channels seek for a change in lifestyle among Iranian women, as she finds a significant relationship between lifestyle portrayed by TV channels and lifestyle of women in Tehran.

Media plays a cardinal role in disseminating our daily life cultural practices. It is said to reflect our culture norms and values and it has widened our choices and increased cultural expression with flow of information at planetary level. Cultural values also shape mass media messages when producers of media content have vested interests in particular social goals.

People can produce and symbolise cultural identities through the media. Verdugo & Fierro (2014)^[59] found that "communication competence is a complex process of

adaptation, understanding, and acceptance of media content, highlighting the ability of subjects to critically own the media through cultural contextualization mechanisms specific to each individual.”

“Popular” culture is the media, products, and attitudes considered to be part of the mainstream of a given culture and the everyday life of common people. It is often distinct from more formal conceptions of culture that take into account moral, social, religious beliefs and values such as our earlier definition of culture.

It can be asserted that there is a close relationship between mass media and culture of people. Different mass media channels are interlinked with the culture of the place. On the basis of the literature, it could be further asserted, as (Dakroury, 2014) ^[16] states that “media narratives and discourses are created within different forms of texts and images that are complexly related to the cultural perceptions and practices of both those who produce and consume them.”

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