# Mass media vs. social media from the perspective of media studies

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# Mass media

- Its evolution was determined by technological advances all the way through history.

- Its practices were structured, the processes became more and more predictable for reasons of productivity and economic efficiency.

- The media institution functioned, in the 20th century, just like any commercial business.

- A dual approach to information: the journalistic code of ethics and the business approach to public information, under the legal framework.

# Media studies

- Concerned with:
- – the institutions (media institutions, their functioning and hierarchies, the state)
- - the public (media influence, media effects)
- - the product (genres, classifications, other aspects, including commercial ones)

…and their inter-relations.

# The institutions

- The authority the journalist had during the 20th century stems from the press institution's authority and privileged relationship to the state, only recently challenged by the free access to public information laws.

- The journalist has a sort of representativeness (the fourth estate metaphor, Burke, the British expression that in French became "the fourth power in the state").

# The institutions

- During the 20th century, the press institution slowly became established for operating according to a scheme well-represented in the fiction film (the newsroom and its functioning)
- In a dual approach to information, the media institutions are faced with an ambiguity. Information is not to be bought or sold, yet once packaged and processed, they are sold.
- The "dual market" of the information as a compromise justified solely by the "public" interest of paying as little as possible for the media product (final, visible cost)

# The public: Media effects

- Media effects: the social, cultural, and psychological impact of communicating via the mass media (Bryant and Zillmann)
- One can choose to enhance them (political communication); understand them (research) or mitigate them (various activists)

# Media effects theories

*Who says what to whom and in what context?*

becomes:

Media effects researchers study what types of content, in what type of medium, affect which people, in what situations.

Cuilenburg et al, 1998, 206:

- "the ensemble of processes and consequences entailed by the reception of the (media) messages; processes and consequences one cannot attributed but to the communication act"

# 'Media effects' theories

Mass media can act upon the individual, the groups, the institutions and the entire society.

- They can affect the cognitive, affective and behavioral dimension
- Micro-effects, mezo-effects, macro-effects
- Short term vs. long term effects
- Centrifugal vs. centripetal effects
- (Denis Mc Quail, Steve Windahl)

# Theories concerning media effects

A historical take (chronological)

- Powerful media effects phase (initial, for the incipient exposure to media messages); the audiences are passive, massive; generalizing theories

– Limited media effects phase (where media effects were countered by other factors; first empirical studies

– Rediscovered powerful media effects phase

– Negotiated media effects phase

– New media environment and its effects

- 1920-1935, POWERFUL MEDIA EFFECTS

The magical bullet theory, the Stimulus-Response theory, the hypodermic needle theory, the one-step flow theory (H.D. Lasswell)

The ideological dominance – Frankfurt School (Horkheimer, Adorno)

The cultural hegemony of the media (Antonio Gramsci)

- 1945-1960, LIMITED MEDIA EFFECTS

Two-step flow model (opinion leader, Paul Lazarsfeld)

Klapper's selective exposure theory

- REDISCOVERED POWERFUL EFFECTS THEORIES

Uses and gratifications (Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch)

Framing theory

The cultural thesis of the Birmingham's Center for Cultural Studies)

-the theory of amplifying the cognitive gap (Tichenor, Donahue, Olien)

cultivation theory (George Gerbner, Anneberg)

the silence spiral theory (Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann)

- 1965-1990, COMPLEX/NEGOTIATED EFFECTS THEORIES

technological determinism (Innis, McLuhan)

the social learning theory (Albert Bandura)

the media addiction/dependency theory (Sandra Ball-Rokeach, M. De Fleur)

the theory of diffusing the technological innovation (Everett Rogers)

the agenda setting theory

The ethnographic take on the reception studies

NEW MEDIA EFFECTS THEORIES

social information processing (Walther)

Media richness theory (Daft and Lengel)

# Media studies: the product

- A continuous effort of classifying and establishing genres, of both journalistic and fiction media, with both prescriptions and finely classified characteristics (such as, types of leads, types of headlines)
- Also, taxonomies created to exclude non-journalistic genres (PR, adv.)

# Technological progress and its challenges prior to the Internet

- Each new medium was supposed to / expected to threaten the existence of the older media (radio)
- Communication satellites brought on an wider TV offer (**fragmentation** of the traditional mass audiences)
- The remote control changed the way TV audience was measured and turned into advertising money (share, rating)
- VCR thorn the time continuum of the TV flow, by allowing viewers to watch a show later than it was programmed

# "Fragmentation"

- The most mentioned term, fragmentation, does not apply only to public(s) and audiences.
- The practices are fragmented and individualized, gadget-oriented
- The dissemination is fragmented.
- PIXEL: the word that describes best the current communication: from the millions of different pixels we get an overall picture.

# Adjusting to the challenges. TV

- TV audiences started to being assessed by the minute, instead of quarter of hour (now, by the second)
- TV shows are more dynamic and segmented
- Lost in prominence of the national generalist stations (that gave up broadcasting such content that was taken over by specialized stations – music, films, cartoons, fishing, religious services, etc.)

# Adjusting to the challenges. Print media

- Niche magazines monetizing each and every human interest possible

- Alternative financing models, including free distribution (metro papers)

# The online challenge for the "traditional" media. Stage 1.

- To be or not to be (also) online? The "mirror" websites appear, doubling up the print content.
- Online television start to appear, once the technical conditions (IPTV protocol, Over the top protocol, streaming technologies) allowed for it
- News aggregators, portals and other forms for gathering previously printed journalism
- The institutional websites made instrumental information obsolete in the media (exchange rates, various institutions' program, etc.)
- The illusion of 'free of charge' use of journalism and other content (online = free), sold to the audiences once with the online version of the paper

# Institutional solutions to the challenges

- Print media came up with their own websites, mirroring the content in print and came to update it as quick as it posed a threat to the television itself.

- Television adapted with an increase in news channels and a reforming of generalist content

- Linking to institutions as content providers

- Creating online 'accounts' on the news platforms for the users to build up their own 'desk' spaces

# Institutional response

- A change in the jobs and hierarchies, due to the digitisation of media processes

- A concentration of media ownership and going towards corporate practices

# Further challenged from Web 2.0

- UGC (user generated content) led to a change in readership:

- Blogs (mainly text and photo) – readers get to question the authority of the columnists and move focus from them towards the theme/subject

- Video and audio content (YouTube, trilulilu) changed focus from legitimacy to popularity

(Affordability of prosumer equipment and access of the audiences to platform of personal expression)

- Ad money directed almost entirely to online advertising

# Media adjusted by

- Communicating the willingness to accept reports from the members of the audiences as valid sources of information

- Changing focus, from the 'voices of authority' (televisual 'apparel') towards the 'common people', who become the new stars (see *neotelevision)*

- Including amateur materials in the TV flow or in online news sites.

# Other aspects

- Adapting the message to various devices (one of the social media debate focuses on is social media contesting the famous 'media is the message' and pointing towards an era where the message finds it way, ''regardless the device''?)
- Creating forums, communities of people who read and comment, like and share

# Social media and its challenges

- Getting users to retain loyalty towards the media sources and visit the news source/page, departing from the social media page
- Click bait, share bait – foul practices from websites that re-circulate content or even steal content from other sources
- A shift from reading, understanding to liking and sharing

# What did change:

- The approach (of the user)
- The content (the journalistic genres, the headline as an institution)
- The human resource (and the jobs)
- The institutional scheme / hierarchy
- The financial flow (see long tail)
- The measurement of success
- The professional status of the journalist

# What did change:

- **Mass** media becomes **tabloid** media
- Former taxonomies of the press (according to strict criteria) are replaced by one:

<p align="center"><u>quality vs. tabloid media</u></p>

- Rise of marketing terms in the assessment of instant success: journalistic genres are replaced by the word "content"; media institutions become, in the Facebook era, "content publishers", circulation becomes "clicks", "comments", "likes"and "shares".
- A new form of 'social capital' related to a carefully constructed self through online marketing techniques

# What did change:

- A greater, more pervasive diffusion of information on a different model (the network society) – see Facebook connection map as opposed to the hierarchic model

- The well-equipped user turns into a journalist (information gatherer or info. processor)

- The propagation of the information follows a different model (similar to that of the rumor, due to websites such as Twitter and Facebook; Kapferer)

# Media theories

- A shift from total "control" of the media institution as sender of the message (neo-Marxist theories, cultural studies, feminist studies) to the theories granting the users some control (uses and gratification theories and the like) as part of the conscious act of reading, listening, viewing, and also of co-creating and disseminating information.

# Challenges for the media theories

- Media changes, theories change. Did they? Flourishing of theories on the social media, but considerable fewer academic articles on the social media impact on the 'traditional' media
- The "mass" model (mass media, mass society, mass culture) disappears
- Fragmentation of the audiences/readership
- The disappearance of the concepts from journalism in theoretical approaches and the rise of marketing-related terms to judge "journalistic" products

# Example of practices of the 'new' media

- Second hand and third hand content
- Headlines (click-bait, sampling content)
- Fishing for information from the audience
- Ampler information from geographical and social areas where journalist have no access to, under the newer financial schemes that exclude the expense of time and effort for investigative journalism

# Network societies

- Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society* (vol. I), 2010
- *Industrialism* turns into *Informationalism*
- Global financial markets change the former model of disseminating information through traditional media channels in a different pattern
- The end of the mass audiences
- Informational cities

# "Network states"

- **Ingrid Volkmer, *The Global Public Sphere: Public Communication in the Age of Reflective Interdependence***
- Transnational public engagement led to the new network states, as opposed to the national states
- New public spaces, unattached to national states, appear
- Centrality networks: different spatialities
- Post-territorial spheres of deliberation and legitimacy (following legitimacy and power crisis)
- Symoultaneous temporality spaces
- Public actors transformed from discourse sources in discourse mediators and spheres of connectivity
- Public loyalties are dispersed and changed

# Articles: content publishers on social media

- http://phys.org/news/2016-07-social-media-echo-chambers.html#jCp
- http://ro.ejo-online.eu/arii-de-acoperire/se-schimba-modul-care-masuram-audientele
- **What is social media** from marketers:
- http://heidicohen.com/social-media-definition/
- http://ideagrove.com/blog/2005/10/understanding-the-long-tail-theory-of-media-fragmentation.html/

# Various non-academic covering the field

- https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-intersect/wp/2014/08/27/forget-click-bait-were-living-in-the-world-of-share-bait-now/

- https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-intersect/wp/2015/06/03/if-you-use-facebook-to-get-your-news-please-for-the-love-of-democracy-read-this-first/?tid=a_inl

- https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-intersect/wp/2016/05/20/what-we-really-see-when-facebook-trending-picks-stories-for-us/

# Various non-academic articles covering the field

- https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-intersect/wp/2016/06/15/you-dont-need-to-find-the-news-anymore-it-will-always-find-you/
- https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-intersect/wp/2016/06/16/six-in-10-of-you-will-share-this-link-without-reading-it-according-to-a-new-and-depressing-study/

# Various non-academic articles covering the field

- Social media outstrips TV as a source of news for young people
- [http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-36528256?SThisFB](http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-36528256?SThisFB)
- [http://www.recode.net/2016/6/14/11926124/facebook-ads-track-store-visits-retail-sales](http://www.recode.net/2016/6/14/11926124/facebook-ads-track-store-visits-retail-sales)
- [https://medium.com/swlh/how-technology-hijacks-peoples-minds-from-a-magician-and-google-s-design-ethicist-56d62ef5edf3#.6goenwpwh](https://medium.com/swlh/how-technology-hijacks-peoples-minds-from-a-magician-and-google-s-design-ethicist-56d62ef5edf3#.6goenwpwh)

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- http://www.umass.edu/digitalcenter/research/pdfs/JF_NetworkSociety.pdf
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- *Piracy Cultures. How a Growing Portion of the Global Population is Building Media Relationships Through Alternate Channels of Obtaining Content,* 2013

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