

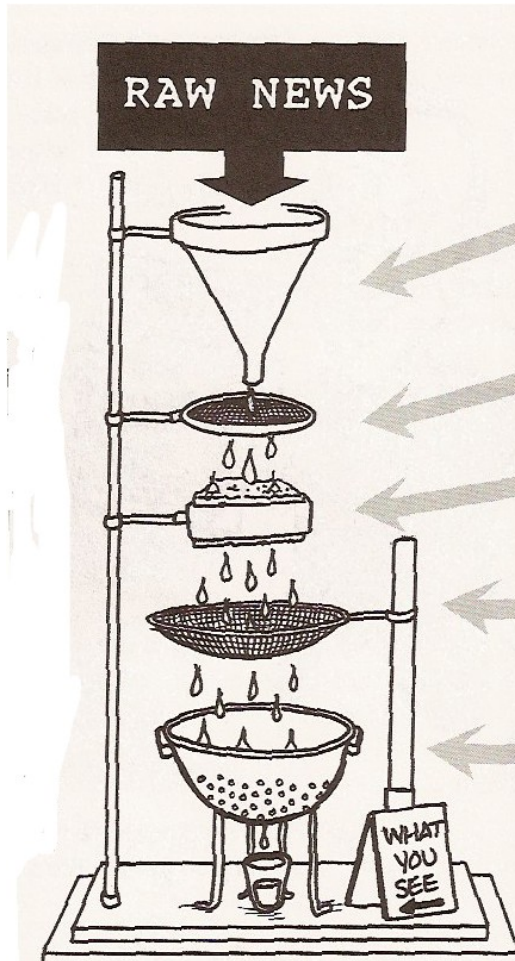
Media Society and Culture

News media in a democratic society

- Is supposed to
- Report events objectively as they occur, to allow citizens to make informed political choices
- Control governmental abuses of power, through investigative journalism

- But, it is more like a Propaganda System
- However, this control is remains invisible when the media are private and formal censorship is absent, portraying themselves as the voice of public

News Filters



Financial ownership

Funding through advertising

Reliance on PR

“Flak”

“Anti-communism”

News Filters

- corporate ownership of the media (Own interests)
- Financial reliance on advertising (Source of money, Business friendly)
- Reliance on PR information provided by government and business (Limited source of news. Over-reliance on power elites)
- “Flak” as a means of disciplining the media (Law suits, petitions, complaints from interest groups/powers/businesses)
- “anticommunism” (Anti-terrorism) as a control mechanism (Obedient audience. Controlled by fear)

Media on Politics

- Transmit political information from political actors to the public
- Gatekeeping
 - Media makes decisions about what is news, and for how long
- Watchdog function
 - Informal check in our political system
 - Media allows the public to keep tabs on behavior of elected officials
- Expand scope of an issue
 - More media attention leads to higher levels of public knowledge about issue
 - This leads to more pressure on politicians

Rich
Media
Poor
Democrac
y

- Robert McChesney
- Most of the news and entertainment available today comes from just a few massive entertainment corporations – function as virtual monopolies or oligopolies
- A handful of media giants compete with one another for market share, but they all know their mutual survival is assured.

Media Industries

- Main trends
 - Corporate concentration
 - Conglomeration
 - Hypercommercialism
- “...media system is an integral part of the capitalist political economy, and . . . this relationship has important and troubling implications for democracy.”
- “The media system exists as it does because powerful interests have constructed it so that citizens will not be involved in the key policy decisions that have shaped it.”

Concentration

- “Concentrated media markets tend to be vastly less risky”
- Horizontal integration has been common in media for a long time
 - Low overhead
 - Greater bargaining power

Conglomeration

- Vertical integration
 - Synergy
 - Deregulation
- Cross-promotion and cross-selling
- Merchandising
- Branding

Hyper commercialism

- spread of media conglomerates externally to new areas of social life
 - Amusement parks
 - Spectator sports
- commercialization of our childhood
 - Commercialization of Life Experiences
- Farewell to journalism
 - Make journalism a profit center
 - Breakdown of separation between advertising and editorial
 - Lowering editorial standards
 - Lifestyle, nightly horrors, fluff

Agenda setting

- Experiment 1 – News stories about defense
 - Group A: Stories about weakness in defense
 - Group B: No stories about defense
 - *** Group A participants much more likely to cite defense as a major problem facing nation
- Experiment 2 – Various news stories
 - Group A: Stories about defense
 - Group B: Stories about pollution
 - Group C: No added stories
 - *** Participants cited defense, pollution, depending on what stories they were exposed to

Framing

- The way that the media presents a story
- Can affect who we blame for a particular problem, which affects how we think the government should respond
 - Individual vs. societal frames
 - Poverty experiment
 - Those who were exposed to societal frames more likely to blame society for high poverty levels
 - More likely to support welfare, food stamps, etc.
 - Those who were exposed to individual frames more likely to blame individuals
 - Oppose social welfare programs

Priming

- Prominence of stories in the media can affect the standards by which we judge political leaders
 - Bush overall approval rating – 71%
 - Approval of handling of economy – 49%
 - Approval of handling of taxes – 52%
 - Approval of handling war in Iraq – 71%
 - **Overwhelming coverage of the war is priming the public
 - Evaluate Bush, they do so based on war, rather than economy or taxes