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Instrumental communicative distortions: the 'Hegemonic' functions of the electronic data.

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INSTRUMENTAL COMMUNICATIVE DISTORTIONS: THE 'HEGEMONIC'
FUNCTIONS OF THE ELECTRONIC MEDIA

A Dissertation Presented

By

Michael T. Martin

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DEDICATION

To my parents, Alide Martin and Oliver Martin, Sr., whose devotion and sacrifice made it possible.

To my grandparents, Amanda and Oder Spelta, for their untiring love.

To my sister, Kristina Martin, for all that she would be.

To my brother, Oliver Martin, Jr., for the dreams we share.

To my aunt and uncle, Hattie and David Jackman, who encouraged me to go on.

To the late Lou Gilbert who embodied the spirit and the conscience of the "new" man.

To the people of Zimbabwe and Vietnam who command the day.

And to the freedom fighters of South Africa who will lead the final assault on Capetown.

ABSTRACT

INSTRUMENTAL COMMUNICATIVE DISTORTIONS: THE 'HEGEMONIC'
FUNCTIONS OF THE ELECTRONIC MEDIA

(September 1979)

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The present inquiry is an attempt to bring relevant social theory to the problematic of media functions in the modern industrial capitalist society; and to show how the electronic media serve to maintain and legitimize the racial divisions, and therefore, the socioracial structure of the American social order. The evidence gathered in this study point to the following:

1. There is a qualitative and empirical evidence to show that the media, particularly television, shapes and alters political reality; and that political attitudes and behaviors are in part, formed by the political reality projected by the electronic media.

2. The media are structurally linked to the power elite in the American social order and the patterns of ownership and control of the media channels are increasingly concentrated in small elite stratum.

3. The images of the social world (race relations, social life) presented by the media are largely consonant with the interests of ruling elites in society.

4. Media systems systematically reproduce distortions of social reality.

5. The electronic media, in reporting the news on race related issues, present blacks as a problem and a threat to

whites and the status quo in America. In doing so, the media
contributes to the maintenance of racial division in society.

6.   Since the owners of the media in the United States have
encouraged the practice of stereotyping blacks through their
portrayal in entertainment and news shows, the author con-
cludes that the maintenance of racial antipathy is a necessary
and central dynamic for ruling elite hegemony.

For us, a revolutionary people in a revolutionary process, the value of cultural and artistic creations is determined by their usefulness for the people, by what they contribute to man, by what they contribute to the liberation and happiness of man.

Our standards are political. There cannot be aesthetic value without human content or in opposition to man, justice, welfare, liberation, and the happiness of man.

-Fidel Castro

* * *

When there are no longer slaves, there are no longer masters.

-Frantz Fanon

* * *

It is better to know where to go and not know how than to know how and not know where.

-From an unknown
 revolutionary in
 Quemada by
 Gillo Pontecorvo

* * *

A civilization that proves incapable of solving the problems it creates is a decadent civilization. A civilization that chooses to close its eyes to its most crucial problems is a stricken civilization. A civilization that uses its principles for trickery and deceit is a dying civilization.

-Aime Cesaire

* * *

America's media managers create, process, refine, and preside over the circulation of images and information which determine our beliefs and attitudes and, ultimately, our behavior. When they deliberately produce messages that do not correspond to the realities of social existence, the media managers become mind managers. Messages that intentionally create a false sense of reality and produce a consciousness that cannot comprehend or willfully rejects the actual conditions of life, personal or social, are manipulative messages.

-Herbert Schiller

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C H A P T E R I

INTRODUCTION

The Communications Revolution

> One communications revolution has taken place in
> our lifetime. The next revolution, perhaps the
> final one, will be the result of satellites and
> microelectronics, which will enable us to do lit-
> erally anything we want to do in the field of
> communications and information transfer--including.
> ultimately, not only sound and vision but all sense
> impressions.
>
> -Arthur C. Clarke

Over the past wo and a half decades, the development of communica-
tion technology has progressed at an incredibly rapid pace. More re-
cently, the speed with which new communication technologies supplant
communication systems that have out-lived their usefulness has accele-
rated so rapidly that man is now witnessing what can best be described
a "communications revolution".

As a consequence of the recent advances in microelectronics and
space technology, and the development of advanced computer systems,
vast amounts of information can be stored and retrieved almost instant-
ly. Through the development of "information transfer networks", we
are approaching the point where anything that is spoken, observed or
written can be converted into an electrical impulse, transferred almost
anywhere, and reconstituted in any form desired.

Complex communication satellite systems begun as a spinoff of the
space program, are capable of transmitting simultaneously to every part

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of the planet. Moreover, what was believed to be theoretically pos-
sible a decade ago is now technologically and practically operational.
Every home and every office in the world can be linked by telephone,
telegraph or facsimile through the recent technical refinement of new
and more sophisticated communication--direct broadcast--satellites.
These advanced satellite communication systems are capable of sending
signals direct to home antennas and, as such, are harbingers of a
future world where video telephones, television transmitters and "sense
impression" transfer systems will be as common as television and the
transistor radio are today.

The Problem: The Manipulation of Consciousness

At the technological level, the past 25 years can indeed be de-
scribed as a revolution in communications technology. Technical devel-
opment is not, however, the same as use. The "new society" envisaged
by the technocrats and optimists, who comment enthusiastically about
the social benefits which they assume will flow automatically from
developments in communications technology, is not altogether certain.
No doubt, a fundamental transformation is occurring in our perception
of the world; and our conception of space, distance and time has been
profoundly altered, in part, as a consequence of the communications
revolution. People separated by thousands of miles share simultaneous-
ly the same experience via satellite television. Action and reaction
bear, consequently, a much closer relationship as the world grows "com-
municatively" interconnected.

Tempered by economic and political realities, considerable specu-

lation and concern has been raised in recent years over the "effects" and uses of communications technology on Man and the society in which he lives. Predictions of a "new" and purposeful social order, however, appear, at best, problematic.

We now recognize, for example, that the electronic media provide much of the material used to form images of the world, social groups, and human conduct. As such, the various media channels present conflict, and where ideology is seldom if ever, absent. To argue that the issues media present are not value-laden is to assume that values are divorced from facts. In every society where the media exists for public consumption, people are bombarded daily by political messages via the news, commercials, televised debates, etc. Programming reflects, in the very production, sponsorship and format of the materials, a host of social values disguised as truths intended to inform and persuade the public opinion. Even entertainment and information programming are not exclusive of ideological content. They fail to distinguish between the intentions of those who produce the materials for programming and the 'effects' upon those who receive it. The media are informed by ideology and inform ideologically those who are exposed to it.

In the past fifteen years the electronic media presented a visual history of Vietnam, recorded the assassination of a president, the killings of a presidential contender and a leading civil rights leader, rioting in the major cities and at a national political convention, etc., it is plausible to assume that the mass media, particularly television, play a decisive role in the construction of political reality.

As such, the focus of recent attention and concern about the

media, centers on the political context in which media operate, the spurious and ideological uses of media technology by powerful interest groups, the nature of the flow of information, the content of programming, and the intended 'effects' of media use on the social and political behaviors of the viewing audience.

These concerns point to a more fundamental problem that informs this inquiry. Who manipulates the media, in what ways, and toward what ends? It is with these questions in mind that the dissertation is advanced. The general foundation of this disseration is the attempt to understand the, as yet, little understood 'effects' of the electronic media on the political attitudes (belief structures) and behaviors of the audience.

. The thesis of the dissertation is that the electronic media, television in particular, function, above all else, as 'hegemonic' instruments for ruling groups in the United States. And that, with other agencies of cultural manipulation and political socialization, the electronic media maintain and advance an ideology that legitimize the existence of structural inequality, privilege, and the political order in society. Specifically, we will attempt to show how the electronic media collude in the maintenance of racial divisions in the United States, and , in doing so, legitimize the socio-racial structure of the American society.

We shall argue that the institutional complex of the electronic communications system in the United States are structurally linked to the political order (Schiller, 1969; 1972). The political order produces, intentionally, patterned use of the media channels by the pub-

lic, and, as such, grants the media spheres of influence within society. By "intentionally" we mean that conspiracy provides the dynamic force for ruling elites to maintain their hegemony and control (Mills, 1956). As the media introduce the public to information concerning issues related to the nature of social relations, electoral politics, power relationships, etc., that information is created, processed, and disseminated by a communications apparatus that is controlled and manipulated by ruling elites. We will examine the structural relationship between each element in this process: the nature and content of information/media manipulation/media control.

The Aims of the Dissertation

The most general goal is to analyze the electronic media, specifically television[*], as a technology and as a cultural form. Specifically, to assess the relationship between technology, society and culture as it shapes ideology. As such, questions of cause and effect, as between a culture and a technology, take form and cogency within an arena of intention rather than accident.

Within this analysis we will establish the centrality of language and its use in 'instrumental' forms of communication wherein the fragmentation and distortion of social reality occurs. Here we rely on the theoretical work of Jurgen Habermas (1971), the eminent representative of the Frankfurt School of social theorists. We extend and link Habermas' communication theory of society to the electronic media analyzing the format and

[*]We tangentially comment on the ideological uses of film throughout the analyses of this inquiry.

meaning of value ladened visual and linguistic messages for intended communicative distortions concerning issues of power, social groups and the political order.

To support this analysis we will bring to bear relevant empirical research and theoretical approaches to the analysis of the electronic media within the general parameters described above. We will examine and critique the dominant research paradigms, and bring to bear on the discussion, the orthodox Marxist and neo-Marxist (Frankfurt School) conceptual approaches, as they relate to 'technological rationality' and media use.

The critique will be developed through an application of the Frankfurt School's theory of manipulation and Gramsci's conception of 'hegemony' to the problematic of race relations in the United States, in order to determine whether the thesis of the dissertation has practical and theoretical value.

In addition we will bring to bear social theory on the questions posed by previous research as they relate to the manipulatory aspects of the media, and how they (the media) contribute to the maintenance of racial inequality in the American social order.

The Design and Organization of the Dissertation

The present chapter introduces the subject of inquiry, states the problem, establishes the aims of the enterprise, and delineates the course of study.

The second chapter reviews and critiques the major research con-

ducted on mass communications as it relates to the influence of the
media on political behavior. We examine the media's role in people's
acquisition of political beliefs and attitudes from childhood to adult
life. We then review the media's influence on the electoral process
and how the media create and are used in the construction and method-
ological approaches employed in political communication research. We
argue that the 'positivist' approaches in media study provide inade-
quate and false accounts of the relationship of media use to political
behavior. As an alternative to the 'positivist' framework, we employ
the Frankfurt School's theory of manipulation in the subsequent theore-
tical and empirical analyses of media uses and 'effects' on social and
political behavior.

Chapter three reviews and critiques television research in the
areas of audience, content, and effect studies.

Chapter four examines the relationship between technology, lan-
guage, and ideology to media use. We apply and extend Habermas' theory
of communication to the electronic media and examine how 'systematic
distortions' are reinforced and amplified by the media agency of tele-
vision. We locate the ideological uses of television within the frame-
work of the political economy of the giant private and governmental
communication systems. By doing so, we establish the relationship
between the media, manipulation, and the legitimization of the politi-
cal order.

Chapter five attempts to apply Habermas' concept of 'distorted
communication' via the electronic media to race relations in the United

States. I argue that the stereotypical characterizations of blacks in film and television reinforce systematic distortions already extant in the social world. As such, I advance the argument that the electronic media subtlely confirm and legitimize racial divisions in American society by beguiling people into accepting images generalized to themselves and others as truths concerning their respective racial group's personality traits, dispositions and behaviors. We establish the historical setting (1915) wherein the distorted and stereotypic images of blacks in cinema emanate to attain legitimacy. We then trace the elaboration of these 'one-dimensional' stereotypes of blacks that emerge forty years later in television fare.

The final chapter summarizes the thesis and indicates areas for further research.

C H A P T E R   I I
A REVIEW OF POLITICAL COMMUNICATION RESEARCH

The corpus of communication research is voluminous through the systematic study of mass communication, as a subject of intellectual and practical inquiry, is comparatively new. Consequently, the varied conceptual frameworks and methodological approaches applied in communication research relies largely on the theoretical developments achieved in the major disciplines in the social and behavioral sciences. Only recently has the study of mass communication emerged, dependency on the other related fields notwithstanding, as a new academic discipline in its own right.

The focus of our investigation in the dissertation is on the "electronic" medium of television. In the present chapter, we shall review and critique the major research conducted on the role of the mass media on influencing political behavior.[*]

Before, we review the various categories of political communication research, we must establish the fact that the primary impetus for research on the mass media was politically and militarily motivated (Kraus and Davis, 1976; Williams, 1975). The systematic study of mass communication began fifty-two years ago with the publication of Lasswell's (1927) classic study of <u>Propaganda Technique in the World War</u>. Lasswell's (1927) study set forth the dominant paradigm of: "Who

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[*]In Chapter three, we review the major research literature--audience, content, and 'effect' studies--specific to race relations in the United States.

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says what to whom, through what channels, with what effects?" Through the collation of propaganda themes, Lasswell established the research category known today as 'content analysis'. Moreover, through the use of in-depth interviews and the differentiation of propaganda audiences, Lasswell opened-up another area for communication research--'audience research'--where psychoanalysis was later to play a major role.

During the second world war, communications research, especially in the United States, focused on how the media could be used more effectively against the Axis powers, especially Germany, who under the direction of Geobbels had developed an extremely effective propaganda apparatus. The then infant science was concerned almost entirely with political persuasion and psychological warfare (Beltran, 1976; Kris and Leites, 1947). Much of the research then was on an "against who" basis. After the second world war, and during the 1950's and 60's (the cold war period) communications research became strongly anti-communist in scope and tone (Turnstall, 1970). Later, (as we shall examine) new areas in communications and research opened up to include electoral behavior, socialization, political information dissemination, and media use in the electoral process.

Nonmedia Political Socialization Research

Greenstein (1968) has delineated the boundaries for political socialization research to include:

> ...all political learning, formal and informal, deliberate
> and unplanned, at every stage of the life cycle, including
> not only explicitly political learning which affects politi-
> cal behavior, such as the learning of politically relevant
> personality characteristics (p. 551).

In short, the study of political socialization includes how politics is learned, how we acquire values and attitudes concerning political institutions, and how we behave politically.

When we examine the literature on mass media's influence on the development of political attitudes and behavior, one is immediately struck by the dearth of studies engaging the two variables. In the past, the mass media and political socialization have been studied separately by researchers in the related disciplines of political science and sociology. More recently, however, a growing number of researchers (Bryne, 1969; Seymour-Ure, 1974; Shostech, 1969), especially those in the fields of journalism, television, and radio, have combined the two variables in order to test hypotheses concerning children's cognitive and affective political development as a consequence of their exposure to media channels (magazines, story books, television and film). Fewer academic researchers, however, have extended their investigations beyond childhood and adolescence into the adult audience of media consumers (Kraus and Davis, 1976).

Out of six comprehensive reviews (Dawson and Prewitt, 1969; Harvard Educational Review, 1968; Hyman, 1959; Patrick, 1967; Sigel, 1965, 1970), and four major studies (Easton and Dennis, 1969; Greenstein, 1968; Hess and Torney, 1967; Langton, 1969) published since 1959 on political socialization, mass communication and television variables were ignored, dismissed as irrelevant or barely noted. It is difficult to comprehend that given the growing television audience, the increase and diversification in television fare, and the amount of media exposure children were receiving, that researchers avoided studying tele-

vision and other media as central sources of political socialization before the nineteen-seventies.

Most studies on political socialization conducted prior to the mid-1970's were nonmedia in content, and they centered on familial influence (Bell, 1969; Blumenfeld, 1964; Braungart, 1971; Connell, 1972; Greenstein, 1965; Hyman, 1959; Searing, Schwartz, and Lind, 1973; Wasby, 1966) as the primary agency of political socialization. Other studies, conducted during this period, 1959-1974, focused on the impact of peer groups (Greenstein, 1965; Langton, 1967; McCloskey and Dahlgren, 1959), education (Greenberg, 1970; Hess and Easton, 1962; Hess and Tourney, 1967), and on perceptions of authority (Adelson and O'Neil, 1966; Froman, 1961; White, 1969) as they relate to socialization and social influence.

The nonmedia studies cited above point to the major thrusts in political socialization research between 1950 and 1974. The family was viewed by researchers as the foremost agency of political socialization where parents functioned as the child's link between consciousness and environment. From this perspective, parents transfer their political attitudes to their children. The childs imitation of and association with his parents was singled-out by researchers as a prime example of the enduring power of parental influence. This perspective eclipsed and/or relegated other agents of socialization to secondary importance, or, as in the case of the media, were excluded almost entirely from consideration. No doubt, the family persists as an important agency of socialization, its primacy, however, especially in households where both parents work, has in recent years been challenged by several

communication researchers (Chaney, 1970; Surlin and Dominick, 1970-71). The family, it is argued, may be the initial agent of socialization, it may not, however, have the greatest impact over time. The same doubts (Jennings, 1967; Jennings and Neimi, 1968) emerge for the relative influence of peer groups and the schools. How powerful are they today in relation to other agencies of socialization (e.g. the media)? More sophisticated conceptual and methodological research designs are required to determine and compare, in different social settings, the relative capacity of each agency of political socialization.

The earlier studies, then, on political socialization report that the family's influence, in comparison to other socializing agents, was dominant in the formation of political attitudes in children and youth. The absence of media variables in these major studies, several noteworthy exceptions (Bailyn, 1959; Bryne, 1969; Kraus, 1964; Schramm, Lyle and Parker, 1961) notwithstanding, suggest that researchers perceived the media as too new to have any significant impact, or that the media's capacity to influence was ancillary even to peer groups and schooling. Kraus and Davis (1976) suggest that the reasons researchers failed to seriously examine mass communication variables in political socialization was threefold: (1) researchers, in conceptualizing political socialization, excluded the mass media as possible independent variables, (2) earlier studies of radio and newspaper exposure concluded that the media reinforced existing attitudes and behaviors rather than creating them, and (3) socialization researchers perceived the mass media as little more than transmitters of information. As a consequence of the three factors, the conclusions drawn from the non-

media studies cited above, and the corresponding perceptions of the re-
searchers who conducted them, media variables until 1970 received only
minor consideration in the field of political socialization research.

Media Political Socialization Research

Children, unlike in the past, are immersed today in an electronic
"media environment". Communication researchers, Gerbner and Gross
(1976), have observed that television:

> ...penetrates nearly every home in the land. Unlike newpap-
> ers and magazines, television does not require literacy. Un-
> like the movies, it runs continuously, and once purchased,
> costs almost nothing. Unlike radio, it can show as well as
> tell. Unlike the theatre or movies, it does not require
> leaving your home (p. 42).

Early studies by Schramm, Lyle and Parker (1961) and Bailyn (1959),
reported the growing use of media, particularly television, by youth to
support the contention that the mass media contribute to the acquisi-
tion of political attitudes. Schramm et al., (1961) noted that youth,
in their first sixteen years, spend as much time watching television as
they spend in school. Bailyn (1959) reported that the children sampled
in her study spent on the average twenty hours a week viewing televi-
sion. Bronfenbrenner (1970) in a later study concluded that:

> By the time the average child is sixteen, he has watched from
> 12,000 to 15,000 hours of television. In other words, he has
> spent the equivalent of 15 to 20 solid months, 24 hours a day,
> before a television screen (p. 103).

Given the present sophistication of research designs, it is em-
pirically impossible to assess the impact of the time spent viewing
television and the formation of political attitudes. However, we can
argue that television contributes to the learning about politics,

social issues, and government, and that political behavior may be form-
ed, or, at least, influenced as a result of systematic television view-
ing (Kraus and Lee, 1973). Hollander (1971), studying the voting be-
havior of youth who grew-up with televisions in their homes, concludes
that the political war "stories" youth viewed on television influenced
the political choices they made at the polls.

Jennings and Niemi (1968), using a national sample of 1969 high
school seniors, conclude that:

> If the eighteen-year-old is no simple carbon copy of his par-
> ents--as the results clearly indicate--then it seems most
> likely that other socializing agents have ample opportunity
> to exert their impact....Not the least of these are the
> transformation in the content and form of the mass media and
> communication channels, phenomena over which the family and
> the schools have relatively little control (p. 183).

Johnson (1967) and Bryne (1969) report that adolescents in econom-
ically depressed rural and ghetto areas obtained most of their politi-
cal information from television. Chaffee, Ward, and Tipton (1970) in-
vestigated the variables of media use, political knowledge, and cam-
paigning activity among adolescents in five Wisconsin city schools in
1968. The three variables were measured by a self-administered ques-
tionnaire. The researchers, comparing the agents of political sociali-
zation (parents, teachers, peers, and mass media), concluded that the
relationships between media use and political knowledge "should be con-
sidered as an independent (or intervening) variable in the political
socialization process, not merely as one of many dependent variables,"
(p. 657).

In a later study, Hollander (1971) investigated how adolescents
viewed the Vietnam war. The major finding he reported in his study:

> ...is the importance of mass media as a source of learning
> about an important political object, war. This finding casts
> considerable doubt on the present utility of much of the pre-
> vious research on the sources of political socialization and
> indicates that researchers have, perhaps, been passing over
> the major sources of political learning. The new 'parent' is
> the mass media (p. 479).

A year later, Dominick (1972), using a sample of sixth and seventh graders from New York city schools, concluded that for the age group he studied "the mass media (specifically, television) are clearly the sources of information about the government" (p. 51).

The following year, Kraus and Lee (1973), replicated several items (church, mass media, family, school, peer groups) used in the Johnson (1967), Chaffee et al. (1970), Hollander (1971), and Dominick (1972) studies. The results of the study (Kraus and Lee, 1973) confirm the above researchers' conclusions.

More recent research (Barnouw, 1975; Collins, 1976; Gerbner and Gross, 1976; Nunez, 1979; Strouse, 1975) further substantiates the findings reported in the studies cited above. Unlike the nonmedia research reviewed earlier, these studies render evidence that point increasingly to the media's particularly television's, primary role in the political socialization process of children and adolescents.

Communication Research on Voting Behavior

In the previous section, we reported that until recently, political socialization research upheld the view that the mass media have a negligible influence upon children's political development. Researchers investigating the electoral process and voting behavior, during this period (1950-1960's), however, have given considerable more atten-

tion to the influence of mass media in election campaigns.

The early 'classic' voting studies conducted by Lazarsfeld (1944), Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee (1954), Campbell, Gurin and Miller (1954), Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes (1960), and the later contributions of Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955), Pool (1959), Key (1961, 1966), Kraus (1962), Rubin (1967), Lang and Lang (1968), and more recently, Mendelsohn and Crespi (1970), MickKelson (1972), and DeVries and Tarrance (1972), have rendered significant information on mass media use and voting behavior.

In a later study, Prisuta (1973) examined the relationship between newspaper exposure and voter turnout. He found that the use of newspapers, as a source of information, among voters, correlated significantly with voter attendance during elections. Moreover, seventy-five percent of his sample indicated that television exposure provided them with the most information, in relation to other media, about the election campaign. Converse (1962) confirms this finding 11 years earlier:

> A majority of those who do notice some political news in the printed media nonetheless feel that they learned more about what is going on politically from the spoken media (radio and television). Given the sketchy coverage of politics in the spoken media by contrast with the written (newspapers, magazines and books), this is quite a commentary on the relative "reach" impact of the newer spoken media (p. 592).

Moreover, a plethora of studies and reports conducted during the 50's and 60's further support the contention that, in politics and, in particularly the electoral process, television's impact has been significant (see Alexander, 1969; Bendiner, 1952; Blumler and McQuail, 1969; Goodman, 1955; Greenberg and Parker, 1965; Kelly, 1962; Kraus, 1962b; O'Donnell, 1966; Salant, 1962).

Although, the early 'classic' studies by Lazarsfeld (1944), Berelson et al. (1954), Campbell et al. (1954), etc., point to the influence of the mass media in the electoral process, they conclude that the media act as reinforcers rather than formers of political opinion. These conclusions stem, in part, from the fact that the studies were conducted during a period when the number of television sets in American households was one fourth of what it is today.

As early as 1948, however, contradictory findings were reported by Berelson (1948) who suggested then that the media could have "pervasive, subtle, and durable effects" on the political behaviors of individuals (p. 182). Blumler and McQuail (1969) report that the public uses television for their "surveillence" needs rather than for guidance and reinforcement. As such, the researchers conclude that viewers rely on television for most of their political information.

Blumler's et al. (1969) study of the 1964 British election and that of Kraus' (1962) study on the 1960 Kennedy-Nixon debates, provide further evidence of television's pervasive and persuasive role in political campaigns, and of the public's use of television for understanding the issues and evaluating the candidates.

Studies and reports on the uses of the media by politicians and political parties during the: (1) primaries (Churgin, 1970; Kelly, 1962; Pepper, 1973); (2) conventions (MacNeil, 1968; McClure and Patterson, 1973; Paletz, 1972; Roper, 1960; Salant, 1962; Swanson, 1973); (3) polling (Brown, 1976; Fuchs, 1965; Harris, 1963); and (4) the televised debates (CBS, 1976; Gilbert, 1967; Gordon, 1977; Katz and Feldman, 1962; McLuhan, 1976; O'Connor, 1976; Rider, 1963) further

point to the media's pervasive influence on voters political behavior
and on the electoral process.

When we examine the influence of television news broadcasts on the
voting patterns and political behavior of adults, the data further sup-
ports the contention that the media informs rather than only reinforces
public opinion. An early study by Danielson (1956) measured the atti-
tudinal effect on voters following Eisenhower's announcement, in
February, 1956, that he would run again for president. Danielson (1956)
reports that the story left the public feeling optimistic about the
choices for a Republican victory in the fall. Robinson (n.d.) studying
the national voting pattern in the 1968 presidential election, in rela-
tion to the George Wallace vote, found that the relationships between
the use of television for information and the support for Wallace among
voters was significant even after controlling for the variables of edu-
cation, age and income.

Another study, conducted by McClure and Patterson (1973) and the
1972 presidential campaign, assessed the influence of the television
news on voters behavior. The researchers report that 30 percent of the
voters sampled who experienced 'high' exposure to television news
changed their belief regarding a corruption issue in the direction con-
sistent with the news message.

The impact of political advertising on political behavior has also
been the subject of investigation by researchers. An early study by
Perentesis (1948) of a 1948 city election in Detroit, found that ad-
vertising via a motion picture trailer was influential in gaining
votes. In 1952, the Eisenhower election campaign committee utilized

television commercials in areas assessed as crucial to Republican success at the polls (Worsnop, 1968). Margolis (1968) reports that by 1956 election campaign strategy relied heavily on the use of radio and television advertising. After the 'Great' presidential debates of 1960, MacNeil (1968) reported that spot ads were used extensively by Nixon, Humphrey, and Wallace. The cost of these television ads, Worsnop (1968) reports, was $12 million, $6 million, and $3 million respectively for each candidate. More recently, the use of political advertising by candidates seeking congressional office has increased significantly and is regularly included in the campaign strategies and activities of candidates running even for minor political offices (Apple, 1976; Carroll, 1976; Lelyveld, 1976; Lynn, 1976).

The communication studies and reports cited above on political socialization and the electoral process (e.g., voting behavior) constitute the empirical bases for the formulation of the early theories of national communication systems and for the models of "communication of information," developed by researchers. These two developments, in the construction of theories of mass communication and in empirical research, are important inasmuch as they established in this century the dominant (traditional) paradigms for the study of the mass media.

The Mass Media and the Communication of Political Information

In this section of the literature review, we examine the relationship of the mass media--as an organizational structure--to political phenomena. We assume that the mass media performs a central role in the creation, organization, and dissemination of information in Ameri-

can society as they do, in most, if not all, industrial societies
(Gordon, 1977). As such, the mass media constitutes processes in that
information is assembled, screened, and transmitted through various
media channels. These media channels (cinema, television, newspapers)
form complex organizational structures where information related pro-
cesses operate. The media, then, are both systems and processes of
mass communication (Kraus and Davis, 1976; Williams, 1975). When the
mass media influences or is influenced by political institutions, their
structures of communication and the processes by which to communicate
information, correspondingly become political.

Only until recently, have communication researchers begun to un-
derstand and study systematically the relationship between the mass
media (structures and processes) as social systems, to political phen-
omena. As a consequence of the conclusions drawn from many of the em-
pirical investigations cited earlier in this chapter, communication
researchers have advanced theories concerning the structure and poli-
tical function of national communication systems. Early communication
theorists classified national communication systems into four categor-
ies developed by Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm (1956). The four
categories are "totalitarian," "libertarian," "authoritarian," and
"social responsibility." Each system of national communications has
a corresponding set of underlying assumptions about the process of
transmission of political information. In "totalitarian" and "author-
itarian" systems, the flow of information is downward from the "top of
the hierarchy" to the 'mass'. From this perspective, all information
is viewed as political and communication systems are directly controlled

by the government. In "social responsibility" communication systems, a high degree of self-censorship exists where media groups exercise control and make decisions concerning the transmission of information on the basis of whether society as a whole benefits. "Libertarian" communication systems are devoid of any outside controls. No restrictions are placed on access to or transmission of information. Access to communication mediums are viewed as a right of the public not to be infringed upon by the state.

This view and typology of communications systems, advanced by early communication theorists has proven inadequate. The models assume that it is possible to determine the social consequences of any form of transmitted information. Recent controversy over the "effects" of television violence illustrates this point. Furthermore, the technologies of advanced communication media require trained personnel to operate them which, in effect, limits access to the media by nonprofessionals. In the case of "libertarian" systems of communication, they are nonexistent. All governments regulate and constrain, to varying degrees their national communication systems. Finally, the above models of national communication systems, are essentially grounded in the descriptive and ideologically based typologies of the early theorists. They convey little about the organization, complexity, and relationship of communication systems to other political institutions in society.

Recently, four alternate models have emerged to supplant the above theories of national communication systems. These models differ in their conception of the way the mass media and the public interact.

Each model, however, is historically related and elaborates on the models which preceded it.

The first and earliest of these models is referred to as the "hypodermic needle" model (Rogers and Shoemaker, 1971) or "mechanistic stimulus-response" model (DeFleur, 1966). Developed during World War I, the "hypodermic needle" model conceived the media "as a needle which 'injects' information directly into the mind" (Kraus and Davis, 1976, p. 115). Researchers including Lasswell (1927), believed then that the mass media had a direct impact on the individual and that the media were capable of producing predictable and uniform behaviors in persons irrespective of their psychological differences. Individuals were conceived, from this view, as non-discriminating entities, who responded identically to similar media stimuli. After a series of experiments and surveys (Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1955), researchers found that this model failed to account for the social context in which media information was received and retained after exposure.

After the "hypodermic model" was found inadequate by research findings, it was displaced by the "social influence" or "two-step" flow model (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet, 1944) which emphasized the importance of social and political groups upon the transmission of information. This model assumed that an individual's perception and retention of information was largely controlled by the groups of which he was a member. Media variables were treated as dependent variables (Merton, 1949), and researchers focused on interpersonal communication (the influence of opinion leaders) as the significant sources of political influence.

The third model to attain prominence among researchers was the "diffusion" model of communication (Katz, Levin, and Hamilton, 1963). Sharing similar theoretical assumptions and methodologies with the "social influence" model, the diffusion approach differs conceptually in one fundamental way from its precursor:

> ...under certain conditions of access to mass media, for particular social relationships, for certain types of information, media transmission of information will have a direct impact upon individuals and can produce changes in their knowledge, attitudes or actions (Kraus and Davis, 1976, p.125).

Ironically, the diffusion model was not a theoretical creation of media researchers, but rather was developed by social scientists in anthropology and education (Rogers and Shoemaker, 1971). The diffusion model is essentially descriptive in nature and linear in process. It is characterized by four stages: information or knowledge; persuasion; decision or adoption; and confirmation or re-evaluation. The mass media are viewed as central only in the first stage in that the media's transmission of information initiates the interest in the audience, renders understanding concerning the information communicated, and, in so doing, facilitates the advance of the other three stages. Under certain conditions, however, the media can continue to influence the audience throughout the later stages (Kraus and Davis, 1976, p. 128). The mechanistic or linear nature of this model has been the subject of considerable discussion (Kraus and Davis, 1976). The diffusion approach treats each stage as if they were discrete rather than interrelated, processes. Moreover, the model is conceived of in linear rather than non-linear terms which forecloses the analysis of the media's influence if it is introduced in later stages of the model.

The final model concerned with the study of the communication of information builds upon the three preceding approaches. Referred to, by researchers, as the "transactional" model, this approach examines the patterns of media use and the social contexts which 'teach' these patterns (Baur, 1964). As such, this model includes, within its conceptual framework, the "social contexts" which inform media use (e.g., the political institutions of society, and the development of technology and the mass media).

> In this model the flow of influence does not simply come down from sources of mass communication. The messages from these sources are only part of the process. Influence also is grounded in social situations (Kraus and Davis, 1976, p. 143).

The "transactional" model has not yet been systematically developed by researchers. It is, however, a critical first step in the development of a research paradigm that will account for the relationship of the mass media to political phenomena where ideology plays a major role in the construction of political reality.

Mass Media and the Construction of Political Reality

The penultimate section of our literature review concerns itself with the media's role in reflecting political reality. Concern over the media's reporting of political events has been questioned, not only by communication's researchers, but, as well as, by politicians and the public alike. Richard Nixon, for example, repeatedly accused the media for unfairness, bias and distortion. In fact, recent disclosures indicate that during Nixon's administration, the White House tried unsuccessfully to control the media (Brown, 1979; Naughton, 1978). During

the 1968 presidential campaign, press disclosures concerning Spiro

Agnew's performance as governor in Maryland, prompted Agnew to reply:

> You know, when a man's reputation is bandied about by a large
> newspaper in the last few days of the campaign...the whole
> thing becomes more than a little unfair. So I say to the
> New York Times: act with decency, act like men, act with
> intellectual honesty--and for heaven's sake let in the fresh
> air (New York Times, p. 28).

These attempts by leading politicians to control and counter the

media's interpretation of political events, illustrates the power the

media is perceived to command by political elites. Recently, aspects

of the production process of information dissemination (editorials,

distortion and intentional bias in reporting and errors of fact) have

come under researchers' scrutiny. Three major conceptual frameworks

on the role of the media in forming political reality emerge from the

research conducted so far.

Anchored in the proposition that behavior depends largely on the

image, the "image" formation framework advanced by Boulding (1961),

argues that messages change images which in turn change behavior pat-

terns. As such, social reality is constructed through the formation of

images by messages transmitted via the media channels. Concomitantly,

political reality is constructed by political messages which modify or

transform political images and, in doing so, political behavior. Poli-

tical reality, in this framework, is viewed as nonstatic and "subject-

ively" experienced, in that message dissemination, image alteration and

behavior changes occur as interactive processes. The media are crucial

during the image formation stage in that they stimulate the individual

to perceive a certain reality that can either affirm, modify, or

entirely re-construct his image of issues, power roles, etc., (Kraus and Davis, 1976, p. 211).

The "communicational reality" framework advanced by Thayer (1968), describes social reality as a function of human communications 'acts'. That is reality is formed and ordered through the 'acts' of talking, listening, and thinking. Thayer argues that "whatever one or more men can and do talk about, but which is not amenable to direct sensory contact by them has no reality beyond what can and is said about it" (p. 54). Mass media then creates reality by extending the environment and the settings in which communication occurs. The totality of this process, within which political issues emerge, are discussed and reflected upon, constitutes the substance of social reality.

The "agenda-setting" framework examines how the mass media establishes priorities in the determination of what it reports to the public, how editors and broadcasters choose and present information, and the affect this practice has in shaping social reality for the audience.

> Audiences not only learn about public issues and other matters through the media, they also learn how much importance to attach to an issue or topic from the emphasis placed on it by the mass media. For example, in reflecting what candidates are saying during a campaign, the mass media apparently determine the important issues. In other words, the media set the 'agenda' of the campaign...Here may lie the most important effect of modern mass communications, the ability of the media to structure our world for us (McCombs and Shaw, 1974, p. 1).

Agenda-setting models have been used extensively by researchers (Funkhouser, 1973; McCombs, Shaw, and Shaw, 1972; McLeod, 1965; Weaver, McCombs, and Spellman, 1975). The advantages of this model are that communication variables can be studied in relation to concrete politi-

cal events (e.g., election campaigns, conventions, debates), and that through the content analysis of media reports and the corresponding audience self-reports, plausable causal inferences can be made by researchers.

Discussion and Critique

Rather than limit the discussion to questions of design, measurement, and data analysis we will discuss the ways in which methods of research and the findings they produce can have different ideological and political consequences for research and policy making.

Given the range of research subjects (socialization, electoral process, communication systems), methodologies, and populations examined in the literature, a holistic compilation of findings that cogently and indisputably point to the media's singular and independent effect on political behavior is, at present, impossible. Political communication research, in comparison to the more established disciplines of political science and sociology, remains a nascent field of inquiry. Relying largely on the theories and conceptual frameworks developed in the social and behavioral sciences, communication researchers have yet to develop systematic and critical theories of the mass media. However, as we have suggested earlier in the literature review, recent findings report that the mass media influences the political attitudes and beliefs of children and youth, that it shapes public opinion in the electoral process, and that politicians increasingly rely on the media in their campaign strategies.

The methods employed in the early 'classical' studies (Campbell,

et al., 1954; Lasswell, 1927; Lazarsfeld, 1944) were produced within conceptual frameworks that supported the prevailing beliefs concerning the political processes and institutions in society. Research, suggests Kraus and Davis (1976):

> ...had the function of confirming what societal leaders already accepted as true while refuting the claims of troublesome social critics. The null findings concerning the influence of mass media on political behavior confirmed the wisdom of permitting mass media to develop as profitmaking, privately operated industries (p. 248).

On another level, the models used during this period were too simplistic in their respective scopes and designs to account for the media's dynamic role in the formation of political attitudes. Consequently, political communication researchers tested isolated bivariate relationships (for example, political attitude formation and parental influence), which had the effect of precluding any real critical evaluation of media variables. As such, the early studies failed to discriminate between the effects of nonmedia variables from those of media variables on the attitudes and behaviors of the audiences sampled. Nor were researchers able to ascertain how attitudes change or become modified in different social contexts. In the few studies that examined the media, researchers defined the media channels as dependent variables, and in doing so, excluded the media as possible primary influences (Kraus and Davis, 1976). Unlike the importance early researchers ascribed to the family, the media were perceived as ancillary to rather than primary agents of political socialization. This view argued that the media, at best, served to reinforce the existing attitudes held by children and adults. Consequently, researchers never

established control groups in their designs nor did they seriously investigate the patterned and differentiated uses of media channels by children. Finally, and more importantly communication researchers during this period failed to generate conceptual models that conceived of and studied systematically the mass media as cultural processes embedded within a political and social system.

Current development in political communication research has not significantly advanced beyond the 'classic' studies. Consequently, many of the more recent studies rely on the conceptualizations, conclusions, and designs of the 'classic' studies instead of empirically re-examining them. By doing so, researchers cannot:

> investigate empirically certain events and happenings since often the stimuli and attending data are "fugitive," that is, have escaped the researcher's grasp or gone undetected. If they question investigator's findings they must do so on methodological grounds or counter with more persuasive evidence (Kraus and Davis, 1976, p. 2).

Gradual development in political communication research has, however, occurred. Researchers are now treating media variables as independent rather than as dependent variables. Moreover, recent research findings report that the media plays an important role in the process of political socialization of children and that in the arena of electoral politics the media can and does influence public opinion. More importantly, researchers are presently examining the media as social systems. Studies that focus on the media's structure and its influence on political institutions in society, are the subject of increasing attention and investigation (Seymour-Ure, 1974).

Variations in conceptual approaches and research designs notwith-

standing, two important conclusions can be drawn from the studies conducted during this decade in political communication research: (1) there is qualitative and empirical evidence from traditional research methods to posit that the media, particularly television, shape and alter political reality; and (2) the political attitudes and behaviors of politicians and the public are, in part, formed by the political reality projected by the mass media.

Though recent research findings support the contention that the media influence and are influenced by political phenomena, only a rudimentary understanding of the media's capacities, structures, and processes exists. We do not understand, for example, the 'effects' of a steady diet of television fare on the development of political attitudes in children and adolescents, nor do we systematically understand the role of the electronic 'media' as a surrogate agent of political socialization for youth in a period where parents are absent from the home during periods of high media exposure (Chaney, 1970; Surlin and Dominick, 1970-71). Moreover, very little empirical knowledge exists from traditional research sources, concerning the organization and structures of, in particular, television. Researchers have not developed models that critically study the process of information creation, organization, as it affects political phenomena.

The paucity of critical investigations that address the above concerns is, in part, explained by the fact that many researchers employ methods that justify conclusions before the research is conducted, especially when issues of social policy are concerned. Most funding for media research is dependent on policy related issues (Kraus and Davis,

1976). Andreski (1972) contends that many researchers use the "scientific" method to enhance their power as well as to create self-serving misperceptions of reality. Many social scientists knowingly or often unwittingly legitimize the political order by convincing the public that certain policies prescribed and implemented by the state are in their best interests (Blackburn, 1970; Smith, 1971). As such, researchers and the disciplinary fields they represent collude in and become reduced to instruments of legitimation for powerful elite groups who seek "scientific" support for their self-serving policies and programs (Caplan and Nelson, 1973).

At another level, researchers often secure their reputations on the bases of investigations which involve refining the methodological procedures in research developed by others (Brown, 1970), or they investigate only those variables which are prescribed and considered "acceptable" by leading scientists in their respective disciplines.

Furthermore, reputations are often established on the basis of discrete and self-contained (laboratory experiments) research projects, which appear methodologically sound but fail to advance any substantive empirical or theoretical contribution to the field of communications study (McQuail, 1942). This type of research, argues C. Wright Mills (1953), is "molecular" in conception and design and is unable to transcend the very theoretical frameworks which inform them.

> It is, at first glance, characterized by its usually small-scale problems and by its generally statistical models of verification...Molecular work has no illustrious antecedents, but, by virtue of historical accident and the unfortunate facts of research finance, has been developed a great deal from studies of marketing and problems connected with media of mass communication. Shying away from social philosphy,

it often appears as technique and little else (p. 554).

At the philosophical level "molecular" research is informed by 'instrumental rationality,' a conception of reason which divorces fact from value. Referred to as the Neo-Positivist School, its members embrace the 'scientific method'. The world, from this perspective, is grounded in "objectivity, efficiency, and the reduction of all problems to the logic of technical mastery" (Giroux, 1976, p. 32.) The scientist is detached from, rather than a participant in research, and the scientific method is grounded in a set of laws governing both natural and social relations. What cannot be measured empirically is excluded from serious consideration and observations do not require value judgments on the part of the observer. Implicitly accepted in this doctrine is the belief that the scientific method is value-free or neutral (Gouldner, 1962). As such, science is abstracted from ideology, although, in fact, it is ideology that informs the way in which the scientific enterprise is conceived of and engaged in by researchers.

In context, the kinds of problems selected for study and the way in which they studied are defined by the scientific method (Gadlin and Ingle, 1975). Mills (1959), poignantly expresses this view:

> As a matter of practice, abstracted empiricists often seem more concerned with the philosophy of science than with social study itself. What they have done, in brief, is to embrace one philosophy of science which they now suppose to be the Scientific Method, this model of research is largely an epistemological construction; within the social sciences, its most decisive result has been a sort of methodological inhibition. By this I mean that the kinds of problems that will be taken up and the way in which they are formulated are quite severely limited by the Scientific Method. Methodology, in short, seems to determine the problems (p. 57).

From the 'instrumentalist' conception of the world and the scien-

tific enterprise, then, research is bound up in a host of complex value and ideological orientations that invariably determine the scope, method, outcome, and utility of research.

In conclusion, political communications research has essentially been concerned with the forms and methods by which information is communicated and exchanged in the modern industrial state. Considerable attention has been focused on how, information transmitted via the media channels, affects political behavior. Despite the findings and theories derived from the literature on communications research, we are unable to define and elaborate those functions of the mass media that, in relation with other political institutions, specify the ways (techniques) in which audiences are manipulated and political reality is constructed in modern societies. As such, traditional communications research fails to critically study the role of the mass media in a political and economic institutionalized context.

Alternative Frameworks

Alternative radical perspectives that view the mass media in an institutionalized context having distinct ideological functions for the state exist. Developed largely from the writings of Marx and Engels on aesthetics, ideology, and art, Marxist social theorists have advanced several major models (the orthodox and noe-Marxist base/ superstructure and structuralist frameworks) that interface with or rather stand in opposition to the dominant positivist models. While substantially different from one another in the way that relationships are conceived of between the media and the economic-political order,

each Marxist model is historically related in that each, serves to ela-
borate on rather than supplant Marx's fundamental assumption that most
forms of human communication are grounded in specific economic rela-
tions. This view maintains that the economic structure (base) of
society determines the relations of production--the ideological forms
(the legal, political, and the cultural apparatus) of the state.

> The totality of these relations of production constitutes the
> economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which
> rises a legal and political superstructure and to which cor-
> respond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of
> production of material life conditions, the general process
> of social, political and intellectual life. It is not the
> consciousness of men that determines their existence, but
> their social existence that determines their consciousness
> (Marx, 1859, pp. 20-1).

From this perspective, then, all forms of "mental production"
(art, philosophy, politics, etc.) are conceived of as epi-phenomena,
determined by the economic processes of production. By extension, the
mass media are defined:

> as a means to express and affirm the leading ideas of dominant
> economic and political interests as well as perpetuating a
> 'false consciousness' of the working class. Thus, in this
> sense, the apparatus of communication are seen as synonymous
> in identity and function with the ideological apparatus
> (Petryszak, 1977, p. 35).

Critics of the base-superstructure formula argue that the model is
"mechanistic" in that it compartmentalizes human existence into a set
of spheres (superstructure) that find their reality elsewheres (base).
They contend that, from this dichotomized perspective, social reality
is conceived as a reflection or representation of the underlying eco-
nomic relations rather than that the concepts, practices, and beliefs
of men constitute the bases of social reality (see Williams, 1971).

In defense of the base-superstructure model, the British Marxist scholar Raymond Williams (1977), offers an alternative interpretation of Marx's original formulation. Significantly, Williams states:

> It is only when we realize that the 'base' to which it is habitual to refer variations, is itself a dynamic and internally contradictory process--the specific activities and modes of activity, over a range from association to antagonism, of real men and classes of men--that we can begin to free ourselves from the notion of an 'area' or a 'category' with certain fixed properties for deduction to the variable processes of a 'superstructure'...Thus, contrary to a development in Marxism, it is not the base and the 'superstructure' that need to be studied, but specific and indissoluble real processes within which the decisive relationship, from a Marxist point of view, is that expressed by the complex idea of 'determination' (p. 82).

At another level, the base-superstructure model is criticized for its inability to locate, within its theoretical purview, the centrality of the media as the "fundamental basis of political and economic power in the modern industrial state" (Petryszak, 1977, p. 35).

What emerges unaccounted for in the base-superstructure framework are a set of critical questions that point to the manipulatory aspects of the mass media in modern society. For example, how does manipulation technique operate within the communications apparatus? How do individuals react and accept manipulation as part of their daily lives? How is the political stability of the state maintained via ideological manipulation?

The Frankfurt School's theory of manipulation is a particularly useful conceptual model for the critical study of these questions. The Institute of Social Research (known as the Frankfurt School) brought together in 1923 a group of gifted Marxist intellectuals who were committed to the re-examination and reformulation of Marxist theory in

light of the changing historical circumstances occuring in the 20th century. The Institute, under the directorship of Max Horkheimer, together with Theordor Adorno, Erich Fromm, Herbert Marcuse, Walter Benjamin, Leo Lowenthal and others, provided through their writings a significant theoretical and practical contribution to the understanding of popular culture which revealed the way in which the mass media manipulate and are manipulated by ruling groups in modern society.

Beginning in 1923, its members agreed that many of the analytic categories formulated by Marx were no longer theoretically and practically valid and useful for understanding the modern industrial society. Confronted by the emergence of fascist movements, the stabilization of monopoly capitalism in Western Europe, and the decline of militancy among the European working class, the Frankfurt School concerned itself with the "ideological reifications" or manipulations of consciousness that blocked the self-conscious force in people to resist domination. At the core of their "philosophy was the belief that the newly advanced industrial societies, with their modern techniques of production, consumption and administration, had ushered in radically new modes of political, social and psychological domination (Giroux, 1976, p. 37).

In opposition to the positivist logic (the logic of domination) that infomred the administrative and production operations of capitalist society as well as the consciousness of its members, the Frankfurt School developed one of the most progressive analyses of technology and alienation to appear in the West.

As a consequence of the decline of worker militancy in Europe, the

Frankfurt School shifted their attention from the working class as a group to the individual, and the focus of their study centered on epi-phenomenal factors (family, religion, mass culture, and the mass media complex). When the members of the Frankfurt School were forced to leave Germany in 1933, they came to the United States where a second shift occurred in the object of their study.

> In the U.S.A., the Frankfurt School were confronted with an advanced monopoly capitalist state, with an equally advanced network of non-Fascist, but nonetheless manipulative popular culture. They no longer saw the family as the decisive agent of socialization; on the contrary, they perceived a dissolu-tion of the family, and thus a drastic qualification of the significance of Freud's model of the id, ego and superego. The psychological component as a whole gradually became sub-sumed under a broader socio-political analysis of the pro-duction, distribution and consumption of popular culture (Slater, 1974, p. 180).

The shift from the analysis of the family to the analysis of 'mass culture' and the manipulatory aspects of the mass media is explained in Marcuse's (1964) critique of the advanced industrial state:

> Introjection...implies an existence of an inner dimension dis-tinguished from and even antagonistic to the external exigen-cies--an individual consciousness and an individual unconsciou-ness apart from public opinion and behavior...Today this private space has been invaded and whittled down by a technological reality. Mass production and mass distribution claim the entire individual, and industrial psychology has long since ceased to be confined to the factory. The manifold processes of intro-jection seem to be ossified in almost mechanical reactions. The result is, not adjustment but mimesis: an immediate identification of the individual with his society and, through it, with the society as a whole (p. 10).

As the members of the Frankfurt School (Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse and Lowenthal in particular) proceeded to advance their criti-que of 'mass culture' and mass media, it increasingly became evident to them that in conjunction with the increasing dominance of 'instrum-

ental' forms of rationality:

> the 'culture industry' under late capitalism had enslaved in-
> dividuals in far more subtle and pervasive ways than had pre-
> vious modes of domination. Their conclusion was that the in-
> dividual was fast becoming a completely assimilated and
> socially determined character (MacIntyre, 1979, p. 3).

From the content analysis studies of Lowenthal (1967) on popular biographies, the newspaper, music, radio, and television analyses of Adorno (1945, 1967, 1957, 1973; and with Horkheimer, 1944), and the more recent analyses of distorted communication in the scientific and adminstrative spheres of industrial society by (Habermas, 1971a, 1971b), the foundation of the Frankfurt School's theory of manipulation and critique of 'mass culture' was formed and elaborated on.

Concerned with how the individual psyche interiorizes culture, the members of the Frankfurt School generally agreed that there exists a structural relationship "between the organization, content and linguis-tic symbols of specific forms of communication and the more typical forms of behavior, common beliefs and fears of large numbers of people that live within the same social milieu from which the form of communi-cation...takes its impetus and characterizing features" (Petryszak, 1977, p. 35). These forms of cultural communication (radio, televi-sion, literature) extant in advanced industrial society distort social reality and transform history into mythology. The distortions of real-ity produced by the media form the bases of popular or 'mass culture', that function to preserve the political order and to anesthetize or submerge 'consciousness' rather than to liberate it. Specifically, for Adorno (1967), the focus of attention was not on particular ruling groups to which cultural phenomena are assigned but rather on "the

general social tendencies which are expressed in these phenomena and
through which the most powerful interests realize themselves"
(Petryszak, 1977, p. 36).

From this perspective, then, the Frankfurt School attributed the
development and perpetuation of 'false consciousness' to the social
tendencies inherent within popular culture and the mass media, rather
than exclusively to the direct manipulations of ruling elites in
modern capitalist society. Marcuse (1964) significantly advances this
view:

> Our insistence on the depth and efficacy of these controls is
> open to the objection that we overrate greatly the indoctrin-
> ating power of the 'media', and that by themselves the people
> would feel and satisfy the needs which are now imposed upon
> them. The objection misses the point. The preconditioning
> does not start with the mass production of radio and televi-
> sion and with the centralization of their control. The people
> enter this stage as preconditioned receptacles of long stand-
> ing; the decisive difference is in the flattening out of the
> contrast (or conflict) between the given and the possible,
> between the satisfied and the unsatisfied needs (p. 8).

Within this framework, the Frankfurt School advanced their criti-
que of cultural manipulation. Culture, in the modern capitalist state,
is reduced, they argued, through the content and form of entertainment
provided by the media, to a commodity subject; to the law of exchange
"that it is no longer exchanged; it is so blindly consumed in use that
it can no longer be used" (Horkheimer and Adorno, 1944, p. 161). In
doing so, the individual as well, is reduced to an object.

Art itself is deformed. Popular music functions as a commodity
and produces "commodity listening". The astrology column in newspapers
causes readers to project the irrationality of their lives on the stars
rather than on the material bases of their existence (see Adorno, 1957).

Stereotypes, in media entertainment, serve to eclipse individual differences and the possibility of an alternate social existence, and cliches allow for the individual to order and make sense out of a disordered world (see Adorno, 1954).

In effect, art, in capitalist society, is leveled and reduced to a commodity and the people who consume it are, in turn, reduced themselves to objects of consumption. The mass media, argued the Frankfurt School, are the vehicles or instruments of this process where an essentially uniform system of cultural messages and images (stereotypes) supplant individual differences to virtual one-dimensionality.

The efficacy of the process of cultural manipulation, contend Horkheimer and Adorno (194-), occurs when:

> The most intimate reactions of human beings have been so thoroughly reified that the idea of anything specific to themselves now persists only as an utterly abstract notion: personality scarcely signifies anything more than shining white teeth and freedom from body odor and emotions. The triumph of advertising in the culture industry is that consumers feel compelled to buy and use its products even though they see through them (p. 167).

In summary, the Frankfurt School concluded, Adorno (1944, 1954) in particular, that the development of 'mass culture' would eventually homogenize man in the modern industrial and capitalist society into a generalized culture of "everyman" where all stereotypes previously ascribed to social groups would be supplanted by a single, all-inclusive stereotype. The critique of 'mass culture' was not, however, a rejection of the mass media, but rather it was a dialectical critique of mass culture in its complicity with monopoly capitalism (Slater, 1974). As such, the Frankfurt School's analysis of 'mass culture'

raises the question of how the mass media can be employed in non-manipulative emancipatory ways.

The Frankfurt School is to be credited for pointing out how distortion and manipulation techniques occur within the mass media, and how that contributes to the pacification of consciousness and the maintenance of the political order in the advanced capitalist society. Unlike the models and frameworks we reviewed earlier in the literature, the Frankfurt theorists incorporated into their framework, the structural relationship extant between the political economy of manipulation, mass media use, and the maintenance of false consciousness. Though I, in subsequent chapters, take issue with several of the Frankfurt School's formulations, it is within their theoretical framework that I advance the thesis of the dissertation.

CHAPTER III

A REVIEW OF TELEVISION RESEARCH:
AUDIENCE, CONTENT, AND EFFECT STUDIES

The Black Audience

Media exposure studies. Interest in viewing behaviors and preferences
of the television audience paralleled the early formation and expansion
of the broadcasting industry. Studies, conducted by Nielson, Roper and
the networks, focused on particular characteristics (e.g., social class,
age, sex and education) of the viewing audience. It was not until the
early 1960's that commercial advertisers and network producers acknow-
ledged that the black audience constitutes a significant segment of the
viewing audience.

The first comprehensive and massive survey of the viewing behav-
iors of the American television audience was conducted by Steiner
(1963). A national cross-section of the adult population was inter-
viewed. Demographic data was collected on viewers, their viewing ha-
bits, and attitudes toward the medium. Steiner found, in part, that
education and race were the most significant variables of viewer atti-
tudes toward television. The black adult viewer, Steiner sampled, ex-
pressed a high regard, as did generally his white counterpart, for
television. Black viewers with no more than a high school education
expressed the most favorable attitude toward the medium. Black viewers
were less critical of television than whites of comparable education.
Television was generally perceived as entertainment by both groups,

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and preferred and used more by black viewers than other mass media.

Five years later Bogart (1968) examined the differences between black and white media exposure to newspapers, radio, and television. He reports that black viewers watched less television than did whites, although both groups had equal access to television. Comparing the viewing behaviors of the black audience in different geographical areas of the country, Bogart found that northern blacks watched more television than those in the south. The patterns between black and white television exposure during the day were reported similar for the two groups. However, black viewers watched significantly less television than whites in the evening.

In a later and more comprehensive study, Bogart (1972) reported that during prime-time black and white viewer exposure to television was similar. This finding is contrary to that reported in his earlier study. Also inconsistent with his earlier finding, Bogart reports that, with the exception of prime-time, black exposure to television was substantially more than that for whites. He contends that black women accounted for the difference, spending significantly more day-time and fringe-time hours watching television than white women. Among the black audience, during prime-time, young blacks (age 18-25) were reported to be the heaviest viewers of television, while older blacks were found the lightest viewers. Evidence was reported in this study to support his earlier finding: that geography and climate affect the viewing behaviors of the television audience. In the south, prime-time exposure was comparatively less among black and white viewers than in the north. Further differences between black and white viewers were

found when education and income-level of viewers were considered. Un-like white viewers of comparable education, upper-income blacks, especially women, watched more television than those lower on the income scale, and black middle-income men watched more television during day-time and fringe-time viewing periods, including the weekends and late evenings, than did white males of higher and lower incomes. In summary, Bogart's findings suggest that the differences in media exposure between and within the black and white audience reflects differences in social class and geography. Although Bogart fails to define the nature (e.g., values, life-styles, etc.) of the social class differences between the two groups, his findings are significant and demand further empirical and theoretical study.

In a more narrowly focused study, employing a smaller sample, Allen (1968) interviewed 100 black ghetto residents of Pittsburgh, and found that family exposure to television occurred seldom before 1 p.m. The heaviest exposure to television occurred between 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. through the evening hours till midnight. Of particular interest in this study was that black viewers depended almost entirely on television for news outside of their community. Although several researchers report that blacks prefer television to other mass media, none have found that the black ghetto residents rely solely on television for news information.

A year later, Greenberg and Dominick (1969), in a more systematic manner than Allen, examined the uses of television by low-income, black and white, urban teen-agers. Identical data was collected from a sample of 206 lower class black and white teen-agers, and 100 middle-

class white teen-agers attending public high schools in Philadelphia. The researchers found that black low-income teen-agers watched more television than did both low and middle-income white teen-agers. In comparison to the middle-income group, both black and white low-income teen-agers preferred and spent more time watching television than other mass media. Based on the reports of the teen-agers sampled, it was found that black parents spent more time watching television than did parents of the other two groups. The researchers contend, as a result of the teen-ager's reports, that significant social class differences exist between the three groups. Although there may be significant social class differences between the three groups studied (e.g., education, occupational level), Bogart's study (1972) suggests that television exposure (time spent watching television) is a poor indicator of the viewer's social class background.

The same year, Shostech (1969) investigated the viewing habits and attitudes of black and white adults residing in Indianapolis. Using stratified random sampling techniques, Shostech sampled 450 black and 400 white subjects in his study. One interview was conducted per household, and an attitudinal measure was adminstered to each subject in the study. The results of his investigation indicate that television and the newspapers are the most important news sources for both the black and white respondents sampled. Blacks, in general, relied more on television for community news than other media. Black respondents, however, who were identified according to attitudinal measures as "militants" were found less likely to use television as their major source of community news. When compared to whites, black viewers were

found no more likely to watch television than white viewers. Both black and white viewers reported, more often than not, that television news and special reports were beneficial in helping to solve community problems. Two out of every three respondents regarded television news as "fair" in reporting civil unrest. Black "militants", however, judged news reports as biased and unfair in their coverage of civil disorders. While only a few blacks, who expressed concern for civil unrest, agreed that television contributes to riots, most whites agreed that television did aggravate the conflict. When both groups were asked what bothered them about television, approximately, half in each group said that nothing about television bothered them. The respondents who were reported critical of television identified television ads, crime, violence, immorality, vulgarity, poor acting, and dullness as the principal complaints. No respondent complained of frustrations they may have experienced in watching programs depicting affluence unobtainable to them. Shostech (1969) further reported that blacks were found significantly (statistically) aware of the increase of black performers and newscasters appearing on television, and that they expressed a highly favorable attitude in support of it. Perhaps the most interesting finding reported in this study was that black respondents preferred more black-oriented programming that protrayed blacks in "average or typical" roles than as heroes.

We should regard this finding as a significant expression of the black viewing audience desire to see themselves portrayed on TV in real life situations, and not as "super" or "sambo" caricatures.

Using survey research procedures employed, a decade earlier

by Steiner and Bower (1973), in an equally comprehensive study inves-
tigated nationally, the attitudes of the American audience toward tele-
vision. Sampling a national cross-section (1900) of the adult poplua-
tion, Bower found, as did Steiner ten years earlier, that the adult
viewing audience was generally favorable toward television. Steiner
found that education and race (in that order) were the best predictors
of viewer attitudes toward the medium. In this study, Bower reports
the opposite, that race and not education was the more predictive
variable of viewer attitudes toward the medium.

Evidence supporting several of Steiner's findings was reported in
the Bower (1973) study. Black viewers, when compared to white at com-
parable educational levels, held a significantly more favorable atti-
tude toward television. Black viewers were less critical of television
commercials than were whites; less apt to think newcasters biased in
the presentation of news events; and more believing of the alleged
benign effects of television on their children. Consistent with
Bogart's (1968) finding, this study reports that black viewers spent
less time watching television than did whites.[1] The better educated
black viewer, however, was found proportionately higher among the
heavy viewers.

Viewer program preference studies. The first major research inquiry
of import that examined the program preference behaviors between black
and white television viewers was conducted by Carey (1966). A massive
sample of 5,000 Illinois families were studied in which 9.9% were black.
Using a Spearman Rank-Order Correlation for 75 selected programs, Carey

found significant differences between black and white viewers in their preference for television fare. Black viewers favored fewer variety and family programs than did whites, preferring physically aggressive comedy and conflict centered dramatic programs in which the principal characters were cast in lonely and individualistic roles. Unlike white viewers, Carey further reports that black viewers tend to watch television heavily on the weekends; reflecting different social and occupational living styles between the two groups.

Several years later, Fletcher (1969) examined the television preference behaviors of black and white youth, attending public school in Georgia. Using rank order procedures, similar to that of Carey's to test for similarities between the two groups, Fletcher reports no significant correlation between the two racial groups in their preferences for television fare. This finding supports that of Carey's. However, contrary to Carey's data that revealed a strong preference among black adult viewers for violent and crime oriented programs, Fletcher reports that black youth preferred situation comedies and family programs. One possible explanation for the differences in program preference between the two black samples examined in both studies may be the result of regional differences.

A third regional study, Surlin and Dominick (1970), examined the preference behaviors between black and white lower-income and white middle-income teen-agers attending high school in Philadelphia. In order to code each respondents program preferences, four typologies of program categories were created: loner, family, team, and entertainment (variety).

Findings reported in this study indicate that programs with family themes were preferred more by black and white lower-income teen-agers than by white middle-income teen-agers. No significant differences were found between the three groups for shows portraying characters cast in a "loner" role. Programs featuring team characterizations were preferred equally by both black and white teen-agers. However, significant differences, according to race and income-level of teen-agers, occurred in their preference for entertainment programs. Black teen-agers preferred fewer variety shows than did white teen-agers of both lower and middle-income. A comparison of the three above studies reveals that black and white viewers prefer different kinds of television fare. Ambiguity exists, however, in the identification of program types differentially preferred between and within the two racial groups. Results of Surlin's and Dominick's investigation support Carey's assertion that black viewers prefer variety and entertainment programs less than whites. The two researchers, however, found that, unlike Carey, black and white teen-agers preferred equally individualistic, or "loner" programs. More significantly, Fletcher and Surlin, et al., found that contrary to Carey's finding, black viewers preferred more programs that centered on family interactions than programs featuring loner portrayals.

In summary, the studies cited above yield both contrasting as well as consistent information. The findings are reported below in statement form:

    1. Attitudes toward television are significantly related to race and education of viewers.

2. Black viewers express more favorable attitudes toward television than whites of comparable education.

3. Black viewers, regardless of education, generally have a favorable attitude toward television.[2]

4. Several studies found that the more affluent black viewers spend more time watching television than the lower-class black viewer.

5. Black viewers prefer television more than other mass media.

6. Several studies report that black viewers rely on television more than other mass media for world and community news information.

7. Black viewers watch more television than white viewers (however, several studies report the contrary).

8. Geography affects the viewing behaviors of both black and white viewers. Specifically, Northern blacks were found to view more television than blacks from the South.

9. Black and white viewers prefer different kinds of television fare.

10. Black viewers prefer black-oriented television programming, especially when blacks appear in significant roles.

11. One study reports that, unlike black viewers, whites believe that television contributes to civil unrest.

12. "Black Militants" were found to rely less on television as a major source of community news than did blacks in general.

The Black Image on Television

Content studies. In the past decade, the content of television programming has been the subject of considerable research. Numerous studies have investigated the effect of televised violence on viewer behaviors, while, to a lesser extent, researchers have focused on the degree to which television portrayal of sex and occupational roles conform to social reality. Results of several studies (DeFleur, 1964;

Gentile and Miller, 1961; Smythe, 1954) suggest that television presents a highly selective and distortive view of social reality. Recently, researchers have broadened their investigations to include racially diverse television programming.

In a well designed study, Roberts (1970) investigated the extent to which blacks appeared in television; the character and occupational roles in which they were cast; and the context in which they performed. Selecting three commercial network affiliated stations in Iowa City, Roberts recorded each time a black appeared on television during prime-time for a week. Each time a black appeared on television two measures were taken. First, if a black appeared, regardless of how long or in what role, and secondly, if they were cast in a recognizable occupational role (e.g., professional, managerial, clerical, sales, domestic, etc.) for a period of at least three minutes.

Roberts reports that when black portrayals were compared to the national racial composition of the labor force, television is significantly distortive of social reality. Black performers were cast more often in occupations related to law enforcement and entertainment; and they appeared financially well-to-do. As such blacks were overrepresented in professional roles and underrepresented in occupations of less prestige. Approximately 50% of the television programs appearing on television. Blacks, however, were found stereotyped in appearance and action: as light-skinned and conservatively dressed people who always respected the laws, and seldom, if ever, engaged in phyiscal contact with white women. Comparing the three network's presentation of blacks, Roberts found that blacks appeared more often on ABC than on

NBC and CBS.

A later study, conducted by Seggar and Wheeler (1973), compared the portrayal of ethnic minorities (including blacks) with those of white portrayals in television dramas. They investigated the following: the over and underrepresentation of minorities appearing on television in relation to each group's actual proportion in the national population; the sex distribution in the portrayal of roles; the occupational portrayals of each minority group in relation to their proportion in the national population; the representation of each minority group vis a vis specific occupations portrayed; and the amount of television exposure each group received. On a massive scale, data for 1830 distinct portrayals was collected from 250 half-hour programs viewed over five consecutive weeks. Cartoons, news, westerns, commercials, sports, historical, and talk programs were excluded from the study. Each portrayal was related to occupational role, sex, and ethnicity of the performer, and grouped in the following typologies: Portrayal, Minority, Performance Time, Occupational Role, Census Category of Occupations, Prestige, Distortion (when compared to the actual labor force), and Labor Market.

Results of the study indicate that the frequency of portrayals of ethnic minorities on television is inconsistent with their respective proportion in the national population. Black portrayals were significantly underrepresented while those for whites were overrepresented, with black women being most underrepresented. Consistent with Robert's finding, blacks were reported, in this study, to be overrepresented in both professional and managerial occupations, being most frequently portrayed as government diplomats, musicians, policemen, guards, and

servicemen (in that order). Conversely, blacks were found underrepre-
sented, except for household domestics, in all occupations of little
prestige. Finally, like the other non-white minority groups examined
in this study, blacks were portrayed, in most cases, in roles of less
than three minutes, reflecting, the researchers contend, the network's
policy of tokenism towards minority groups.

The following year, Hinton, Seggar, Northcott, and Fontes (1974)
compared black and white portrayals on television in order to determine
whether tokenism and stereotyping occurred in network programming. The
researchers hypothesized that blacks would be portrayed more than
whites in minor roles; and that blacks would be portrayed more in nega-
tive stereotypes than are whites.

A sample of 133 randomly selected programs, regularly televised
between 5 and 11 p.m., were collected over 6 consecutive weeks. The
researchers excluded, as in the previous study, variety, news, talk,
etc. programs from their study. The only programs samples were comedy
and drama. For every nine whites one black performer appearing on
television for more than three seconds was recorded. Three hundred and
seventeen different portrayals were collected in a ratio of ten whites
to one black. In order to determine whether differences in stereotyp-
ing occurred between the two groups, these researchers operationalized
the following stereotypes: industriousness, competence, attractiveness,
hostility, morality and dominance.

Results of the study,[3] support the finding of Seggar and Wheeler
(1973): that blacks are portrayed more often than whites in minor
roles. Moreover, black and white females, black females to a larger

extent than white females, were reported excluded from significant roles on television. Support was also found for Roberts' finding that ABC portrayed blacks more often than the other two major networks. In this study, CBS and ABC presented blacks more than NBC. Contrary to the research hypothesis, evidence was found to indicate that whites were stereotyped more negatively than were blacks. Whites appeared more often than blacks as violent, hostile, criminal, and immoral. The researchers, however, observed a tendency toward a negative stereotype of blacks in the "dominance" category. That is blacks were portrayed more than whites in subordinate roles.

The final three studies reviewed in this section, examine the networks' portrayal of blacks on television newscasts.

In the first study, Pride and Clarke (1973) investigated the differences between the networks news coverage of race issues. They examined the news story's position and duration in the broadcast; the language structure used by newsmen; and the manner in which the networks treat social and institutional symbols in presenting the news. Systematically, one day a week was randomly selected over a two-year period (1968-70) of televised news programming. Transcripts were made for each race-related story broadcast. Each sentence in the story was coded using a classification system designed to identify inference statements. Data was also collected and coded for date, network, source, and story number for each program. Nine symbols (President, Courts, Police, Blacks, Black Militants, etc.) were constructed and measured according to direction (positive, neutral, or negative), and dimension (strength or morality) of each sentence.

Pride and Clarke found that the networks do not operate uniformly in the amount of coverage and emphasis each placed on race issues. NBC provided more coverage (time) and greater priority (order of presentation) than did the other two networks. Unlike ABC, CBS and NBC more often identified the source of their information when reporting race-related events. Network anchormen were more likely, however, to make unidentified reports. The treatment of different symbols was found consistently the same for all the networks. "Black Militants" were treated more severely by the networks, while the courts received the most positive treatment.

In the second study, Roberts (1975) recorded, from two three-week periods sampled during the early evening, the number of news segments in which a black appeared on television. Data was collected on the frequency of black appearances; the nature of the news story in which blacks appeared; and their occupations (when it was possible to determine).

Roberts found that blacks appeared in approximately 25% of the news programs sampled. The majority (52%) of black appearances were seen but not heard. Non-speaking appearances were significantly higher on ABC than on the other networks. Blacks appeared more often in news related to civil rights issues, and unlike entertainment programming where blacks most often appear in high prestige occupations, blacks appeared more often in news programs in blue-collar occupations.

The final and most recent study on minorities in network television news, was conducted by the United States Commission on Civil Rights (1979). Using a sample of news programs broadcast on each of

the major networks on five randomly selected dates in 1977, 330 stories from 15 news programs were analyzed. Of the 330 stories, only 8 (2.4 percent) were found related to women and minorities. Two of the eight stories that related to women or minorities were reported by a minority or female correspondent. The Commission reports that the mean length of all news stories was 128 seconds, while the mean length of stories on minorities was 73 seconds (40 percent shorter than the average). Moreover, the few stories concerning minorities tended to occur late in the programs which the Commission suggests is a measure of its (story's) importance.

The studies cited above reveal the following:

1. Television is distortive of reality, portraying blacks more often in professional and high prestige occupations than in occupations consistent with their actual social status in society.

2. Although blacks are significantly underrepresented on television in proportion to the national population, an increase in the frequency of blacks appearing on television was reported by several researchers.

3. Stereotyping of blacks is practiced by the major three networks.

4. Blacks are portrayed more than whites in subordinating roles.

5. One study reports that whites are portrayed significantly more than blacks in violent, hostile, criminal and immoral roles.

6. Blacks are portrayed most often as entertainers and regulators (e.g., guards, policemen, officials).

7. Blacks are portrayed more often than not in minor roles.

8. Blacks appear more often than not on television for less than three minutes. Several studies suggest that this reflects the networks policy of tokenism toward blacks.

9. Blacks are more often seen on television than heard.

10. Black women are most underrepresented on television, and to a large extent, are excluded from significant roles.

11. Differences exist between networks in the amount of coverage and emphasis placed on race issues.

12. The three major networks treat issues related to black militancy severely.

13. Blacks appear more often on news broadcasts in blue-collar than professional and high prestige occupations.

14. A character profile emerges of blacks appearing on en-entertainment programs. They are cast as regulators, law-abiding citizens, subservient to whites, professionals, financially successful, living in luxurious settings, and seldomly shown in physical contact with whites.[4]

Attitude Formation/Elaboration: Television's Impact

Effect studies. Television is not a definable, discrete, and unitary element. Like other mass media, television performs a mediating function prescribed by external forces. As such, it responds to and is manipulated by externally imposed restraints, and, therefore, operates as a conduit through which cultural messages become reified in the form of image and sound. The medium itself, however, functions as a stimulus that conditions the viewer for subsequent value ladened stimuli. The viewer, on the other hand, comes to television with a host of values and beliefs that the medium can either modify or reinforce according to the content and format of its programming. Consequently, cause and effect relationships (that are reliable and valid) between the message, mediated by the medium, and the behaviors of the viewers are difficult to discern given the present experimental paradigms available to researchers.

Laboratory experiments have, however, suggested that children learn from and identify with characters in films (Maccoby and Wilson, 1957); that children imitate film-mediated aggressive models (Bandura, Ross and Ross, 1963); and that stereotyping can change after television exposure to counter-stereotypes (Scherer, 1970-71).[5]

If television is more than mere entertainment, but functions as an important socializer, then the effects of television content on the social behaviors of viewers is of enormous import.

Until recently, relatively little systematic research has been conducted on the influence of racially diverse programming on viewers behavior. The studies reviewed in this final section, examine the effects of television programming on the racial attitudes of viewers.

Gerson (1966), investigated the use of mass media (television, movies, books, and magazines) by black and white adolescents residing in the San Francisco Bay area. The study was concerned with how the media functions as an agency of socialization for different groups in society. Gerson examined the social contexts in which media socialization behavior was more likely to occur. Using a pretested questionnaire, he collected data from a large sample of 623 (272 white and 351 black) adolescent males (49%) and females. Media socialization functions were divided into two categories; media reinforcement and media norm-acquiring behaviors.

Results of the study indicate that significant differences exist between the two racial groups in their use of mass media. Black adolescents were reported to use mass media to learn how to behave like whites. Older black adolescents were reported to use mass media more

for norm-acquiring behaviors than did younger black adolescents. White youth relied more on mass media, especially the older white adolescents for social reinforcement than for norm-acquiring behaviors than did black adolescents. White females were found more dependent on media for socialization than white males, while black males used media for socialization more than black females. When the two racial groups were compared for socio-economic differences, black and white working-class adolescents were found highers users of mass media as a socialization agent than did middle-class adolescents.

Several years later, Byrne (1969) investigated the influence of mass media (television and newspapers) on the political socialization of children. Comparing four subcultures: rural black, urban black, rural white and urban white in North Carolina, Byrne administered a questionnaire to 184 black and 203 white students in the 6th, 10th and 11th grades.

Black children were reported exposed to news on television as often as white children. The racial groups differed, however, in their exposure to newspapers. Black children were exposed less to newspapers than whites. Families of urban children, regardless of race, used newspapers more often than those of rural children. Children of lower socio-economic status, regardless of race and residence, watched the news on television less than did upper-income youth. Black children who were exposed less to newspapers than whites, reported more positive attitudes toward the government than did white children. Byrne contends that type of mass media exposure is related to certain attitudes towards political authority. Evidence was found to support this con-

tention. When race, geographical, and socio-economic characteristics of the children sampled were compared to the type of media they were exposed to, it was found that black, rural, and lower-income children were exposed more to television than to newspapers. These three groups in the aggregate, reported more favorable attitudes toward the government than did children of urban, white, and middle-income backgrounds.

Three years later, Greenberg (1972) examined black and white children's reactions to blacks portrayed on television entertainment programs. Greenberg hypothesized that black children would identify more with black characters and black programs than would white children; and that black children would watch more programs featuring blacks than would white children. For white children, who were geographically distant from blacks, and, therefore, seldom interacted with blacks, Greenberg hypothesized that television portrayals of blacks would serve as a primary source of information for white children; and that it would generate more positive attitudes toward blacks.

Four groups (one black and three white) of fourth and fifth graders were interviewed from several urban and rural public schools in Michigan. Each child was presented with a list of 25 programs and asked what programs they regularly viewed. The program list included 12 programs that regularly featured, blacks, and 12 that did not, plus one "Sesame Street" program. Data was collected on the following: the children's exposure to the 25 programs, their preference for specific programs, their perceived reality of life (including black life) portrayed on television, where they obtained information about each others race, their attitudes toward blacks, and their contact with blacks.

Analysis of the data indicates that black children watched more television than did white children, and that black children preferred programs that featured blacks more than did white children. Black children's identification with black programs increased as they were exposed to more black shows than did white children. White children, however, identified strongly with several programs that featured a black performer. Interestingly, neither black nor white children identified with child characters appearing on the programs. Black children perceived television to be more realistic than did white children. White rural children reported that television was a major source of information about blacks, while most black children reported that whites lived in their neighborhoods. Perhaps Greenberg's most significant finding was that white children identified with blacks and black feature programs from television exposure and not from personal experiences with blacks; and that television exposure, and not personal contact, contributed to the belief in white children that black performers were representative of blacks in the real world.

Impressive findings notwithstanding, Greenberg was unable to identify why both black and white children identified with black performers, nor did he examine the mediational influence of peers and parents in the structuring of the child's racial attitudes.

The following two studies discussed in this paper constitute part of the Surgeon General's Advisory Committee report on Television and Social Behavior: to date, the most exhaustive investigation of television's impact on children's social behaviors.

Concerned with the legitimation functions television performs for

the social order in American society, Clark (1973) investigated the medium's affects on the formation of black personality and self-concept. Clark argued that the mass media in general, and television in particular, generates violences, and is by its character and function violent. In order to empirically demonstrate this phenomena, Clark conducted a series of related studies: that operationally defined the concept and dimensions of identification vis a vis psychoanalytic and cognitive models of learning; that generated a psycho-dynamic profile of "Black consciousness"; and that distinguished between black and white behavioral responses to the media's presentation of blacks.

The results of his studies indicate that blacks are presented unfavorably on television in comparison to white portrayals. This enables whites, by comparison, to feel a sense of self-esteem and legitimacy. Conversely, Clark reports that blacks as a result of this process, experience often severe and crippling personality disorders. As such, television commits an act of "violence" against non-white peoples. Paradoxically, Clark reports, that respondents judged high in "race consciousness" experienced a heightened racial awareness by virtue of their inability to identify with mass media models. Consequently, he argues, that a cause and effect relationship is manifest in that blacks who commit acts of social violence are responding, to a large extent, to the social violence committed against them by the social order and the mass media, and especially television.

Greenberg and Gordon (1972), examined the influence of social class and race on children's perception of television violence. They sampled 325 (black and white lower-class, white middle- and upper-class)

fifth graders attending public schools in Michigan. Each subject was shown a 45-minute video tape depicting a variety of television violence.

Results of the study indicate that low-income black and white children found violent scenes more acceptable than did the white middle- and upper-class children. The low-income groups preferred watching the violent scenes more, and believed that they were more real to life than did the middle- and upper-class groups. Interestingly, low-income black children were found to perceive less violence in scenes of violence when compared to other groups. When the four groups were compared, black low-income children were found more accepting of the violent scenes than were the other three groups.

In a more recent study (Donohue, 1975) examined black children's perceptions of television characters. Donohue hypothesized that black children would prefer more violent than nonviolent television characters, and would respond to violent characters more violently when compared to other response categories measured in the study.

A sample population of 247 black elementary school children was selected from two schools in New Orleans. Data was collected for age, sex, favorite television program, favorite television character, amount of television exposure, and the time in which viewing usually occurred in the children's home. Each child heard descriptions of four situations, and after each description was asked how to identify their favorite television character, how their parents, and their best friend would respond in the situation described by the interviewer. The data was grouped according to violent or nonviolent response categories.

The results of the study indicate that television provided essen-

tially harmless behavioral models for the black children studied. In only a few children did television provide a negative behavioral model. Black children imitated their favorite television characters behavior for the situation described. Both male and female children believed that their favorite television characters would respond violently to several of the situations described by the interviewers. In situations where the favorite character was perceived by the black child to respond violently, the character served as an antisocial model of behavior. The behavioral categories that provoked the most violent responses in the children sampled were "you", "TV character", and "best friend". Donohue also reports that black male children preferred violent television programs more than females, and that aggressive responses and preferences for both violent programs and characters tended to decrease in older children, especially among males.

The same year, in a well designed study, Graves (1975) investigated the affects of racial diversity in children's television cartoons on black and white children's racial attitudes and preferences for program characters. Eighty children (age six-eight) were randomly selected from racially mixed schools in the Boston area. Subjects were distributed equally, according to race and sex, and randomly assigned to experimental or control conditions. Each child was individually tested on racial attitude and program preference measures. Several weeks later, the children in the experimental groups were exposed to one of several different types of cartoon programs, and then immediately re-tested on attitude and preference measures. The cartoons used in the study were one of four types: positive portrayals of blacks

when they were in the numerical minority; negative portrayals of blacks when they were in the numerical majority; negative portrayals of blacks when they were in the numerical minority. The children in the control group were exposed to one of two wildlife programs.

Results of the experiment indicate that the cartoon programs used in the study had an effect on the children's racial attitudes. However, the extent of the influence, Graves contends, was determined, largely, by the child's racial attitudes prior to exposure. She found, as Greenberg (1972) reports, that positive portrayals of blacks tend to produce more positive attitudes in black and white children. However, negative portrayals affected the two groups differently. Exposure to negative portrayal of blacks produced significant negative attitudes in white children, while for black children, negative portrayals produced positive attitudes, especially for black females, who were exposed to cartoons featuring black women. That is regardless of the portrayal, black children responded positively, suggesting that the inclusion of blacks, in cartoons, had a salutary affect on their attitudes. Graves reports that no significant difference in program preferences between the two racial groups was found. Both groups responded favorably to cartoons featuring both black and white participants.

Although the final study reviewed in this section, Gorn, Goldberg and Kanungo (1976), does not directly bear on blacks, I consider the researchers findings of import. Gorn, et al., using a traditional experimental design, examined English Canadian children's reactions toward other racial groups (American Indian and Oriental) portrayed on

television. A total of 205 white upper-middle income nursery school children (age 3½ to 5½) were randomly assigned to an experimental or control group. The experimental group was exposed to "Sesame Street" inserts containing children of racially mixed groups playing together, and to inserts where one racial group, other than their own, was portrayed in a non-integrated, though similar play setting. Eac child, immediately after viewing the inserts, was interviewed and shown two sets of four photos selected from the inserts depicting, in one set, white children, and in the other set, Oriental and Indian children. Each child was then asked which group of children they would prefer to come visit the nursery school the next day.

Response preferences for both the experimental and control group were compared, and results indicate that the children in the control group showed a significant preference for playing with white children. The children in the experimental groups, who were exposed to the multi-racial inserts, preferred playing with the Oriental and Indian children. When the children's responses for both types of inserts (integrated and non-integrated settings) were combined, it was found that children in the experimental groups continued to prefer to play with non-white children more than did the children in the control group. Although statistically not significant, it was found that an increase in the children's exposure to the television inserts produced a more favorable reaction toward the Oriental and Indian children.

The findings of the studies cited in this section are summarized below:

1. Four researchers found that racially diverse television

programming affects children's racial attitudes positively.

2. The extent of the effect of racially diverse television on children's racial attitudes depends on the child's racial attitudes prior to television exposure.

3. Black adolescents use mass media (including television) in order to learn how to behave like whites.

4. As a result of television exposure, black youth were found to express more positive attitudes toward the American government than did white youth.

5. Several researchers found that black children perceive television content to be more realistic than did white children.

6. Three studies indicate that black children identify with black programs and black characters more than did white children.

7. Several studies indicate that white children identify with black characters and programs featuring blacks.

8. Television is a major source of information about blacks for white children.

9. Mass media (including television) contributes to the destruction of black personality.

10. One study found that television provides essentially innocuous behavioral models for black children to imitate.

11. Black youth were reported, in one study, to perceive less violence in scenes of violence on television than did white youth.

12. One study found that white children preferred playing with non-white children after exposure to multiracial programming.

Critique of the Research

The findings gathered in the literature review, suggest that there exists, little, if any, consistently reliable evidence of either the neutral or the salutary effects of television on the racial attitudes of viewers.

No doubt, the "image" of blacks portrayed on television has changed from the menial (servants, cooks, and janitor), or comical (Amos 'n' Andy) characterizations of the past that overtly emphasized subservancy and ridicule. The question, however, is whether new stereotypes of blacks, equally as destructive as of those of the past, have emerged to supplant images no longer tolerable to the viewing audience, especially the black audience. Several studies cited in the review report that blacks are persistently stereotyped in television entertainment fare. They are cast as "regulators" (policemen), law-abiding citizens, professionals, financially successful, living in expensive dwellings. At a deeper level, in interracial scenes, blacks are, in most cases, subtlely portrayed as subservient to whites, and are seldom shown in physical contact with whites, especially when the scenes are sexually charged.

Although many of the studies cited in the review used distinct and elaborate empirical research designs and traditional and innovative data acquisition and measurement techniques, only one study (Clark, 1972), attempted to link systematically empirical data with underlying psycho-dynamic (cognitive and emotive) processes. Like much of the research we reviewed in chapter two on the 'effects' of mass communication on political behavior, most of the studies examined in this chapter failed to render intelligible the relationship between media variables and the racial attitudes and behaviors of viewers.

The problem, as I have suggested earlier in the critique of political communication research (chapter two), lies in the implicit value systems of traditional researchers; values that inform the logic of

research itself. Smythe (1954) has observed that:

> The bulk of the research in the interdisciplinary field...
> known as 'communications research' has been in the hands of
> persons who more or less consciously adopt the stance of
> 'scientism'. By this I mean that they will accept as 'know-
> ledge' only what has been demonstrated through 'controlled
> experiments'; and that their assumptions and preconditions
> are often inexplicit and seriously biasing. One of the more
> serious of these preconceptions has been that there is a
> simple cause-and-effect relation between the content of
> mass media and the behavior and attitudes of the audience
> (pp. 20-1).

The assumption here is that the only evidence--particularly in
studies of 'effects' on social behavior--deemed "legitimate" by, es-
pecially experimental researchers, must come from laboratory settings;
and, more significantly, must be "blessed" with statistical measures of
variance. As early as 1951, Fearing remarked vis a vis the influence
of film and radio on social behaviors that:

> The viewer and listener are dynamic participants in the situ-
> ation. They react on the content presented rather than react-
> ing to it. How they react is determined by many factors only
> one of which is the content of the film itself. This is not
> equivalent to saying that film and radio have no effects.
> Rather, it raises the much more complicated question of what
> effects under what conditions (p. 40, emphasis in the origin-
> al).

In context, social scientific experimentation concerning the ef-
fects of television programming on viewer attitudes and behaviors have
frequently exhibited methodological problems. These problems are as-
sociated with the research designs of controlled investigations in
which relevant factors (normal viewing conditions) either cannot be
overtly manipulated or cannot be varied in accordance with strict logi-
cal design sequences (see Nagel, 1961). Consequently, causal imputa-
tions based upon controlled investigations have faced serious technical

problems concerning the identification and definition of variables, the choice of relevant variables, the selection of representative sample data, and the familiar post hoc fallacy in which data about sequentially manifested events are interpreted as indicating causal connections.

Specifically, in the controlled experiments ('effect' studies) cited in the literature review, the artificial conditions of the laboratory setting is by no means equivalent to the normal viewing conditions of the child or adolescent. By distorting the context of the viewer in his home, etc., the experimental setting becomes an abstraction, so divorced from reality as to make any generalization of findings problematic. Even laboratory conditions which attempt to replicate the natural television viewing environment have low-order generalizability to society. Moreover, methods (surveys) which attempt to collect data based on natural viewing conditions of subjects within their homes are also of limited usefulness.

Halloran (1974) poignantly sums up what happens as a consequence of this spurious "scientific" process:

> In our operational definitions we have disembodied, fragmented, and pigeon-holed human beings into cognitive, affective, and behavioral bits and pieces. We have rid society of its embarrassing complexity by displaying a total disregard for what is really taking place. The situation has been approached, seen, examined and analyzed, according to the requirements of fabricated model or design...Our obsession with scientific method (with reliability in particular), accompanied by the neglect of validity, has frequently led to a serious distortion of social reality...How valuable is it to be precise and consistent about something that isn't true or doesn't matter? (p. 15).

Researchers must take cognizance of these traditional research problems and devise multi-procedural designs which allow for observa-

tion and logical rigor outside of the confines of the controlled-experimental format and situation. As such, the expansion of psychological and mass communications methods and theories delineating the relationship of media to learning processes and the formation of racial attitudes awaits further empirical and, especially, theoretical study.

TECHNOLOGY, CULTURAL HEGEMONY AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF POLITICAL REALITY

> There is a profound interconnection...between the new Age of
> Ideology--the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries prolifera-
> tion of ideologies--and the "communications revolution"
> grounded in the development of printing, printing technolo-
> gies, and the growing production of printed products.
>
> - Alvin W. Gouldner

In chapter 2, we reviewed and critiqued the corpus of literature in political communications research. We examined the major theoretical models and the conceptual frameworks that inform and are representative of political communications research. We established the framework--the Frankfurt School's theory of manipulation--within which the thesis of the dissertation will advance and develop.

In the present chapter, we generate and develop a set of inter-related and sequentially ordered propositions that render support for the thesis of the dissertation--that the electronic media, in collusion with other cultural forms of manipulation (education, printed media, electoral process, legal order), constitute the complex institutional apparatus through which ruling elites in the United States maintain control and ideological hegemony over the rest of us.

Proposition I. Technology in the modern capitalist society is inten-tionally employed by elite groups to mystify the social world and to alienate people from the object of their labor, the process of produc-tion, and from themselves and the world.

Proposition II. The "electronic media" are by definition technological and cultural innovations. As such, they are employed in the modern capitalist society to manipulate and inhibit rather than to liberate the consciousness of men of women.

Proposition III. Language, as a communicative form and 'act', is the basis for the advancement of 'rationality', or for the mystification and distortion of the social world. When language is systematically distorted the possibility for rational discourse (and freedom) to occur is correspondingly obstructed. The content of programming in the electronic media are informed largely by linguistic messages that are systematically distorted. Furthermore, the electronic media, as a technical mode of communication, contribute to the distortion of social reality, and, in doing so, further inhibits 'rationality' from becoming manifest in the way people reflect on and conduct their lives.

Proposition IV. The electronic media transmits systematically distorted messages concerning the nature of the social world. The transmission of distorted messages (meanings) are not the consequence of the communication technology itself, but rather are the result of the intentional manipulations by ruling elites in society. As such, the electronic media collude in presenting a distorted view of the social world that affirm and legitimize the false truth claims (advanced by elite stratum) concerning the nature of social relations and the political order in society.

Technology and Social Relations

Belief in the omnipotence of technology is the specific form
of bourgeois ideology in the late capitalism.

-Ernest Mandel

The proposition that technology has altered the world and our
lives is regarded as true by most, if not everyone, living in the post
industrial society. How and in what ways (by accident or design) has
technology altered our lives, however, has been the subject of an in-
tense debate for the past half century. Opinions concerning this pro-
blematic can be distinguished and assigned under one of three schools
of thought: the neo-Positivist, Anti-Technology, and the neo-Marxist
schools.

The neo-Positivist school celebrates technology and, as we have
discussed earlier in chapter two, supports the 'instrumentalist' con-
ception of rationality. From this perspective, technology is viewed
as the consequence of the scientific enterprise and progress is con-
ceived of in terms of technological efficiency and growth.

The Anti-Technology school, most recently represented by Ellul
(1964), Wilhelmsen (1956), Roszak (1972), and Toffler (1970), essen-
tially view technology as an independent and increasingly uncontrol-
able force in modern society. The "machine" is regarded as a threat
to mankind and 'instrumental' rationality, the philosophical foundation
and rationale for technology's ascendance, is viewed as the maniacal
force that will further alienate and eventually subordinate mankind to
the objects of their creation.

Though both the neo-Positivist and the Anti-Technology schools

represent antithetical positions vis a vis the role of technology in the modern industrial society, they share several common characteristics. Both schools abstract technology from ideology and each for different motivations, support a conception of the world grounded in "technological determinism". Two broad classes of opinion underlie the two schools. The first class of opinion contends that the specific forms of new technology are in effect accidental--that is they emerge by an internal process of scientific research and development independent of external manipulation and design. The social consequences of the new technology on society are similarly viewed as accidental in that they are technological effects. This view assumes that if the technology had not been developed certain cultural phenomena would not have occurred.

The second class of opinion argues that although the development of new technology is accidental, its significance lies in its uses. This position, suggests Williams (1975), is less determinist than the first class of opinion because it considers other causal factors in social change.

> It then considers particular technologies, or a complex of technologies, as systems of change of some other kind. Any particular technology is then as it were a by-product of a social process that is otherwise determined. It only acquires effective status when it is used for purposes which are already contained in this known social process (p. 13).

In both classes of opinion, labelled by Williams (1975) as "technological determinism" in the former and "symptomatic technology", in the latter, research and development of new technology are assumed to operate as self-generating processes independent of external manipula-

tion. In "technological determinism", social change is assumed to occur as a direct consequence of the new technology; while in "symptomatic technology", new social conditions for life and the technologies that effect and shape them become manifest within a social order and process (e.g., the Industrial Revolution) than is otherwise determined. Each perspective then, depends on the isolation or detachment of technological development from the external social and political influences that would otherwise influence the nature and scope of scientific research. From these two views, technology is conceived of as a "self-acting force which creates new ways of life, or it is a self-acting force which provides materials for new ways of life" (Williams, 1975, p. 14). In either case, technology is assumed to have an inner logic and dynamic of its own, though in the case of "symptomatic technology", the uses of the new technology are intentionally informed by an existing social formation.

In contention with the neo-Positivist and Anti-Technology schools of thought stands the neo-Marxist position. Technological development and use is viewed quite differently from this perspective. Significantly, Williams (1975) states:

> Such an interpretation would differ from technological determinism in that it would restore intention to the process of research and development. The technology would be seen, that is to say, as being looked for and developed with certain purposes and practices already in mind. At the same time the interpretation would differ from symptomatic technology in that these purposes and practices would be seen as direct: as known social needs, purposes and practices to which technology is not marginal but central (p. 14, emphasis in the original).

The neo-Marxist position represents an alternative interpretation

of the role of technology in the modern capitalist society and, as
well, a critique of the positivist and anti-technology position.
Jacoby (1975), in criticizing the two positions argues that:

> The reduction of social antagonism and misery to a maladjust-
> ment between people and technology is an old approach; tech-
> nology in this scheme exists in a no man's land beyond profit
> and exploitation...the sleight of hand involves shifting at-
> tention away from the social-economic structure to supposedly
> neutral territory, as if today no one controls technology.
> Such an analysis permits enough pathos to creep in to make
> an enthusiasm for capitalism such as Toffler's acceptable to
> those who rightly think that something is terribly wrong
> (p. 8).

Despite differences in view among the neo-Marxists they all share
the common position that technology is not an independent force detach-
ed from the economic-political structures of society. Technological
determinism is viewed, from this perspective, as an ideological argu-
ment employed to mystify the social world. Moreover, the use or abuse
of technology is considered, by the neo-Marxists, as dependent upon
the underlying power relations in modern industrial society.

The neo-Marxist position on technology and social relations, re-
presents a significant departure from orthodox Marxist political theory.
Represented by such diverse social theorists as Karl Korsch, George
Lukacs, Antonio Gramsci, and Herbert Marcuse, the neo-Marxist school,
in the early 1920's, committed itself to the re-examination and re-
formulation of Marxism in light of the changing historical circum-
stances occurring in western Europe soon before and after the first
world war.

As a consequence of the failure of the II International in the
face of World War I (Jacoby, 1971), the stabilization of capitalism

worldwide, and the emergence of fascist movements in western Europe, the traditional Marxist assumption concerning the revolutionary role of the working class was viewed as problematic by many intellectuals out-side of the established Left parties. They argued that the concept of revolution held by the orthodox Marxist was deterministic in that socialism was believed to be the natural and inevitable outcome of capitalism. Technological growth was assumed, from the orthodox Marxists viewpoint, to heighten class conflict and, in doing so, strengthen the class consciousness among workers who would eventually seize power.

The failure of the orthodox Marxists to account for the decline of the worker's militancy during this period prompted Lukacs (1922) and Korsch (1923) to mount an attack on the orthodox Marxian view that human behavior is merely a reflection of the economic and social con-ditions in society. For both Lukacs (1922) and Korsch (1923), objec-tive forces and conditions were central, however, they become signifi-cant when they are "subjectively realized" by the working class. In effect, both Lukacs and Korsch questioned a Marxism that failed to account for the impact of bourgeois ideology and culture on the con-sciousness of the workers. Lukacs (1922) charged that the orthodox Marxists, and not Marx himself, had obscured Hegel's contribution to the understanding of how development occurs in society. For Hegel, "development in society is the movement from unconsciousness to self-consciousness" (Giroux, 1976, p. 34). According to both Korsch and Lukacs, the orthodox (vulgar) Marxists had reduced this phenomena to an automatic process where "consciousness" stood independent and distinct

from the very process that informs it. Rejecting this mechanical and one-directional formula of social development, many of the neo-Marxists (including the Frankfurt School) argued that the subjective dimension of experience was a significant (the last element) property in Marxism.

In context, the early neo-Marxist's analyses of the changing historical circumstances, unfolded a different and theoretically significant Marxist perspective on technology and alienation.

Giroux (1976) summarized the rationale advanced by the neo-Marxists for the reformulation of the classical Marxian critique of technology and alienation.

> If a change in individual consciousness was a prerequisite of revolutionary social change,...then alienation would continue to exist for workers even though political and economic changes had taken place. Unless accompanied by socio-psychological changes, the character structure of the public would still be operating in an alienating frame of reference left over from the past. The call to extend revolutionary social change beyond political and economic institutions and into the daily life and consciousness of individuals, prompted an analysis of alienation that seemed to go unanswered in Marx's own examination of the subject (p. 34).

Marx's critique of alienation has been the subject of considerable debate (Meszaros, 1970). Set forth in the Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844, Marx conceived of "purposive productive activity" (work) as the essential foundation for human existence. Through work man developed the capacity for self-realization and in doing so, the basis for the command of his existence.

Marx's theory of alienation refers to the disruption in the process of man's social development. Specifically, states Ollman (1971), Marx's theory seeks to account for the "devastating effect of capitalist production on human beings, on their physical and mental states and

on the social process of which they are a part" (p. 131). The trans-
formation of the work process ruptures man from experiencing himself
as the center and creator of his existence. As such, the worker's
products are rendered meaningless to him and his labor and products
become both reduced into a commodity (see Meszaros, 1970, p. 125).

According to Marx, alienation is manifest in Man in three forms:
alienation from the object of one's labor, the process of production,
and from his fellow men. The first form--alienation from the object
of one's labor--the worker no longer controls what he produces, it be-
longs to the owner who employs him. What is produced operates inde-
pendently of his needs and values.

> ...the worker is related to the product of his labour as to
> an alien object...The worker puts his life into the object;
> but now his life no longer belongs to him but to the object
> ...Whatever the product of his labour is, he is not...The
> alienation of the worker in his product means not only that
> his labour becomes an object, an external existence, but
> that it exists outside him, independently, as something
> alien to him, and that it becomes a power on its own con-
> fronting him. It means that the life which he has conferred
> on the object confronts him as something hostile and alien
> (Marx, 1844, p. 64).

The second form of alienation--alienation from the process of pro-
duction--the worker is reduced to an appendage of the production pro-
cess. Because of the division of labor and the process, plan and
objectives of production, under capitalist society, the worker is
separated from his work and his labor. His labor, contends Marx (1844)
"is not his own, but someone else's, that it does not belong to him that
in it he belongs, not to himself, but to another" (p. 66). Consequent-
ly, the worker plays no significant role in what to do and how to do
it. Hence he is further detached from his life activity.

His task is simple, mechanical, boring and intrinsically worthless to him. Forced to sell his labor power for a wage, the laborer can no longer experience his work as a means for satisfying the need for creative expression, but only as a means to make money to satisfy his immediate, material needs. Man is thus reduced to the status of an animal (Giroux, 1976, p. 35).

Marx (1844), forcefully explicates the devasting social consequences of this process on Man. He states:

What, then, constitutes the alienation of labour? First, the fact that labour is external to the worker...he does not affirm himself but denies himself, does not feel content but unhappy, does not develop freely his physical and mental energy but mortifies his body and ruins his mind. The worker therefore only feels himself outside his work, and in his work feels outside himself...His labour is therefore not voluntary, but coerced; it is forced labour. It is therefore not the satisfaction of a need; it is merely a means to satisfy needs external to it. Its alien character emerges clearly in the fact that as soon as no physical or other compulsion exists, labour is shunned like the plague...As a result, therefore, man (the worker) only feels himself freely active in his animal functions--eating, drinking, procreating or at most in his dwelling and in dressing-up, etc.; and in his human functions he no longer feels himself to be anything but an animal. What is animal becomes human and what is human becomes animal (p. 66).

The third form of alienation in Marx's theoretical framework lies in the worker's estrangement from himself and nature. Here, in the workers relationship to the process of production, he (the worker) views himself and others as fragmented and isolated human beings.

If the product of labor does not belong to the worker, if it confronts him as an alien power, this can only be because it belongs to some other man than the worker...man's relation to himself only becomes objective and real for him through his relation to other men...Every self-estrangement of man from himself and from nature appears in the relation in which he places himself and nature to men other than and differentiated from himself (Marx, 1844, p. 70).

From Marx then, alienation represents a break with nature, a cleavage between human beings, and an antagonistic separation between

producer and consumer within the division of labor in capitalist society (see Axelos, 1976, p. 58). From this view, alienated labor was the inescapable consequence of social relations in capitalist society, and the individual is reduced or degenerates into an 'abstraction'. By 'abstraction', Marx implied that the worker has lost touch with human specificity. His relation to his work, fellow human beings, and the products he produces are lost in the emptiness of his social and productive activity (see Ollman, 1971, p. 134).

Finally, within Marx's theory of alienation, the capitalist himself is alienated. Both worker and capitalist live in the 'realm of alienation', thus both must be in a 'state of alienation'. Specifically, the capitalist, rather than engage in the creation of products, he merely appropriates them for profit. Marx (1844) delineates the 'state of alienation' existing between the worker and the owner.

> ...it has to be noticed that everything which appears in the worker as an activity of alienation, of estrangement, appears in the non-worker as a state of alienation, of estrangement ...the worker's real, practical attitude in production and the product (as a state of mind) appears in the non-worker confronting him as a theoretical attitude...the non-worker does everything against the worker which the worker does against himself; but he does not do against himself what he does against the worker (p. 74).

Throughout the critique of alienation, Marx emphasized the objective political and economic forces that promote and maintain domination. Marx assumed that the formation of a class consciousness in the working class would emerge from the material (subsistence) conditions of their existence. The degradation of the work experience, Marx assumed, would eventually compel workers to unite as a class and advance demands that the capitalist class could not meet. This process would

inexorably heighten the class consciousness of the workers resulting in revolution. According to Marx, consciousness and class struggle were structurally linked to and determined by the objective eonomic forces grounded in the prevailing social formation (society). From his historical vantage point, then, Marx focused on the working class solely on the bases of their class position and productive experience. Unable to anticipate the social disruptions that would subvert working class militancy in western Europe during the first two decades of the 20th century, Marx's theory of alienation was necessarily specific to its time in its critique of social relations under capitalism.

When Marx failed to consider how other institutions and cultural experiences (mass media, science) under capitalism effect consciousness Lukacs (1922), Korsch (1923) and others incorporated these factors into their theoretical analyses of monopoly capitalism. During the 1920's workers were rallying throughout Europe in support of fascism. Mono- poly capitalism was consolidating throughout Europe, and the revolution Marx foresaw had not developed. In light of these historical events many neo-Marxists called for a reformulation of Marx's theory of class consciousness which could account for the new forms of cultural and ideological manipulation of working class consciousness.

'Hegemony' as a Theory of Ideological Control and Manipulation

The first major reformulation of the orthodox Marxist theory of alienation was achieved by Lukacs (1922). Lukacs incorporated into the Marxist world view, Hegel's dialectical notion of alienation which cen-

tered on how alienation is produced at the level of everyday life (see Schroyer, 1978, pp. 97-100). Unlike the orthodox Marxists, Lukacs (tangentially) and the members of the Frankfurt School (specifically) examined the myriad forms of social alienation that were manifest in the subjective dimensions of social relations of production. Beginning from the material and objective factors that shaped consciousness, many of the neo-Marxists stressed in their analyses, the subjective and psychic dimensions of alienation (for example, the role of the unconscious and its relationship to cultural forms of social and sexual socialization). What emerged, as a consequence of the neo-Marxists investigations, contends Giroux (1976) was a:

> Creative synthesis of the Hegelian and Marxian theoretical
> domains and systems, which was the first major step in the
> updating of outworn, orthodox Marxism. The relationship be-
> tween technology and alienation was soon to be explained as
> part of this synthesis in which cultural forces acted as a
> mediator (p. 35).

Lukacs was not, as we have stated earlier, the only neo-Marxist committed to the reevaluation of classical Marxism. While Lukacs was formulating the synthesis of the Hegelian and Marxism conceptions of alienation, another equally important social theorist committed to the same tasks as Lukacs emerged. Born on the isle of Sardinia in 1891 and imprisoned by the Fascists until the day before his death in 1936, Gramsci (1946, 1947) is considered on of the seminal Marxist thinkers of this century. An active organizer and theoretician, and one of the major founders of the Italian Communist Party (PSI), Gramsci was concerned with how the state, technology, and culture (schools, newspapers, religion) enforced a passive consciousness among the European (spec-

ifically Italian) working class. Both Lukacs and Gramsci rejected, in part, the orthodox Marxian notion that the objective material forces in society are the sole bases for revolutionary change. Revolutionary change, both theorists argued, only occurs when the subjective and objective dimensions of the working class simultaneously merge.

Significantly, then, Gramsci established:

> a theoretical structure for examining the political importance of culture. His first premise began with a refined constriction of the Hegelian division of society into the state and civil society. The state referred to those institutions of control that used direct force in maintaining power...According to Gramsci, the traditional Marxist theory of the state was limited by the exclusive attention it paid to the role of direct force as the basis of ruling-class domination. The orthodox Left had little or no understanding of the subtle but pervasive forms of ideological control that operated outside of the realm of direct coercion (Giroux, 1976, p. 36).

From Gramsci, civil society was embodied in the complex of social, cultural, and political institutions (churches, media, schools) that were not directly a part of or controlled by the state. As a consequence of his study of civil society, Gramsci formulated the conception of ideological 'hegemony' as a lived social process in society.

Traditionally, 'hegemony' is conceived in terms of political rule or domination, especially in relations between nations. Marxist's extended the definition of rule to include relations between social classes. For Gramsci, however, 'hegemony' meant:

> ...an order in which a certain way of life and thought is dominant, in which one concept of reality is diffused throughout society in all its institutional and private manifestations, informing with its spirit all taste, morality, customs, religious principles, and social relations, particularly in their intellectual and moral connotations (Cammett, 1967, p. 182).

The significance of Gramsci's conception of 'hegemony', suggests Williams (1977), is that it "at once includes and goes beyond two powerful earlier concepts: that of 'culture' as a 'whole social process', in which men define and shape their whole lives; and that of 'ideology', in any of its Marxist senses, in which a system of meanings and values is the expression or projection of a particular class interest" (p. 108). Williams (1977) further states that:

> It is in just this recognition of the wholeness of the process that the concept of 'hegemony' goes beyond 'ideology'. What is decisive is not only the conscious system of ideas and beliefs, but the whole lived social process as practically organized by specific and dominant meanings and values. Ideology, in its normal senses, is a relatively formal and articulated system of meanings, values, and beliefs of a kind that can be abstracted as a 'worldview' or a 'class outlook' (p. 109).

'Hegemony' then refers to a form of "lived" and indirect control rather than a direct coercion. It permeates throughout the daily lived experiences of people via the cultural institutions of the church, media, schools, etc. In effect, 'hegemonic' control eclipses or removes from recognition the very structures of that control and domination. In context, ideology operates to mystify the social world and to depoliticize people into accepting their oppression.

Again, Williams (1977), brilliantly explicates the pervasive nature of 'hegemonic' control.

> Instead (hegemony) it sees the relations of domination and subordination, in their forms as practical consciousness, as in effect a saturation of the whole process of living--not only of political and economic activity...but of the whole substance of lived identities and relationships, to such a depth that the pressures and limits of what can ultimately be seen as a specific economic, political, and cultural system seem to most of us the pressures and limits of simple experience and common sense. Hegemony is then not only the

articulate upper level of 'ideology', nor are its forms of control only those ordinarily seen as 'manipulation' or 'indoctrination'. It is a whole body of practices and expectations, over the whole of living...It is a lived system of meanings and values--constitutive and constituting--which as they are experienced as practices appear as reciprocally confirming...It is...in the strongest sense a 'culture', but a culture which has also to be seen as the lived dominance and subordination of particular classes (p. 110).

Within the 'hegemonic' concept of control then, domination is 'lived' at the level of daily life. It is a practiced activity experienced directly in personal relationships and in the way people use their physical and material resources. In this sense, cultural activity within a 'hegemony' are seen as more than the reflections or mediations of an economic structure. They are the basic elements of the social formation itself (see Williams, 1977, p. 111).

Gramsci's concept of 'hegemony' represents a major reformulation of classical Marxian theory. Like Lukacs and the members of the Frankfurt School, Gramsci elaborated a theory of culture and domination that included the subjective as well as the material and objective dimensions of alienation.

Moreover, Gramsci, in particular, is to be credited for showing how the major cultural forms of manipulation, legitimation, and control function within a 'lived' social process in the modern capitalist society. It is within Gramsci's framework of 'hegemony' and the Frankfurt School's theory of manipulation that we advance the dissertation to the next stage of its development.

The Political Economy of Media
Control and Manipulation

In the past decade, increasing concern over the mass media's influence on political behavior has expanded significantly the domain of communications research. The mass media in general and the electronic media in particular are currently the subject of intense study. The focus has broadened to include the study of the media as complex organizational structures and as cultural forms in society (Piepe, Crouch, and Emerson, 1978; Williams, 1975). Significantly, researchers are presently, in their investigations, linking these complex media systems to other political structures in society in order to determine their interrelated processes and functions (Garnham, 1978; Goldin, 1969; Gouldner, 1976; Schiller, 1969, 1973; Williams, 1975). Central to their studies are the factors (military, social class, corporate ownership) that influence and determine the organization, use and control of the media channels.

The first major comprehensive treatment of the structure and policy of mass communication in the United States in relation to their economic and political functions was conducted by Schiller (1969). Concerned with the United States' expanding imperial network abroad, Schiller (1969) examined the 'motor' force behind broadcast communications in the United States. His study reveals the military--industrial --governmental linkages behind the giant national communications systems, and how the American electronic media are extended to the international arena as instruments of cultural domination. Specifically, Schiller (1969) shows how prior to the second World War:

...the development of these media (radio and television) was determined at all points by the market system which surrounded them. Business balance sheets, intent on profitability and unconcerned with human realization, enveloped broadcast communications (p. 20).

Since the second World war, a marriage has occurred between military and political communications research and development, and the development of commercial broadcasting in the United States. Schiller (1969) contends that:

Three changing elements can be distinguished in the machinery of American communications since World War II. There is the growing military influence on the national governmental communications system. There is the continuous enlargement of the civilian military--industrial communications bloc. There is the special role of American military communications in securing the international status quo (p. 33, emphasis in the original).

Williams (1975) reports that during the 1950's and 1960's, the institutional framework of broadcasting in the United States "led to a situation in which it was not possible to separate, into distinct categories, military electronics, government agencies concerned with information and propaganda, and the most visible institutions of general 'commercial' broadcasting" (p. 40).

Within this interrelated structure, where military, commercial, and political interests converge and overlap, the formal assumption of control of domestic broadcasting communications was achieved in 1963 when President Kennedy established the National Communications System (NCS). Under the Department of Defense, headed at the time by Secretary McNamara, the NCS consolidated and extended the military's influence in the communications complex of the United States (see Schiller, 1969, pp. 43-49). Under this new structure (NCS), the

broadcasting system in the United States was placed more directly under the control of the political order constituted by a tri-lateral structure--the military, corporate and governmental agencies of the state. In this context, the government finances the research and development of new communications technologies that are, in part, employed by the military. The research and development of new communications technologies are achieved largely by the corporate industrial sector through contracts financed by both the government and the Defense Department.

Nevertheless, I am not suggesting that internal conflicts do not exist within the political order composed of elite groups. Former President Nixon's attempt to pressure and manipulate the press and the broadcasting networks (see Naughton, 1978) and the recent "media wars" between the giant newspaper and magazine chains (Safire, 1978), and, more recently, the challenges to A.T. & T.'s monopoly over the telecommunications industry (Kleinfield, 1979) clearly indicate that internal conflict and competition among elite stratum are endemic to the political order. These structured antagonisms, however, do not fundamentally alter the "essential interests" and power relations within the American social order. They are merely the internal power struggles between ruling elites competing for control of the media channels, or for a greater portion of an estimated $50 billion dollar communications industry (see Kleinfield, 1979).

The concentration and monopolization of media channels in the United States has increased significantly in recent years (Szymanski, 1978). Schiller (1973) contends that the:

Ownership and control of the mass media, like all other forms

of property, is available to those with capital. Inevitably, radio- and television-station ownership, newspaper and magazine proprietorship, movie-making, and book publishing are largely in the hands of corporate chains and media conglomerates (p. 4).

Nixon (1968), describing the trends in the concentration of ownership of daily newspapers in the United States, reports that nearly 50 percent of the newspapers in the nation's 1500 cities are owned by some group or national chain. Kleinfield (1979), in an essay on the Gannett Company, reports that the giant press chain (the largest in the United States) owns 78 out of the 1,764 daily newspapers in the country. The essay by Kleinfield (1979) further indicates that:

> Gannett's magnitude and its role as a management trend-setter make it the very model of a modern American chain. Gannett has become a publishing empire that grossed $690.1 million in 1978, and routinely has added 10 or more papers every year. In addition, the Gannett Company interests have spread to include radio and TV stations, a scattering of 19 weeklies and the Louis Harris pollster organization. Gannett is also in the midst of wrapping up one of the biggest media deals of all time, the acquisition of the huge Combined Communications Corporation, owner of seven television and 12 radio stations, an outdoor advertising group and two good-sized newspapers (p. 42).

A recent study by Szymanski (1978), reports that out of the forty-two daily newspapers in the United States with a circulation greater than 300,000, thirty are owned by ten large newspaper chains. Ten are controlled by independent millionaires, and the remaining two are controlled by a company of Chicago banking interests. The newspapers owned by the ten newspaper chains account for 62 percent of the total circulation of newspapers in the country (see Szymanski, 1978, pp. 241-242).

The same year, Archibald MacLeish addressing a group of book pub-

lishers in New York commented that the giant publishing conglomerates have a "high devotion to private profit at the expense of everything else, including the country's literature" (Mitgang, 1978, p. C22). Later, during the address, MacLeish went on to say that the corporations have "no knowledge of literature, no interest in it, (they) have acquired publishing houses not to enter publishing, but to diversify their interests" (p. C22).

Examination of the broadcasting industry shows the same patterns of concentration and ownership. In fact, both media industries (broadcasting and printing) are controlled, in many instances, by the same investment and corporate groups. Studies and reports by Johnson (1970), Goldin (1969), Eck (1967), Ehrlich (1974), and Smythe (1977) render further evidence to support the contention that the mass media are owned and controlled by powerful ruling groups in the American political order; and that the concentration of ownership is manifest both within and between media.

At the apex of the television structure in the United States stands the three major networks, CBS, NBC, and ABC. These three commercial networks dominate television. Each network constitutes a private corporation. The three commercial networks have a virtual monopoly on what is broadcast on television. Szymanski (1978) reports that: "of the 533 VHF TV stations in the early 1970's, 424 were affiliated with or owned outright by NBC, CBS, or ABC" (p. 241). Each affiliate (local) station is by the very nature of it's affiliation almost entirely dependent for both the national and the international news coverage on one of the major networks. Of the remaining stations,

eighty, reports Szymanski (1978), "are NET affiliates and twenty-nine
are independents" (p. 241).

The major broadcasting networks clearly, then, represent a power-
ful force in American society. They are, however, within the context
of the economic-political order, dependent on and influenced directly
by the large nonmedia corporations. The media giants rely almost en-
tirely for their profits on corporate advertising (see Szymanski, 1978,
p. 242). Consequently, the corporations who advertise their products
on television exercise a powerful influence on the content and program-
ming of television fare. Advertisers, in fact, have often intervened
directly in network programming (see Miliband, 1973, chapter 8). Pre-
sently, the content of a considerable amount of advertising broadcast
on television, is designed to neutralize the rising hostility of the
American public towards the major industrial corporations, particularly
the petroleum corporations. EXXON and several of the other major oil
companies have sponsored a sustained PR effort via the major TV net-
works to convince the public that they are not responsible for the
current petroleum shortages, but rather are concerned with a clean en-
vironment, and are seeking to produce a cheap supply of energy for the
American people, the American Enterprise Film Series, which is designed
to interest the American people in the free enterprise system (see
Dougherty, 1976). The giant oil company has disseminated the film
through schools and community groups, reaching an estimated 12 million
people a year. In 1975, the oil company, reports Dougherty, "spent
$1.25 million to run a TV spot promoting the concept (free enterprise),
and this year (1976) is spending an additional $250,000 for a print

campaign urging other corporations to sponsor the same spot" (p. 55).

The development and expansion of "Cable" television is another potential media channel for use and manipulation by corporate and political interests. Present estimates indicate that the cable system is a $1.4 billion dollar industry, with well over 12 million subscribers (see Moore, 1978). The political implications of the cable system, suggests Strouse (1975), is that:

> ...a political message may be directed to an audience that is almost coterminous with the exact constituency. The cost is significantly reduced and the message reaches the exact audience for which it was intended. The spillover effect and cost is eliminated (p. 253).

As such, the cable system can create partisan channels for the exclusive use of political parties and interest groups able to pay the high costs of rental. The concentration and eventual control of these cable channels by powerful corporations and political interest groups will, as in the case of the broadcasting and printed media, provide another agency for the manipulation of opinion. Tom Wicker (1977) contends that the move from broadcasting to cable "would put great power-- and probably profits--in the hands of the cable carrier, which under present conditions would be mostly the American Telephone and Telegraph Company" (p. 17).

The media channels, then, are corporate institutions as well as complex systems of communication (Skornia, 1965). They influence and are influenced by political phenomena. In 1978, Chief Justice Warren E. Burger warned of the power held by the giant media corporations (Raines, 1978). Burger argued that the large media conglomerates have amassed vast amounts of wealth and power and that they represent a

larger threat to "valid interests" in the electoral process than other

nonmedia corporations. In 1977, NBC projected that it's revenues by

1985 would exceed $2 billion a year (see Fraser, 1977).

At another level, recent disclosures reveal the extent to which

the media are manipulated by the American intelligence, military, and

governmental establishment, as well as by foreign nations. Brown (1979)

recently reports that the White House under Nixon undertook a campaign

to pressure and manipulate the television networks.

> Efforts by the Nixon Administration to control public broad-
> casting, purge it of commentators considered hostile to the
> President and reorganize it so it might serve the Administra-
> tion's aims are detailed in newly disclosed documents from
> files of the White House Office of Telecommunications Policy
> for 1969 to 1974 (p. 1).

Schorr (1976), Shabad (1979), and Carmody, (1976) report that the

intelligence community, particularly the C.I.A. and the F.B.I., financ-

ed and employed American news organizations and journalists, and

broadcasting media in their covert operations. More recently, Burham

(1979), reports "that for the last quarter-century, one of the Govern-

ment's (American) most secret agencies (National Security Agency) has

played an important, largely undisclosed, role in shaping the nation's

privately-owned communications network of microwave towers, underground

cables, satellites and computers" (p. A1). The NSA is accused: (1)

of persuading the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to reverse

an earlier descision it had made concerning the construction of a $200

million trans-Atlantic communications cable, (2) of encouraging Ameri-

can business to spend millions of dollars on the development of techno-

logy that will prevent interception of their communications, and (3) of

being a major source of research funds for the computer and telecommun-
ications industries. The manipulation of the media channels are not
exclusively the domain of American political-economic interests. Most
recently the government of South Africa was reported to invest more
than $11 million dollars in the U.S. news media operations (see Rawls,
1979).

The most alarming development vis a vis the media concerns the
F.C.C.'s proposal to deregulate the communications industry nationally
(Holsendolph, 1979). Critics opposed to the F.C.C.'s proposal argue
that the deregulation of communications rules will result in the pub-
lics loss of its control over the airwaves (Dunaway, 1979). Specifi-
cally, they argue that the F.C.C.'s rulings will allow some public
broadcasting stations to sell commercial time and eliminate the
agency's role in enforcing equal-employment rules. Moreover:

> Limits on the number of commercials would be lifted, and the
> value of a broadcasting license could soar. Local broadcast-
> ers would no longer be required to ascertain and serve the
> needs of their community. The commission may even relinquish
> its control over the business dealings of broadcasters, in-
> cluding fradulent billing and monopolistic network proce-
> dures...with greater pressure to make every minute of radio
> count, programs of interest to minority (particularly minor-
> ities with low buying power) may begin to disappear...An-
> other major effect could be greater stratification of the
> radio audience, and, indirectly, the increased polarization
> of society (Dunaway, 1979, p. 25).

We can infer from the evidence presented above that the media in
the United States are not independent of the political order. The
media are powerful organizational institutions that are structurally
linked to the ruling order. Since the second World War, the relation-
ship between the commercial media, government agencies, and the mili-

tary apparatus of the state have converged to form the military/industrial/governmental complex. As such, the media influence and are influenced by each sector in the ruling order, internal conflict and competition notwithstanding. Despite the media's consistent claim that its primary function is to serve the public, it operates as a corporate entity, and, like any other commercial enterprise in capitalist society, the media is concerned with increasing its revenues and profits. A political and economic force itself, the media commands vast amounts of wealth and power. The media conglomerates accrue their wealth primarily from advertising revenues. Schiller (1978) contends that the newspaper industry obtains three-fourths of it's revenues from the advertising industry, and one-fourth from the readers while for the broadcasting industry, revenues are secured entirely from advertisers.

The concentration (monopolization) and ownership of media channels is increasingly manifest in the control that the major networks maintain over their affiliate stations. Local broadcasters, either as "independents" or affiliates, are virtually dependent on the major networks for their news and entertainment programming. The one-way flow and content of television fare is, therefore, largely dominated and determined by the three major commercial networks--NBC, ABC, and CBS. Concentration of the ownership of the media occurs both within and across the media channels. This phenomena, is, in part, the consequence of the huge amounts of capital required to finance and maintain media operations. Concomitantly, the federal government directly

supports via legislation the present structure and patterns of media ownership and concentration. From this perspective, the media in America can be seen as structurally linked to the political order, and, as such, are a powerful form of social integration and control. What emerges, then, is a media complex that is located in an industrial society that is privately owned, corporately structured, governmentally protected and financed, and increasingly, internationally based (Schiller, 1973).

Language: 'Systematic Communicative Distortions' as Ideology

A definition of language is always, implicitly or explicitly, a definition of human beings in the world.

- Raymond Williams

Dance and Larson (1976), contend that the functions of human communication are to link the individual with the social word, to develop higher mental processes, and to regulate human behavior (p. 48). Each communicative function described above implies that, in order for communication to occur between people, a system of symbols or language exists. More importantly, these definitions of the function of communication suggest, that language has a history, is an "activity", (process) and that it is concretely connected to a social realm.

Every modern society has a "standard" language, however, it is not internalized equally and uniformly by all of its members. That is linguistic codes and "signs" within language differentiate between social classes (including ethnic and racial groups) in society. The code of a social group, suggests Mueller (1973), "reflects the socio-

economic conditions of that group, while the environment, in turn, re-
inforces and validates the individual's language (p. 14). In this
sense, the code (language) a social group shares is 'context specific'.
As such, the possibility of transcending the context of one's code,
argues Mueller (1973):

> ...is contingent upon accepting and learning other codes.
> Change from one code to another implies, therefore, not only
> a change of the language spoken but also a change of the
> social context (p. 15).

The implication and significance of Mueller's argument is that the
type of language an individual internalizes influences his perception
of himself and the social world; and that the context in which language
is learned can inhibit an individual from comprehending social reality
and the political code (the language of mystification) of society.
Studies by Bernstein (1964), Coward and Ellis (1977), Woolfson (1976),
Tolson (1976), Bourdieu (1977), Camargo (1972), and LaRossa (1974), on
hierarchial message structure and language patterns and use by social
classes render significant support for Mueller's (1973) thesis.

As an 'activity', communication can be defined as a process of
social interaction through messages. In delineating the approach to
the study of communication, Gerbner (1967) states that:

> The distinction between the 'communication approach' and the
> other approaches to the study of behavior and culture rests
> on the extent to which: 1. messages are germane to the pro-
> cess studied; 2. concern with the production, content, trans-
> mission, perception and use of messages is central to the ap-
> proach. A 'communication approach' (or theory) can be dis-
> tinguished from others in that it makes the nature and role
> of messages in life and society its central organizing con-
> cern (p. 44).

It is within the general parameters set forth by Gerbner (1967),

for the study of communication, that I present the work of Jurgen

Habermas, the eminent representative of the Frankfurt School of social

theorists. Concerned with the achievement of communication free from

domination, Habermas (1971) argues that the idea of reason is embedded

in the very "structures" which make communication possible. Habermas

believes, an investigation of those structures will reveal the norma-

tive principles of speech and language which contain an image of social

life and organization free of distortions.

The first set of theoretical proposition Habermas (1970) develops,

concerns the structural conditions required for "normal" communication

to occur. He states:

> (a) In the case of a non-deformed language game there is a
> congruency on all three levels of communication. Linguistic
> expressions...do not contradict one another...Intended con-
> tradictions which have some informational content, are normal
> in this sense.
>
> (b) Normal communication conforms to inter-subjectively recog-
> nized rules; it is public.
>
> (c) In the case of normal speech the speakers are aware of
> the categorical difference between subject and object.
>
> (d) In normal communication an inter-subjectivity of mutual
> understanding...develops and is maintained in the relation
> between individuals who acknowledge one another.
>
> (e) Finally, normal speech is distinguished by the fact that
> the sense of substance and causality...is differentiated ac-
> cording to whether these categories are applied to the objects
> within a world or to the linguistically constituted world it-
> self, which allows for the mutuality of speaking subjects
> (pp. 352-55).

In "normal", communication, Habermas (1970) presupposes that the

'ideal' speaker has mastered the linguistic rules necessary for the

production of "speech acts"; and that he can maintain the interpersonal

(inter-subjective) context in which language communication is possible (see McCarthy, 1973, p. 473).

It is from the above theoretical propositions that Habermas advances his framework for a theory of communicative competence. Breifly stated, Habermas posits that social reality is constituted by "speech acts" which involve the testing of truth claims which are then accepted or rejected by the participants in communication. It is assumed that the communicative process rests on a background consensus of shared intersubjective meanings. The consensus is grounded on the mutual recognition of various kinds of validity claims which are implied in all speech acts (see Connerton, 1976, p. 31). As such, communicative interaction includes the possibility of questioning the truth claims advanced by others. When a claim becomes problematic the background consensus is questioned and the claim now requires justification through discourse. Through this process misunderstandings are clarified and full-scale metalevel discourse becomes possible. Such 'discourses' are theoretically possible only by assuming that the ideal speech situation is possible, and each participant in the ideal speech situation is able to engage in questioning and discourse. Consequently, each participant recognizes the subjectivity of the other. Furthermore, the premise of an ideal speech situation allows each participant to distinguish between systematic distortions of communication where the intersubjective rules are being questioned and mere misunderstandings where consensus is arrived at by the force of the better argument. For Habermas, then, the structure of discourse is free from constraint:

only when for all participants there is an effective equality

of chances to take part in the dialogue. Hence the require-
ments of the ideal speech situation are such that the condi-
tions for ideal discourse are connected with conditions for
an ideal form of social life (Connerton, 1976, pp. 31-32).

Concomitantly, for discourse to occur between participants each
subject must agree in advance on the meaning assigned to a symbol
(language). In this sense, communication is only a tool by which un-
derstanding is achieved.

Conversely, for Habermas, systematic distortions foreclose the
possibility of rational discourse in communication. The consequence of
such distortions for the participants (and in a broader sense, social
classes) is that intersubjective norms are broken and rational dis-
course is made impossible. The individual and/or social group who can-
not communicate rationally may be said to be dominated by unconscious
forces which foreclose the possibility of rational judgement. In sit-
uations of social repression and political domination, communication is
systematically distorted. It's subjective correlate is false conscious-
ness for both the dominator and the dominated. Authority and rule are
perpetuated by an acceptance of false claims to legitimacy. In con-
text, language becomes ideological in that it "not just distracts at-
tention away from real social relations:

> ...nor does it explain them away, nor does it ever directly
> deny them. It structurally excludes them from thought
> (Mepham, 1972, p. 15).

For Habermas, communication in the modern industrial capitalist
society is constituted by "instrumental action". That is, reality is
objectified and the relationship between participants in communication
is that of a subject to an object (see Wellmer, 1976, p. 248). Commun-

icative behavior proceeds according to technical rules that are the result of the development of science and technology. They are integrated with the imperatives of an economic system that is founded on inequality. Language is, in the modern capitalist society, transformed and is used ideologically to legitimize and order social activity. For Habermas, then, blockages to communication and discourse are located, from this perspective in the very structure of communication itself.

Habermas' contribution to the understanding of how the structure of language and speech inform or rather form social life is significant. He has recognized how through the systematic distortion of communication, 'hegemony' and ideological consensus is maintained in the modern capitalist society. Moreover, Habermas has shown how these blockages in communication are structurally located not only in language itself, but in the political realm (government and mass media) as well, and how they are linked to and result in the "depoliticization" of the public. Finally if Habermas' theory of communication is correct, the anticipation of a new form of social life must be prefigured or imagined in the structure of speech itself.

Habermas' theory of communication in society represents the third and final major conceptual framework employed in the formation and elaboration of the thesis in the dissertation. We shall extend and link Habermas' concept of "systematic distortions of communication" in language and those generated and amplified by the electronic media.

The Electronic Media: Legitimation Functions

Fundamental to our way of life is the belief that when infor-

mation which properly belongs to the public is systematically
withheld by those in power, the people soon become ignorant
of their own affairs, distrustful of those who manage them,
and--eventually--incapable of determining their own destinies.

                              - Richard M. Nixon

Every activity and every product within capitalist society
participates in the world and in the logic of commodity. The
very language that allows the meaning of any given activity
or product to be communicated to the public is the language
of the merchant, who is transformed into the custodian of all
language.

                              - Armand Mattelart

The electronic media channels of television and film are "techno-

cratic" mediums through which visual and linguistic messages are trans-

mitted. By technocratic, I mean that the electronic media's very struc-

ture and format is a complex organizational/bureaucratic/technical

system informed by the political economy of advanced capitalism.

Television and film are unique among communication systems. Un-

like personal experience and dialogue, the audience plays an essentially

passive role in relation to the messages being transmitted; that is,

the flow of messages are in one direction. The audience does not

participate in the event whether in the form of action or linguistic

interaction, notwithstanding the feedback from opinion surveys. The

audience cannot ask the television to clarify a statement, or to debate

a point, they are limited to taking what information is transmitted.

In doing so, television establishes the bounds within which discussion

can take place.

On another level, and in contrast to the printed media, the elec-

tronic media have significantly broadened the "iconic" element of

communication. As such, the media channels of television and film have

introduced, in the realm of communication, a new mass experience (see Gouldner, 1976, pp. 168-170).

By assuming the social (entertainment) and political functions previously performed by the printed media (newspapers) as well as the myriad forms of literature and theatre, the electronic media also assumes and expands their political-ideological functions to a mass audience.

I have in the present chapter, already discussed the primary functions of the media in capitalist society. These functions are to maintain and legitimize the 'hegemony' of ruling interest groups in society. Specifically, the media, argues Enzensberger (1974), serve:

> to sell the existing order, to perpetuate the prevailing pattern of man's domination of man.... Its main task is to expand and train our consciousness--in order to exploit it (p. 10).

A fundamental requirement, then, in order "to sell the existing order," is to develop a consumer consciousness in the public. At a deeper level, the effective control (indirect) of a populous demands the conscious effort to manipulate their understanding of the social world, so that they will collude unknowingly in their own victimization. The manipulation and management of consciousness requires that distortions concerning the nature of the social world, operate at the level of everyday life. People must come to believe in and practice daily the distortions that inform their lives. In this sense, the media operate as conduits where distortions are intentionally manufactured and disseminated for consumption by the public. As instruments of domination which can structure social reality because they are themselves structured, the media systems reproduce the social class

structure (the nature of power relations) in unrecognizable forms. The electronic media, from this view, represent a form of "symbolic power". Bourdieu (1977), defines "symbolic power" as being:

> The power to constitute the given by stating it, to create ap-
> pearances and belief, to confirm or transform the vision of
> the world, and therefore the world itself, this quasi-magical
> power which makes it possible to obtain the equivalent of what
> is obtained by force (physical or economic) thanks to the
> specific mobilizing effect is only effective if it is recog-
> nized as legitimate. This means that symbolic power does not
> reside in 'symbolic systems' in the form of an 'illucutionary
> force', but that it is defined in and by a determinate rela-
> tionship between those who exercise this power and those who
> undergo it (p. 117, emphasis in the original).

Clearly, "symbolic power" is a subordinate form of power. It repre-
sents an unrecognizable and transformed form of ideological power that
attains legitimacy when people recognize it as legitimate. The elec-
tronic 'media' create and deliver to a mass audience the ideological
images and messages that constitute the substance of symbolic power.
I shall elaborate on this phenomena later in the discussion.

Though I have discussed the functions of the electronic media in
the modern capitalist society, I have not, however, shown how manipu-
lation and control occurs and is practiced via the media agency of
television in particular.

Manipulation Techniques

The presentation of social reality. Content Analysis studies of tele-
vision programming (entertainment, information and orientation) in the
United States conducted by Smythe (1954), Gentile and Miller (1961),
DeFleur (1964), and Gerbner and Gross (1976), indicate that the por-
trayal of occupational roles (especially in the case of working class

portrayals); stereotyping of characters, according to their social class, gender and ethnic backgrounds are grossly distorted and/or underrepresented on television when compared to the actuality of real life in society. As early as 1954, Smythe noted these tendencies in television's portrayal of occupational roles: (1) persons in professional and managerial roles are generally "well dressed, socially skilled and intelligent, but they also tended to be handsome" (p. 71), (2) the occupations shown were stereotyped (e.g., nurses were cold and impersonal, taxi and bus drivers were burly and aggressive), (3) the portrayals were in atypical settings where, for example, a physician is implicated in a socially unacceptable practice (abortion).

More recently, Gerbner and Gross (1976) have observed that "three-fourths of all leading characters on prime-time networks are male, mostly single, middle- and upper-class Americans in their 20s or 30s (p. 44). Moreover, the researchers Gerbner and Gross (1976), report that unlike the real world:

> ...where personalities are complex, motives unclear, and outcomes ambiguous, television presents a world of clarity and simplicity. In show after show, rewards and punishments follow quickly and logically. Crises are resolved, problems are solved, and justice, or at least authority, always triumphs. The central characters in these dramas are clearly identified: dedicated or corrupt; selfless or ambitious; efficient or ineffectual (p. 44).

From this perspective, television entertainment presentations depict the illusory workings of society. Programming that protray the trials and tribulations of raising a family, crime and law-enforcement, climbing the corporate ladder, etc., provides the audience with a distorted experiential context with which they can vicariously identify.

In doing so, the audiences are beguiled into accepting social values disguised as truths concerning the nature of power, personal relationships, justice, morality, in sum, the nature of the social world.

The distortion and omission of information. The influence of the media lies not only from what is reported via the news, but more significantly from what is not reported. Breed (1958) examined the functions of the media in maintaining social order in America. He reports that the most frequent items screened out of the press pertained to political and economic issues. Specifically, Breed (1958) found that two-thirds of the issues screened out by the press pertained to the undemocratic exercise of power by business elites. He concludes "that 'power' and 'class' as structural strata are protected by media performance" (p. 114); and that cultural patterns (supportive of the values of capitalism, the nation, and religion) are also given protection by the media.

According to the polls, 31 percent of all Americans consider television their exclusive source of news, and 60 percent their prime source of news (Brown, 1976). If this estimate accurately reflects the public's dependency on television for its primary source of information concerning politics, world events, etc., then we can presume, given the functions of the media, that the intensity and frequency of omissions and distortions of information is highest in news broadcasts. Studies and reports by Wax (1970), Johnson (1971), and Schiller (1973) indicate the distortions and omissions of information that occur in the news broadcast when political issues are presented. Bernstein and Gordon (167), in their analysis of the press coverage of the "Bay of

Pigs" invasion, report that "the press decides for or against coopera-
tion with government not on any basis of principle, but on the basis
of the issue" (p. 141). The implication drawn here is that the media
do in fact take positions on issues. They are not merely vehicles for
the dissemination of information, they chose the issues for coverage,
adopt a position, and present it before the public. As such, the
media function as molders of opinion. Two significant reports by
Arlen (1969) and Chomsky (1978) show how the major media channels in
reporting the news throughout the Vietnam War seldom, if ever, strayed
from the system of state propaganda.

Recently, a group of communication researchers, based in Britain,
have begun to study systematically not only the content of news cover-
age, but also the role of the broadcaster (Hall, 1974); the types and
variation of news photo (Powell, 1972), and the determination of the
news photographs (Hall, 1972) in both the print and broadcasting media.
This field of communications of "cultural" study represents an attempt
to examine the production processes involved in creating the news. Al-
though still a nascent field of inquiry, the research conducted thus
far suggests that through the broadcaster's relationship to the power
structure in society, balance and definition of the political order is
maintained (see Hall, 1974); and that, in the case of news photographs
they articulate and underscore certain ideological themes (authority
and power) (see Hall, 1972).

Another aspect of the news broadcasts that distorts social reality
is the manner in which the news is presented. With the exception of
several lengthy news "specials", the news, suggests Robert MacNeil,

is presented as a "blizzard of indigestible information", (see Withers-Sax, 1978, p. 4). Television networks generally provide half-hour news programs where in intervals of ten seconds critical events and issues are presented and cancelled immediately after by the next story. Each news story is brief, often little more than a headline--juxtaposed by a series of commercials and pictures--that rather than critically inform the audience on important social issues, the news merely presents to them the world as "the way it is". Consequently, the news events pass by unexplained without a context or history. The world is made to appear as discrete events. Concomitantly, pictures are used extensively by the networks when reporting the news. They keep the audience there insists MacNeil: "They are boredom zappers to prevent anyone from going away" (Wither-Sax, 1978, p. 4). On another level, contends Lermack (1978), the film clips, as Hall (1972) argues, contain their own ideological message.

> Thus, a film clip of the remains of an explosion may be set
> in Beirut, in South Africa, or in a New York City airport...
> to a viewer who sees this film,...the picture carries its
> own partial message: the terrorists are at it again. Some
> stations give additional visual cues by using standardized
> symbols. A logotype of a clenched fist appears before
> stories about terrorism (Lermack, 1978, p. 191).

The organization and content of the news, then, is not only distorted, it is presented as a commodity. The networks, insists MacNeil, show "a certain contempt for the audience and the feeling that the news is just another commodity that can be shaped, manipulated, or abbreviated to suit whatever purpose" (Withers-Sax, 1978, p. 4).

The interventions of advertising. The rise of the advertising industry

in the past two decades indicate that not only is the corporate sector concerned with reaching out to new markets, it is, in effect, creating them (see Hansen, 1976, pp. 183-84). Smythe (1977) estimates that in 1973, $25 billion was spent in the United States in advertising. This fact alone is significant; it suggests that the maintenance of a "consumer consciousness" in society is largely dependent on a tremendous investment of capital in advertising. Our concern, however, is not the expenditure of capital in advertising, but rather how advertising influences and manipulates the consciousness of the public. Gossage (1961) contends that advertising:

> ...is a brand-new instrument, unique to our age, but at the same time it plays mankind's oldest themes...In an advertisement's effort to persuade people of the justice of its cause ...it invariably seeks a common denominator. The more people it attempts to persuade, the more common the denominator, the more basic the appeal will be. When...the product advertised is virtually identical with its competitors,...the appeals become so basic that they slide away from fact as we know it. They go beyond reason into something even more basic, the most common denominator of all, magic (p. 38).

The appeal of advertising--its "magic"--is that it sells hope. It creates a need in the individual and then supplies the commodity (the magic) to fulfill the need. Krugman (1965) suggests that advertising via repetition transfers information concerning a product from short-term to long-term memory, and, in doing so, alters the structure of our perception of a brand or product. The objective of the manufacturers of the product are obviously to sell their products and to develop a loyalty in consumers for their brands. On a deeper level, however, Ewen (1976) has shown how the advertising industry developed during the early years of this century in order to generate a new and different

kind of value system; a value system that would change habits in accordance with the demands of American capitalism.

In context, Williams (1975) has observed that:

The sponsorship of programs by advertisers has an effect beyond the separable announcement and recommendation of a brand name. It is, as a formula of communication, an intrinsic setting of priorities: a partisan indication of real social sources...Again, to see international news brought by courtesy of a toothpaste, is not to see separable elements, but the shape of a dominant cultural form (pp. 68-9).

As an element of a specific cultural form in society (American), the advertisements on television: (1) are presented as rapidly dramatized events in which pain, beauty or pleasure are negated (pain) or enhanced (beauty) by a specific brand product, (2) employ the entertainment techniques of singing and dancing suitable for the promotion of the product, (3) insert the product within picture-sequences of sports and travel, and (4) use well-known actors and athletes shown consuming or using the products advertised (see Williams, 1975, p. 69).

The importance of the above forms of advertising are that they render further evidence of the character of the consumer culture, in which needs are "satisfied" or displaced in the consumption of commodities. The product and its consumptions become, from this ideological framework, the "substance" of life, and all social activity is organized according to its requirements.

Language and message format. Language is used on television essentially for pragmatic ends: to impress, cajole, misinform, request--all of which are informed by underlying ideological and commercial motivations. The distortion of language meaning are manifest in the promo-

tion of new products. Advertisers will often employ nonsensical neo-
logisms in commercials to convey the impression of novelty in their
products. The product is presented as "better" as "scientific" tests
have shown. A new deodorant is referred to as "microencapsulated", or
a new medication has a "special" or "improved" ingredient to relieve
the discomforts and misery due to colds or indigestion.

When speakers appear as representatives for organizations, corpor-
ations or political groups, a certain "prepackaged" language is usually
employed. The style and jargon (technical) used in the presentations
convey a certain public relations image. In fact, it is widely recog-
nized that most politicians employ public relations experts to develop
their style of communication especially for the broadcast media. The
audience is affected by the use of this standardized language format.
They begin to associate the language with the political group or organ-
ization represented rather than with the individual representative.

The formats within which language is used on television become,
especially in political affairs, highly ritualistic, defining the para-
meters through which communication occurs. Whenever social conflicts
occur, as in the case of the Vietnam war, the major media channels, in
order to obscure and distort the facts, often adopted the technical
language prescribed and used by the propaganda apparatus of the Ameri-
can government. A new vocabulary (metaphors) emerged on the scene
to describe and define the actions and policies of the government. For
example, the term "vietnamization" was employed to mask the reality of
concentration camps; "strategic bombing" veiled the indiscriminate
slaughter conducted against the civilian population in both zones of

Vietnam; and the term "deterrence" was subtlely used to soften the real-
ity of offensive operations against neutral neighboring countries
(Cambodia). The distortive uses of language, then, via the electronic
media constitute an elemental feature of manipulation as both techni-
que and policy.

Summary

I have attempted to show in this chapter that the content, form
and structure of the electronic media are organized essentially to
manipulate the consciousness of the public; to inculcate in them, a set
of beliefs, values and myths that affirm at the level of daily life the
social order in American society. Schiller (1973) contends that five
myths structure the content of the American media complex. They are:
(1) the myth of individualism and personal choice, (2) the myth of the
non-existence of manipulation, (3) the myth of the unchanging nature of
human behavior, (4) the myth of the absence of social conflict in
society, and (5) the myth of media pluralism (see pp. 8-24). Together
with the manipulation techniques described earlier, and the myths list-
ed above by Schiller (1973), the shaping or "packaging" of conscious-
ness occurs. As such, Lazarsfeld and Merton (1948) correctly contend
that:

> these media not only continue to affirm the status quo but, in
> the same measure, they fail to raise essential questions about
> the structure of society. Hence, by leading toward conformism
> and by providing little basis for a critical appraisal of so-
> ciety, the commercially sponsored mass media indirectly but
> effectively restrain the cogent development of a genuinely
> critical outlook (p. 103, emphasis in the original).

The relationship between the electronic media and the "control

culture" is a symbiotic relationship upon which a host of sub-markets (entertainment, advertising, sports) exist parasitically. The "control culture" defines the substance of social life (activity) and the media function as legitimization agents and reproducers of that life in the production of both the images required to maintain a consumer consciousness and the audience necessary to practice a consumership existence. In context, Robert MacNeil argues that: "Television is no longer in the business of providing information, but of delivering to its advertisers the audience at the cheapest per thousand" (Withers-Sax, 1978, p. 4). Smythe (1977), in general agreement with MacNeil, extends the analysis of media functions in capitalist society a step further. He contends that:

> The prime purpose of the mass media complex is to produce people in audiences who work at learning the theory and practice of consumership of civilian goods...The second principal purpose is to produce audiences whose theory and practice confirms the ideology of monopoly capitalism...The third principal purpose is to produce public opinion supportive of the strategic and tactical policies of the state...the fourth purpose of the mass media complex is to operate itself so profitably as to ensure unrivalled respect for its economic importance in the system (p. 64).

Within this political-economic framework, the electronic media generate and amplify communicative distortions extant in the social world. The elemental features of manipulation, at work in this process, requires repetitiveness, technical precision, and a one-dimensionalized representation of social life; and, more importantly, ubiquity if media are to effect and control for mass behavior.

Though I agree with Smythe's (1977) analysis of the media functions in capitalist society, I shall argue in the next chapter, that a

fifth function must be included in his framework. The electronic media, particularly television, fifth's principal purpose is to maintain the racial division extant in American society, and in doing so, legitimize the socio-racial structure of the American social order.

THE HISTORICAL FORMATION AND ELABORATION OF
RACIAL STEREOTYPES IN FILM AND TELEVISION

American moviemakers did not invent the world, nor even the
version of world history they present in their films. How-
ever, they must be given full credit for developing a highly
successful and satisfying cinematic form to encapsulate an
existing ideological message. With this form, they have been
able to relegate the great horrors of Western expansion into
the rest of the world, and present-day American hegemony over
great hunks of it, another universe of pleasure and enjoyment.
They have successfully tied extermination of non-white peoples
to laughable relief, and white racial superiority to the na-
tural order of things. They have destroyed any possibility
for explaining the various ways in which non-white (not to
speak of white) people could resist invasion, colonization,
exploitation, and even mass slaughter.

- Tom Engelhardt

The history of blacks in film and television is a social commen-

tary on American attitudes toward blacks; more importantly, it is at

once both a revealing statement of the nature and of the structure of

race relations in the American social order. The stereotypical images

of blacks in film emerged well before motion pictures became a form of

mass entertainment in the United States (Cripps, 1977). During the

period of slavery, blacks were commonly caricatured in the printed

media, especially in the South, as "sambos" who had little, if any,

intelligence of their own. Starke (1971), in tracing the development

of black portraiture in American fiction, points out that:

> Supported by the myth of white superiority and black inferior-
> ity, authors could, without compunction, depict blacks as
> accomodative chattels in our literature (p. 30).

In keeping with the Southern literary tradition, the theatrical,

ministrel and vaudeville shows greatly contributed to the perpetuation
of black stereotypes. The ministrel shows, in particular, specialized
in characterizing black plantation life in the Old South where white
performers appeared with blackened faces; and behaved according to the
stereotype of the happy-go-lucky, singing and dancing childlike "nig-
ger" (Gunther, 1973).

Leab (1976) has observed that well before the Civil War, the li-
terary and theatrical traditions established in the South:

> ...succeeded in fixing the black man in the American conscious-
> ness as a ludicrous figure supposedly born, as one show busi-
> ness history puts it, 'hoofing on the levee to the strumming
> of banjos'. He was prone to frenzied dancing, shiftlessness,
> garish dress, gin tippling, dice shooting, torturing the lan-
> guage, and inevitably, was addicted to watermelon and chicken,
> usually stolen (p. 8).

It is within the American literary and theatrical traditions, then
that the expression of black stereotypes was formed, long before the
motion picture emerged as a new form of mass communication in society.
The distorted images of blacks in both literature and theatre, and
later in film, were not the demented creation of a handful of writers
and artists; they reveal, at a deeper cultural level, the dominant
racial attitudes and beliefs of most whites in American society at the
time. In this sense, the stereotypic characterizations of blacks,
reflected then as they do now, the dominant racial group's ordering of
society's members in its own mind.[6]

The history of blacks in film and television can be divided into
six historical (including the present) periods.

The pre-World War I period. Films that featured black characters dur-

ing this period invariably fell into one of two categories: the slap-
stick variety type that portrayed blacks as buffoons or idiots; or
"the sentimental melodrama full of laughing, hymn-singing slaves toil-
ing contently for their benevolent masters" (Polski and Marr, 1976, p.
893). Racial labels, during this period, abounded throughout the mass
media. The black character was in most film productions played by
whites in blackface as woolly-headed, thick-lipped, and dark-skinned
(see Cripps, 1977). Leab (1976) suggests that white actors were cast
in blackface in order to serve 'the psychological function of reducing
audience anxieties that might occur of real Negroes were used, espec-
ially in scenes of overt and covert sexual nature or when the Negro
gets the upper hand over the white man' (p. 11).

Among the hundreds of films produced between 1895 and 1919, a num-
ber of cinematic productions to emerge where blacks were portrayed in
an especially demeaning manner were: The Wooing and Wedding of a Coon
(1905), The Slave (1909), and Sambo Series (1909-1911), the Rastus
Series (circa 1910), For Massa's Sake (1911), the Octoroon (1913),
Coon Town Suffragettes (1914).

Another notable film to emerge during this period was based on
Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel, Uncle Tom's Cabin. First produced in
1909, Uncle Tom's Cabin was the longest and most expensive American
film produced until that time. For over a quarter century, the thea-
trical production of Uncle Tom's Cabin was dominated by white actors
even though Uncle Tom himself was a black character. In two out of
the nine film versions of Uncle Tom's Cabin, black actors were chosen

for the title role. The most significant fault, however, with the
film version of <u>Uncle Tom's Cabin</u> is that it seriously distorted the
abolitionist intent of the novel into a sentimental tale about slaves
who know "their place". Uncle Tom was consistently portrayed as a
good-natured, dull-witted slave.

The most pernicious and degrading portrayal of blacks, however, to
emerge in film during this period (1895-1919) was D.W. Griffith's
<u>Birth of a Nation</u>.[7] Released in 1915, <u>Birth of a Nation</u> is a polemical
defense of the "Old South" where the belles remain "pure" and the gen-
tlemen gallant. Conversely, the blacks are portrayed a half-step up
from animals; some trainable while others savage and corrupt. The son
of a Brigadier General in the Confederate Army, Griffith presents in
his film, an incredibly idealized and mythologized drama of the strug-
gle of an elegant civilization (the South) against the brute force and
ignorance of a corrupted and contaminated society (the North). The
film concerns itself with the conflict between the states during the
Civil War and the period immediately thereafter--Reconstruction.

From the opening scenes, the film reveals the status of the
Southern aristocracy; a status maintained by the slave system. The
wealthy Southern aristocrats, paradigms of culture and delicacy, idly
watch as the black slaves work. The aristocrats never question their
superiority, or their right to trade and own other human beings; in-
justice is ignored and the concept of a ruling class is tacitly af-
firmed.

Blacks, on the other hand, in the <u>Birth of a Nation</u> are charac-
terized as clowns, villains or loyal servants. The plantation blacks

entertain the Southern aristocracy and rejoice when the confederate troops march off to war, or the blacks from the North are depicted as invaders and plunderers of the South. No mention is ever made in the film of the blacks who escaped from their masters and the plantation system. Those characters who are cast in the film as villains are either Black, mulattoe, or white (from the North). The Ku Klux Klan is glorified as the savior of the Southern way of life.

The two Swedish film critics, Furhammar and Isaksson (1971), have observed in their review of the Birth of a Nation that:

> The most curious aspect of the film,...is on a personal, psychological level: the hatred, the story of blacks and whites in black-and-white terms. The whites have noble souls; they come from touching family groups; the horrors of war have a purifying effect on them; they die with composure. The blacks are undignified; they roll their eyes and jump about like devishes--detestable creatures who need to be crushed. Worst of all in the half-breed, Silas Lynch. The crime of the rest is that they have set themselves up against the white power structure, but Lynch represents something much more serious to Griffith; he stands for good corrupted by evil, a man of impure blood. Of all the blacks in the Birth of a Nation, who include the faithful, sobbing servants, he is the only one credited with any intelligence, but it is destructive, murderous, insane (p. 202).

On another level, the Birth of a Nation finds tragedy only in war when war brings loss to the Southern aristocracy. The film, in this sense, is a statement of fear: the fear of retaliation. The threat that "we shall crush the white South under the heel of the black South". Consequently the Ku Klux Klan are depicted as morally justified in their actions when they commit murder against blacks in the film.

The Birth of a Nation presents a myth of the South where race and

social class inequality are accepted as the natural order. The signi-
ficance of the film, however, is that it established firmly the range
of black stereotypes that would influence and determine, for the next
two decades, the black image in film (see Leab, p. 37-9).

While the film industry consistantly portrayed blacks as childlike
and loyal servants or brutal villains during this period, several tal-
ented black actors and film makers attempted to produce and distribute
their own films. In 1915, Noble Johnson established a film company
and produced, among other films, Trooper for Troop K, the first black
western. Oscar Micheaux, wrote, produced, and directed over forty fea-
ture films between 1918 and 1948. Producing films for black audiences,
these black film makers were forced to operate largely underground, and
were consistently plagued by problems of distribution, publicity, and
financing (see Cripps, 1977, p. 5).

In summary, the films produced between 1895 and 1919 sharpened the
distinctions between the black and white experience and yet excluded
black actors almost entirely from the screen. The characterizations
of blacks in film were largely drawn from the Southern stereotypes "of
the wretched freeman, the comic Negro, the black brute, the tragic
mulatto, in keeping with literary and theatrical tradition" (Cripps,
1977, p. 8).[8] Whether played by a black or white actor, the black
image, insists Leab (1976), was always presented "as a composite of
qualities that were the opposite of the values treasured by white
American society" (p. 20).

The 1920's. During this era, the motion picture industry was fast

becoming America's major mode of entertainment. Little recognition was accorded to the fact that the cinema was "not only entertainment but an enormous propaganda machine that inordinately influenced the thinking and the behavior of its audiences" (Ploski and Marr, 1976, p. 893). Unlike in the pre-World War I period, blacks were increasingly cast, during this period, to depict black characters. Moreover, unlike in the previous era, where blacks were stereotyped according to the images created in the Southern literary and theatrical traditions, during the 20's the image of blacks crystallized into a new form--comedy. Two distinct character types are exemplified in this new genre (comedy) of films--the "Darkies" and the "Dummies". Ploski and Marr (1976) contend that the earliest portrayal of the new black stereotype of the "dummies" type is found in a film directed by Griffith. "In 1922 with D.W. Griffith's One Exciting Night, a type had been born: the black as a blubbering, superstitious coward whose hair turned white at the approach of even the mildest form of danger" (p. 893).

The "dummy" was usually played by a slight, 'saucer-eyed' black, who was cast in the role of a night watchman or porter. When afraid his teeth would chatter and his knees would knock; and he would scream-out 'feet-don't-fail-me-now'. The "darkie", on the other hand, was cast usually as a comedian whose ambition was to teach Shirley Temple how to sing and dance.

The other two genres of black films to emerge during the 20's were the "jungle" movies where blacks were portrayed as cannibalistic savages in "darkest Africa" (see Cripps, 1977, p. 23); and in the "our Gang" comedy series where black children ("Farina, "Buckwheat" and "Stymie")

were cast playing with other white children. The humor achieved in the "Our Gang" series was frequently at the expense of the black children. Moreover, the power relationship between the black and white children was always explicitly in favor of the white children.

One film featuring an all black cast was produced in Hollywood during this period: Hearts in Dixie in 1929. An all black cast not-withstanding, the film relied largely on the familiar Hollywood cliches and stereotypes of blacks. In Hearts in Dixie, the film lacked a plot, the movie suggests Ploski and Marr (1976) "was merely a succession of 'darkies' picking cotton, praying and getting together to sing spirit-uals" (p. 894). Throughout the 20's then, the black image in films produced by Hollywood consistently failed to depict realistically, life among black Americans. The black characters were portrayed largely according to a white fantasy of black life and culture. Such charac-terizations were far from harmless, they reinforced the image that many white Americans still have of blacks today.

The 30's. With the advent of sound in motion pictures, the 1930's (the Depression) represents an era of commercial exploitation of blacks. Countless Hollywood musicals were produced during this period that em-ployed black singers, dancers, and musicians. Cab Calloway, Lena Horne, Louis Armstrong, among others became box-office names. These black performers were cast in Hollywood films that subtlely reinforced an-other old myth; the myth of the "rhythm man" which found "its most demeaning expression in the grinning, shuffling, eye-rolling antics of Stepin Fetchit, Mantan Moreland and Sleep 'n' Eat, among others"

(Ploski and Marr, 1976, p. 894).

With the exception of several film productions in which Paul
Robeson starred (The Emperor Jones and Borderline), the portrayal of
blacks in film remained throughout the 30's distortive and demeaning of
blacks.

The 40's. The new liberalism of the war years, contend Ploski and Marr
(1976), "with its concern for morale at home and its support of the
country's fighting men of all colors, had a corrective influence on the
black's film image" (p. 894). The image of blacks shifted from the
"Stepin Fetchit" characterizations to the earnest and skillful "Negro".
Documentary films of the early 1940's showed blacks at work (Henry
Brown, Farmer; A Place to Live), or in the armed services. Blacks
appeared in Of Mice and Men and Strange Incident as responsible citi-
zens and, in several films, as semi-heroic figures (Bataan; Sahara;
and Lifeboat). Though the stereotyping of blacks persisted in many
Hollywood produced films, the demands of the war required that unity
at home be maintained. Consequently government propaganda attempts
were made, especially via the use of documentary films, to change the
image of blacks in film. Change in the appearance and not the sub-
stance of stereotypical images of blacks in film was also partly
achieved by the protests of the black and liberal press, and by the
NAACP and the International Film and Radio Guild (see Cripps, 1977).

The 50's and 60's. The 50's is a significant period in the history of
blacks in film. The blatantly negative stereotypes of the scatter-
brained servant, foot-shuffling janitor, and crazed savage or brute

were gradually supplanted by new characterizations of blacks. Black
characters who did not sing, dance, or clown, now appeared on the film
screens. The "new" image that emerged during this period was that of
the educated, sophisticated and articulate black. Embodied in the
person of Sidney Poitier in such films as No Way Out (1950), Cry the
Beloved Country (1952), and Something of Value (1957), a distinctly
different image of blacks was introduced to the American audience.
Themes that were taboo a decade earlier were now subjects for cinematic
presentation. For example, Island in the Sun (1957), Night of the
Quarter Moon (1959) and The World, the Flesh and the Devil (1959)
dealt with interracial love, while The Decks Ran Red (1958) and
Tamango were concerned with the slave trade.

While displacing the old stereotypes of blacks, most Hollywood
films produced during the 50's, created a new one: "the sober, somber,
slightly uptight, superhumanly noble, and dignified Christian Black
man ready to sacrifice his cultural past and himself for the white
world" (Bogle, 1974, p. 324). In describing Sidney Poitier's cinema-
tic roles during the 50's and 60's, Bogle (1974) contends that:

> His characters, while realistically acted, were white liberal
> fantasy creations...They were sexless, humorless, non-aggres-
> sive, non-assertive, non-funky, content to help nuns build a
> chapel...or to guide a young blind white girl to maturity
> (p. 324).

During the 60's, the pressure of social change via the civil
rights movement, and the recognition by Hollywood of the buying power
of black audience caused the film industry to introduce a plethora of
films dealing with a broad range of black themes. Sidney Poitier, with
the exception of A Raisin in the Sun, was again consistently cast,

during this period, as the articulate super-educated "Negro" in film

after film.   In one of Poitier's more notorious roles (Guess Who's

Coming to Dinner), he was cast as a "super" black.   The film critic,

Wilfred Sheed (1968), in his review of the film points out that:

> He (Poitier) is not your average second-string tackle from
> Grambling College, but a doctor of world significance, a
> big wheel in the World Health Organization, a Ph.D. summa
> cum laude avec palme and an awfully nice chap on the side
> (p. 224, emphasis in the original).

Cognizant of the criticsm he was receiving from both white and

black critics, Poitier replied in an interview that:

> ...if the fabric of the society were different I would scream
> to high heaven...to deal with different images of Negro life
> that would be more dimensional. But I'll be damned if I do
> that at this stage of the game. Not when there is only one
> Negro actor working in films with any degree of consistency,
> where there are thousands of actors in films (Leab, 1976,
> p. 231).

The significance of Poitier's reply to his critics is that he links

the roles he has performed in film with not only the film industry, but

more importantly with the "fabric of the society". The implication

here is that the film industry creates images of blacks that are con-

sistent with the culture and social order of American society. We will

return to this point later in the discussion.

With the exception of a handful to progressive films (One Potato,

Two Potato; The Dutchman; and Nothing But a Man) produced in the 60's,

the majority of Hollywood films distributed during this period, liberal

intentions notwithstanding, elaborated on the stereotypes of blacks

developed during the 50's. In what appeared to be an effort by liberal

directors and producers to depict blacks as "respectable" human beings,

they created an image as one-dimensional and demeaning as the earlier

stereotypes conveyed. This "new" image implied that it was the black man's similarity to white bourgeois culture and society that qualified him for membership in the human race.

Concomitantly, the portrayal of blacks in television during the 1950's was to a large extent influenced in Hollywood (Fife, 1974). Black entertainers were featured on the Ed Sullivan, Arthur Godfrey, and Milton Berle shows; and in 1950, one sitcom show (Beulah) was aired weekly on television. In 1953, the infamous Amos and Andy show was aired, and in 1956 Nat King Cole established his own show on NBC. With these few exceptions, the black presence on television was negligible Fife (1974), contends that the audience--the black audience in particular:

> Had to be content with watching Rochester take care of 'Mr. Benny", or an occasional special like 'Green Pastures', or someone's maid doing a walk-on bit. Other than such rare roles, their TV screens remained white (p. 11).

Beginning in 1963, however, blacks were featured in three regular weekly television shows. Ossie Davis was hired as a regular performer in Car 54, Where Are You. In 1965, I Spy was televised starring Bill Cosby and Robert Culp, and in 1968, Diahann Carroll starred in Julia. Though only a handful of black performers appeared regularly in situation comedies and dramatic series, a break from tradition had been achieved. Black performers could now be seen on television networks regularly. Despite the increased presence of blacks on television, their portrayals were always defined by white script writers, directors and producers.

In her analysis of the situation comedy Julia, Fife (1974), observ-

ed that:

> Julia showed a somewhat fictionalized set of lives. Here was
> a woman with a highly accepted job, a great wardrobe, and un-
> common good looks, following a happy, pleasant life in middle-
> class, integrated America (p. 13).

Even in I Spy, Bill Cosby, as the black character in the series,

seldom was confronted by racial issues, nor was his character as a

black man very seriously developed. The script writers were, however,

careful to define the power relationship between Cosby and his white

counterpart Robert Culp. Moreover, in the portrayal of sex scenes,

Cosby never seemed to appeal to Caucasian or Asian women.

As a consequence largely of the Civil Rights movement, the tele-

vision networks during the 60's, like the movie industry, televised

blacks in a variety of different roles. The networks were, however,

reluctant to introduce substantially more and better programming in

accordance with blacks' demands at the time. The networks claimed

that they could not present black programs that deviated from the

"tradition" developed during the '50's because it would antagonize

their advertisers, and, therefore, jeopardize their major source of

revenues (see Fife, 1974).

Clearly the image of blacks in film and television changed during

the sixties. The changes were, however, cosmetic. Blacks were being

accepted as "Negroes", not as human beings, and the new stereotypes

that emerged during this period in film and television reflect merely

a change in image rather than a recognition of blacks as people.

The 70's. The release of several Hollywood produced films in the late

1960's (100 Rifles, Rio Conchos) herald the new wave of "Blaxploita-

tion" films. The film industry anxious to produce films for a huge
black audience, released countless motion pictures depicting blacks as
superheroes, studs, drug dealers, pimps, etc. Black audiences suggest
Bogle (1979), appeared, at first, to be eager to see themselves pro-
jected on the screen as supermen.

> At the start of the 70's, I suppose all of us were dazzled
> and giddy simply because of the idea of a Black film. Whether
> it be...Shaft (1971), Super Fly (1972)...or the latest Jim
> Brown or Fred Williamson opus, never before in our history
> had we been able to run out to the local movie house and see
> a batch of Black heroes up there on the silver screen. Be-
> cause the movies touched on the fundamental dissatisfaction
> of a dispossessed people...the features offered a delirious
> promise, that of 'positive' Black political statements/images
> (p. 16).

While financially providing huge revenues for Hollywood, the
"Blaxploitation" films played on the "needs of black audiences for
heroic images without answering those needs in realistic terms"
(Bogle, 1979, p. 16). These new black films have, however, drawn
criticism from many black performers and political leaders. As early
as 1973, 400 concerned black artists met in Hollywood to discuss the
black image in films. As a consequence of their meeting an organiza-
tion was formed--the Coalition Against Blaxploitation. Critics of
the "Blaxploitation" films argue that the images they project are as
demeaning as the images of the past and that by supplanting the old
Stepin Fetchit stereotype with that of the "Super Nigger", the film
industry is perpetuating a form of "cultural genocide" against blacks.

Despite the array of films that portray blacks as superheroes,
several "quality" pictures appeared in the early 70's: Sounder (1972),
Buck and the Preacher (1972), Black Girl (1973) and Lady Sings the

Blues (1972). Recently the tone of black films suggests Bogle (1979),

has changed:

> ...becoming lighter, less politicized, more playful. Fewer
> action movies were made. Then Black humor was ushered firm-
> ly back into vogue with a trio of films starring Sidney
> Poitier...and Bill Cosby: Uptown Saturday Night (1974),
> Let's Do It Again (1975), A Piece of the Action (1975).

More recently, Richard Pryor starred in the comedies Greased

Lightning (1977) and Which Way Is Up (1977). The black film historian

and critic, Noble (1979), suggests that with the Poitier comedies and

the Pryor films the genre of black humor has "returned to the screen,

a humor not too different from that of Stepin Fetchit or Mantan

Moreland" (p. 19). If Noble's assessment of the new black films ap-

pearing today on the screen is correct, then, the history of blacks in

Hollywood films has taken a full circle back to the period of the 20's

and 30's where blacks appeared in films as foot-shuffling buffoons.

Evidence for Bogle's thesis is also rendered in television fare. The

comedy shows of Sanford and Son, Good Times and The Jeffersons clearly

play on the stereotype of the happy-go-lucky, mild-mannered, black.

Consistently, both film and television, with very few exceptions (e.g.,

several sequences of Roots I), have failed to portray blacks as complex

breathing, living human beings.

Of course stereotyping is the dominant mode of presenting all

characters on television (regardless of race) however, we would argue

that stereotypical representations of racial minorities have a differ-

ent impact than stereotypical representations of racial majorities.

As many whites lack substantial contact with blacks in their daily

lives, the blacks whom they meet on television are representative of

all black people. On the other hand, daily interaction with other whites presents the white viewer with a contrast to the stereotypical images of television.

The fact that the black image in American film and television has been persistently distorted throughout the history of both media industries, poses several questions. Why have blacks (and other racial groups) consistently been stereotyped, variations in image notwithstanding, in the media channels of film and television? Are the images of blacks intentionally created? If so, why? Are these images the creations of a few racist screen writers, or are they the cultural expression of a dominant racial group's conception of blacks? Or are they the devisive manipulations of a ruling political order bent on maintaining the racial divisions and structure in the American social order? If the answer to the last question is yes, then, intention implies that conspiracy informs the use and the manipulation of the mass media in America.

Discussion

In recent years, the major broadcasting networks, under sustained pressure from Civil Rights groups, have increased the number and frequency of blacks appearing on television. I suggest, however, that the networks recognition of and interest in the black audience was largely motivated by three significant factors: (1) the intensification of rivalries between the networks competing for old and new audiences, (2) the interest of the corporate sector eager to exploit a hitherto ignored and underdeveloped "Negro" market estimated in 1967 to be worth

$32 billion (see Evans, 1967), and (3) the increasing concern of the political order for the legitimization and maintenance of its authority over potentially rebellious racial groups in society.

As a consequence of the above factors, black characterizations alleged to be representative of the black experience, can be viewed daily on television. As we have discussed earlier racial and ethnic entertainment programming (e.g., Good Times, Sanford and Son, All in the Family), relies largely on the presentation and expression of stereotypes.

Gordon Allport (1961) has defined stereotype as a generalization concerning a category. The category of concern is that of racial heritage. The generalization concerns the attribution of particular personality and physical traits, and cognitive aptitudes as character- istic of blacks. The category itself is definitionally "neutral" (e.g., Hispanic, Native American, Japanese, etc.), however, as gener- alizations become attached to the categories as labels, the distinction between generalization and category erode.[9] The group (black) as well as the individuals within the group become totalistically defined as the generalized labels. The "power" of stereotype rests precisely on this process of "objectification".

Labels ascribed to the group become the framework from which cog- nitive and emotive decision networks (attitudes and beliefs) develop. These processes act as ideological filters, thereby predefining the nature of the possible interactions between members of different racial and social groups. This ideological screen effectively distances the

individuals and groups from each other in such a way as to confirm the

social group to which he is a member of, become reduced to objects

as defined by the generalization-category matrix. As such, the ster-

eotype rather than reality govern what people see. This process is

inherently an act of violence against the integrity of the individual

and the group of which he is a member.[10]

We have seen that film and television have persistently stereo-

typed blacks, and that the images projected of blacks, in the two

electronic media, have been both distortive and demeaning.

Recently, criticism has increased, in regard to how blacks are

depicted in situation comedies on television (see U.S. Commission on

Civil Rights, 1979, pp. 2-4). Critics argue that blacks are almost

always cast in situation comedies as pathetic and absurd characters.

Morrow (1978) recently observed that the male characters in every 1978

black situation comedy were portrayed in one or another black stereo-

type:

> Here we have George Jefferson: entrepreneur, black bigot, a
> splenetic whip of a man who bullies like a demented overseer,
> seldom speaks below a shriek and worships at the church of
> ostentation...or consider the character J.J. on TV's Good
> Times: a bug-eye young comic of the ghetto with spasms of
> supercool blowing through his nervous system, a kind of
> Electra-Glide strut. "Dyno-mite!" goes J.J., to convulse
> the audience in the way that something like "Feets, do your
> stuff!" got to them three decades ago. Then there is the
> character Ray Ellis in Baby, I'm Back: a feckless black
> creep who deserted his wife and two children seven years
> ago, one step ahead of his bookie's enforcers, and has now
> reappeared to make excuses and bedroom eyes at his wife.
> Ellis and the show's writers make much merriment at the
> expense of the sober, straight career Army officer court-
> ing the wife; obviously, he is a turkey (p. 101).

In the fall 1977 season of Good Times, a particularly disturbing

sequence of the show was aired on television. Under the guise of

humor, a mother was portrayed abandoning her children. An essay in

Time magazine concerning the image of blacks on television states vis

a vis this particular sequence that:

> It was a strange and destructive message that Good Times sent
> out when its producers eliminated not only the family's strong
> if frustrated, father (John Amos) but also, later, its mother
> (Esther Rolle), who abandoned her three children in their
> Chicago housing project to move to Arizona to be with her new
> man. Says Rolle, who quit the show because of her differences
> with the producers over the way the characters were portrayed:
> "It was an outrage, an insult" (pp. 101-2).

Concomitantly, situation comedies ostensibly for white audiences

have been found to perpetuate and legitimize racial prejudice. Vidmar

and Rokeach (1974), in their study of All in the Family, report that

in the character of Archie Bunker, a conservative, superpatriotic

working-class American, racial and ethnic prejudice is being reinforced

rather than reduced in viewers. The researchers report that some

viewers, applaud Archie Bunker "for his racist viewpoint, while others

applaud the show for making fun of bigotry" (p. 37). Moreover, many

of the viewers studied "saw nothing wrong with Archie's use of racial

slurs" (p. 42). Vidmar and Rokeach's (1974) findings support the

critics who argue that All in the Family encourages bigots to ration-

alize their own prejudices.

Occasionally, blacks are cast in serious roles dealing with sub-

stantive themes (e.g., Roots). These dramatic presentations are,

however, scarce. The reason, suggests Barnouw (1978), for why serious

dramas on blacks or other non-white racial groups appear infrequently

on television is because the network producers are concerned with

"entertainment" rather than deeply provoking and controversial sub-
jects. Moreover, Barnouw (1978), contends that such dramatic programs
do not, from the broadcasters view, make good advertising conduits.

In other dramatic presentations on television Blacks are seldom
portrayed realistically. It is as if, blacks provide nothing more
than a backdrop against which the tensions and problems of the white
world are resolved. In an interview in 1968, P. Jay Sidney, a veteran
black actor, cast then in an "important" supporting role in the soap
opera As the World Turns states:

> I was supposed to be a research physician in that series...
> and yet, emotionally and dramatically, I did not exist as a
> person. My whole function in those 14 segments was getting
> a white boy out of jail. I was a nonperson in the plot, a
> one-dimensional figure with no life of my own. I didn't have
> any problems. There were no things about which I was person-
> ally glad or sad, nothing toward which I personally aspired.
> I had no past, no future, no family. I existed only for that
> white boy. I was, in other words, an auxiliary, not a human
> being (Peters, 1970, p. 261).

In the past (1900 to 1940's), blacks were portrayed as maids,
buffoons, etc.; today (1968), suggests Bill Cosby:

> Writers and producers seem to think you need a special reason
> for a role to be played by a Negro--that he has to pounce on
> someone or be pounced upon...When a Negro comes on the screen
> the audience immediately tenses up. They know they are about
> to witness some violence, whether physical, verbal or emotion-
> al (Peters, 1970, p. 260).

Whether the roles are in comedy or dramatic presentations, blacks
are consistently stereotyped in television according to the images
America has created and maintains of them. In film, the image of
blacks today parallels that of television's. Wander (1978), in his
critique of the fantasy and ritual elements of contemporary black films
states that:

Unifying these films is an uneven stream of social realism
and physical black culture. On screen the mimesis of a black
man's life is punctuated by a rap to the head or a kick to
the groin. The struggles are framed by songs or primal
screams...Gone is white-inspired Amos 'n' Andy, but blacks
degrade each other throughout. While romanticizing the war-
rior's distinct style, the various white and black film-
makers can't think of a creative framework by which to order
black experience. The consciousness of these demigods is
limited to their primary American experience, an abusive
order of master/slave relationships...Vested white interests
will be against spreading a gospel which contradicts its own
and threatens to destroy its economic base by raising con-
sciousness of not only black viewers, but white viewers too
(pp. 10-1).

Like the film industry and commercial television, Public Broad-

casting has been assailed for its failure to address the needs of

non-white groups in the areas of management, employment, training and

programming (see Shepard, 1978). A report issued by a 28-member "Task

Force on Minorities" concluded that "the public broadcast system is

asleep at the transmitter" when it concerns Black, Asian, Latino and

Native American needs and interests (see Shepard, 1978, p. 88). The

task force further reported that:

In the fiscal year 1977 series dealing with minorities consti-
tuted 9.4 percent of the total television series funded by the
corporation at $5.8 million. About 48.6 percent of the mana-
gers of 40 public service television stations who responded to
the task force questions said that they each spend less than
$5,000 annually on national minority programming...Only one
minority program funded by the cooperative (PBS), "Black
Perspective on the News", is now being shown...by 77 of the
276 stations that could show it (Shepard, 1978, p. 88).

Significantly, as early as 1968, the Kerner Commission, although

contradictory in reporting several of its findings, concluded that "the

media have thus far failed to report adequately on the causes and con-

sequence of civil disorders and the underlying problems of race rela-

tions" in the United States (see Emergy and Smythe, 1972, p. 462).

In context the <u>Kerner Report</u> further states:

> By and large, news organizations have failed to communicate
> to both their black and white audiences a sense of the pro-
> blems American faces and the sources of potential solutions.
> The media report and write from the standpoint of a white
> man's world. The ills of the ghetto, the difficulties of
> life there, the Negro's burning sense of grievance, are sel-
> dom conveyed. Slights and indignities are part of the Negro's
> daily life, and many of them come from what he now calls
> "the white press"--a press that repeatedly if unconsciously
> reflects the biases, the paternalism, the indifference of
> white America (see Emery and Smythe, 1972, p. 465).

The failure of the press and broadcasting networks in reporting
the black experience in America is perhaps best conveyed by a young
black teenager attending a conference in 1969 on "Does TV serve the
needs of Black Youth?" The youth states:

> You just don't give us any coverage--you know, if we try to
> get a family off unemployment...This doesn't seem to be im-
> portant to the news media...We call them up--they don't ever
> show up...Like when we start rioting...everytime we're doing
> something bad--like the whites look at that show, they look
> at this news thing like they probably think that all those
> 'niggers' do over there is riot and tear up--it's like we
> got a program going--we don't get any coverage until we
> start messing up the furnace...We got to be right up in the
> papers, as soon as somebody steal a check or something, then
> you got a big old thing about that. But you never see any-
> thing like we get some jobs, picket or something, to try to
> get some jobs or get a proposal in downtown...Anything
> that's <u>instrumental</u> that's doing anything for Black people,
> we never get any coverage about that. As soon as we're out
> there making fools of ourselves, or else we're out there
> rioting or tearing up or something, we get a lot of coverage
> behind that (Stavins, 1969, p. 202, emphasis mine).

If television (and film) obscures and distorts the "image" of the
black experience in America, as I have attempted to show, then: "It
may well be that commercial television will prove to be the most re-
solute enemy of black people because of its tremendous capacity for
absorption of just those elements where we excel--sports and entertain-

ment--blinding us from the reality of our condition; and it may well be too, that by emphasizing just that entertainment which is escapist in nature, lulls senses which should otherwise be stimulated to "action" (Gibbons, 1970, p. 50).

In context, then, "superspade" represents a caricature created for the 70's. Unlike "sambo" he is both cunning and brutal, but like "sambo", "superspade" is a black image in the white mind. As such, "sambo" and "superspade", and all the other images created for blacks by America, stand as metaphors for a bankrupt and dying culture.

The Thesis Diagnosed

I will attempt now a synthesis of the various theoretical models advanced and developed in the course of the discussion in order to locate and render intelligible the thesis of the dissertation within a coherent and critical framework.

Census data indicates that over 96% of American homes have television sets. Americans are today exposed, more than ever before in human history, to essentially a uniform system of cultural messages and images. What images of the world are being presented to the American people? Who governs the selection and the creation of the messages and images? I have attempted to show that the images of the social world, presented by the mass media in general, and the electronic media in particular, did not develop, nor are they presently maintained, in a vacuum. They are the products of a systems that is structurally linked to the American political order and to the commercial requirements of the modern capitalist society. We have seen that the patterns of own-

ership and control of the major media channels in the United States are entirely monopolized by elite groups. Moreover, since the second World War, the commercial broadcasting industry has structurally merged to form the military/industrial/governmental/media complex.

What are the functions of the electronic media within the context of the ruling order? I have attempted to show that as early as in the 1920's, the Frankfurt School identified the mass media as agencies of manipulation in the modern capitalist and industrial society. The Frankfurt School argued that the mass media (as elements of the 'culture industry'), in the modern capitalist society, function to manipulate the consciousness of the individual in order to enslave him in far more subtle and pervasive ways than do other more direct modes of domination.

Specifically, the institutionalized media complex in American operate as Smythe (1977) insists:

> ...to produce people in audiences who work at learning the theory and practice of consumership...to produce audiences whose theory and practice confirms the ideology of monopoly capitalism...to produce public opinion supportive of the strategic and tactical policies of the state...to operate itself so profitably as to ensure unrivalled respect for its economic importance in the system (p. 64).

In order to mystify the world so that people will accept the existing order, the media, as legitimization agents of the "existing order", must distort people's perception of the social world. The production of distortions via the media complex operates at two levels. The first level of distortion is informed by the government, military, and corporate sectors of the ruling structure in American society. The second is internal or endemic to the media itself: that is, the organization,

hierarchy, and production process of media systems create distortions of social reality that operate often independent of external influences.

> Those who work in the media are gradually socialized into it. They learn the criteria of inclusion and exclusion, as well as the conventions, and the ground rules of the operation. They eventually come to recognize the appropriate ways to repond to the subtle pressures which are always there but which are rarely overtly applied (Halloran, 1974, p. 17).

Seemingly, I am contradicting my thesis in the above statement. I argued earlier that the media complex is structurally linked to the ruling order in society. Although the media are technically malleable, the manner in which they are used is culturally and politically determined. If the media are employed by a ruling elite to distort social reality, then, the organization structure that informs the use of media technology must itself internally (organizationally) replicate the distortions it generates for public consumption. In this sense, once a system is organized to perform "maintenance" functions for the state, it operates according to the logic (distorted or otherwise) and the interest of those working in the organization as well as of those who control and set the conditions in which the system (media complex) functions.

I have in the discussion shown how the media channels in America systematically communicate distortions to the public concerning the nature of the social world. The media, through entertainment fare and news presentations, advance a set of ideological messages that beguile people into accepting social values disguised as truths concerning the nature of social relations, power, etc., in society. As such, the media reproduce the cultural images that simultaneously affirm the existing

order, and prescribe the patterns of social life. Through the manipulation techniques we discussed in an earlier chapter (e.g. ideological mystifications, distortion and omission of facts, distortions in the meaning of language, etc.), the media "systematically" distorts social reality, and in doing so creates the imagery and rhetoric within which people are constrained to act. In context, the media serves as 'hegemonic' agents for ruling elites in the American social order.

The Media and Race

We have established the general framework within which the media complex operate in the American social order; and we have discussed how the media function in the advanced capitalist society.

I will attempt now to extend the analysis of media functions to the problematic of contemporary race relations in the United States in order to show how the media, particularly television and film, maintain and legitimize, through their portrayal of blacks, the racial divisions extant in American society. By way of introduction I establish the following points: (1) White American relations with blacks (and other non-white racial groups) have been historically characterized by white domination, (2) color in America has and remains a factually accurate index of wealth, power and status in society (see McKenney, 1975), (3) the images of blacks created in literature, theatre, film, and currently in television serve to legitimize the belief that color denotes a differential status and experience, (4) the legal ("equal") status of blacks notwithstanding, the beliefs and imagery of white

superiority remain common currency in the United States, and (5) there persists in American culture the pervasive tendency to accept the subordinate position of blacks as natural and necessary.

It is impossible to understand the relationship between the mass media and contemporary race relations apart from the above considerations. Each of the five factors listed above are historically rooted in the American racial experience. As such, prejudice (color) can only be seen as a normative phenomena, specific, though not unique, to American culture. It is within this framework that racial prejudice and discrimination is examined and evaluated in relation to the role of the mass media. I do not mean to imply that racial prejudice can be reduced to a personal characteristic of individuals; neither is it a matter of misinformation that can be resolved by education. Halloran (1974) argues that:

> It is important to stress that an analysis of race relations which does not seek to relate individual attitudes and cultural norms to underlying social structures is unable to generate proposals capable of leading to real social change. Attitudes cannot be changed significantly, independently of the structural factors to which they relate. In brief, racism should be seen not simply as a psychological matter but also as a cultural phenomenon historically rooted in social relationships, integral to the values system of modern Western societies, and serving particular interests in existing social structures (p. 23, emphasis mine).

The "particular interests" that maintain racial inequality in America are: (1) the dominant white racial group, and (2) the elite white stratum who dominate both the members of its own racial group as well as the members of all other racial groups in society.

American society is stratified along social class and ethnic and

racial criteria. In context, the socioracial structure of American society is characterized by a "racial selection process" (Hoetink, 1973). Historically rooted and culturally specific, this process of social selection and differentiation is determined and maintained by a ruling elite in collusion with other strata in the dominant racial group. Membership in the hierarchically racial structure prevails over achievement and nonsomatic acquired social position. Hence:

> An affluent black doctor in the United States is considered a black first; his professional qualities and economic achievements only serve to determine his position on the socioeconomic scale within the black group (Hoetink, 1973, p. 49).

In this sense, racism, as a culturally practiced phenomena enables whites to maintain a higher position of status and power in relation to blacks and other non-white racial groups in society.

At a deeper cultural level, racism serves a stabilizing function. Kovel (1970), in a trenchant analysis of white racism in America states:

> The most difficult, because unpleasant, fact that we must face is that for all its malevolence, racism served a stabilizing function in American culture for many generations. Indeed it was a source of gratification to whites. It defined a social universe, absorbed aggression, and facilitated a sense of virtue in white America--a trait which contributed to America's material success (p. 4).

Racism, in my estimation, continues to serve a "stabilizing" function in American culture. In this sense racism, both in its historical and contemporary forms, provides for the maintenance of the dominant culture's definition of itself, and, therefore, the potency of the culture. Racism, then, is both an attitude and a practice that accords higher status, material benefits, and a sense of cultural potency for

whites in America. At the level of the ruling order in society, racism
serves as a divisive cultural practice through which hegemony is main-
tained by an elite stratum in the dominant racial group. By promoting
and maintaining racial divisions in American society, ruling elites
shift attention from themselves and from the structures that maintain
their dominance to subordinate social groups in society. Consequently,
subordinate social classes, ethnic, and racial groups are unable to
perceive their common interests. When common interests are recognized
by subordinate social groups, they are rejected in most cases by whites
on the basis that it would fundamentally alter the power relationship
between the two racial groups. The ability to transcend the cultural
experience that historically has differentiated, in terms of wealth and
status, the relations between the races in America is beyond the capac-
ity of most whites at present. The maintenance, then, of racial divi-
sions in the American social order is central to not only the dominant
racial groups definition of itself, but also to the way in which hege-
mony operates at two levels of the social order: control at the level
of the dominant racial group and control at the level of the ruling
stratum. At both levels of the 'hegemonic' process whites are in
command.

Our concern, however, as stated at the inception of the inquiry,
is how ruling elites organize and use the electronic media to maintain
and legitimize racial divisions in American society. In order to main-
tain the racial divisions in American society, and, in doing so, weaken
resistance among subordinate social groups who "objectively" have
common interests but who are unable to subjectively realize them, rul-

ing elites have historically defined blacks as different from and in-ferior to whites (see Kovel, 1970).

The electronic media have historically played a central and con-sistent role, as I have shown, in projecting images of blacks from in-ferior and subservient buffoons to "superspade" portrayals. As such, television and film continue to project an image of white society in which blacks are seen as aberrations or oddities rather than as people who are members of society.

Hartmann and Husband (1971) contend that:

Communication between people is possible to the extent that they share common frameworks of interpretation. They need to have similar meanings for the same symbols, and a way of thinking about things in common before they can communicate. Our perceptions are structured by the mental categories available to us for making sense of our world (p. 267).

The images of blacks in the electronic media, as in the printed media, distances whites from blacks in American society. By doing so, both racial groups are unable to recognize their common experience and condition.

Gibbons (1970), in describing how television conspires to differ-entiate and distance blacks from whites in American, argues:

By creating the myth of the special person (blacks) and by re-solutely and steadfastly believing in it, television sets him aside from the group to which he belongs and by implication from the rest of the people. By refusing to identify the aims of the majority, it deceives the majority into thinking that the aims of that special person are in no way related to that of the majority (p. 51).

The Kerner Commissions have astutely observed that:

The absence of Negro faces and activities from the media has an effect on white audiences as well as black. If what the white American reads in the newspapers or sees on television conditions his expectation of what is ordinary and normal in

the larger society, he will neither understand nor accept the black American. By failing to portray the Negro as a matter of routine in the context of the total society, the news media have, we believe, contributed to the black-white schism in this country. When the white press does refer to Negroes and Negro problems it frequently does so as if Negroes were not part of the audience. This is perhaps understandable in a system where whites edit, and, to a large extent, write news. But such attitudes, in an area as sensitive and inflammatory as this, feed Negro alienation and intensify white prejudices (see Emergy and Smythe, 1972, p. 467).

Hartmann and Husband (1971, 1974), in their analysis of the relationship of the mass media to race relations in Britain, support the Kerner Commission's contention that "the way race-related material is handled by the mass media serves both to perpetuate negative perceptions of blacks and to define the situation as one of intergroup conflict" (p. 270). The researchers Hartmann and Husband (1971) conclude that the news coverage of race related matters in Britain causes:

...people to see the situation (race related issues) primarily as one of actual or potential conflict...The result is that real conflict is amplified, and potential for conflict created. For the media not only operate within culture, they also make culture and they help shape social reality (p. 280).

Correspondingly, in the United States, as a consequence of the civil unrest of the 60's, the decolonization struggles occurring throughout the Third World, and the severe structural crisis in the 'central' capitalist economy, blacks and other non-white groups are currently presented as a "problem" by the media, television in particular. Daily, television presents to the American public, in distorted formats, race related issues concerning education, employment, etc., which heighten interracial hostility (see Fisher and Lowenstein, 1967). The images and messages derived from television infer that blacks are

in various ways a problem and threat to whites. Seldom, if ever, are the problems related to unemployment, unequal distribution of resources, etc., presented by television as symptoms of deeper structural inequal- ities in society. By distorting, then, the image of blacks and presen- ting them as a "treat" to society, the electronic media perform a main- tenance function. From the prespective, the electronic media serve to legitimize white racism as a culturally practiced activity; and in doing so, the media, in general, obscure and shift attention away from the source and cause of the racial conflict--the system of capitalism and the socioracial structure of American society.

C H A P T E R   V I

EPILOGUE

Summary

Two final comments before I bring the discussion of the media and racial conflict to a close. In chapter two, I suggested that the Frankfurt School's theory of manipulation was an appropriate model for the analysis of the electronic media in the modern capitalist society. Throughout the development of this inquiry, I have relied on the work of several of the Frankfurt School's major social theorists (Adorno, Horkheimer, etc.). I am in general agreement with many of the Frankfurt School's theoretical formulations concerning the nature of social relations and of the role and function of the 'culture industry' in the modern industrial capitalist society. I disagree, however, with Adorno's (1944) thesis that the development of mass culture will eventually homogenize society into a generalized culture of "everyman" where all stereotypes previously ascribed to social groups will be supplanted by a single, all-inclusive stereotype.

No doubt, the electronic media function to reduce individual differences in American society to virtual one-dimensionality. However, if the maintenance of racial divisions in society is a necessary and central dynamic of the ruling elite hegemony (as I have argued), then, the portrayal of cultural differences between racial groups will continue in film and television. As such, the electronic media will continue to generate and promote stereotyped images of blacks and other

non-white racial groups in American society. Accordingly, people are being systematically reduced or levelled to 'one-dimensionality', but different stereotypes predominate at different levels of the social structure. The media process operating via the electronic media, direct different sterotypes to selected audiences based on racial criteria. Obviously, the net effect of this process is that "everyone", is reduced to a virtual one-dimensionality but in different ways.

The final point I wish to advance concerns the nature through which hegemony is maintained by ruling elites in the American social order. Hegemony, as I have defined in chapter four, is a "lived" social process.

> It is a realized complex of experiences, relationships and
> activities, with specific and changing pressures and limits
> ...Moreover, it does not just passively exist as a form of
> dominance. It has continually to be renewed, recreated, de-
> fended, and modified. It is also continually resisted, limit-
> ed, altered, challenged by pressures not at all its own. We
> have then to add to the concept of hegemony the concepts of
> counter-hegemony and alternative hegemony, which are real
> and persistent elements of practice (Williams, 1977, pp. 112-13).

Within this 'hegemonic' process, where contradictory elements and alternative forms emerge, the change in the image of blacks in film and television, parallel corresponding changes in social relations in society.

Until the 40's, blacks were portrayed in films as buffoons or savages; during the second World War period, the image partially changed to accomodate the protests of Civil Rights groups; and in the early 70's the image of blacks changed further to depict the new black superhero. These changes in the image of blacks in film and television occurred as a response to opposition which questioned or threatened the

ruling order. "Any hegemonic process," contends Williams (1977),

"must be especially alert and responsive to the alternatives and oppo-

sition which question or threaten its dominance (p. 113)." By intro-

ducing new images of blacks in television and film fare, ruling elites

absorbed and neutralized, within the hegemonic process, resistance to

their dominance. From this perspective contends Williams (1977, p.

114):

> It can be persuasively argued that all or nearly all initia-
> tives and contributions, even when they take on manifestly
> alternative or oppositional forms, are in practice tied to
> the hegemonic: that the dominant culture, so to say, at once
> produces and limits its own forms of counterculture.

I have attempted in the present inquiry to: (1) examine and

assess critically the corpus of research conducted on the nature, struc-

ture, role and effect of the electronic media on social relations in

the United States; (2) bring to bear relevant social relations in the

discussion of media functions in modern society; (3) determine in what

ways the electronic media are structurally linked to the ruling order

in America; and (4) show how the media serve to maintain and legitimize

the racial divisions, and therefore, the socioracial structure of the

American social order.

The evidence gathered in this dissertation point to the following

conclusions:

> 1. Variations in conceptual approaches and research designs
> notwithstanding, there is qualitative and empirical evidence
> to show that the media, particularly television, shapes and
> alters political reality; and that political attitudes and
> behaviors are in part, formed by the political reality pro-
> jected by the electronic media.
>
> 2. Since the second World War, the media complex in the United
> States has emerged with the military/industrial/government

complex. As such, the media are structurally linked to the power elite in the American social order.

3. The patterns of ownership and control of the media channels in the United States are increasingly concentrated in a small elite stratum.

4. The broadcasting medium is virtually dependent on advertising revenues from the corporate sector, and therefore, operates in accordance with the commercial requirements of capitalism.

5. The images of the social world (race relations, power, social life) presented by the media are largely consonant with the interests of the elite stratum in society.

6. The electronic media systematically distort social reality, and in doing so, beguile people into accepting social values disguised as truths concerning the nature of the social world.

7. Media structures, by their organization and production hierarchy, systematically reproduce distortions of social reality.

8. Television and film in America have consistently presented a distorted image of blacks and other people of color. Blacks are presented either as deviants, oddities, or subversives.

9. In recent years, the electronic media have, in reporting the news on race related issues, presented blacks as a problem and a threat to whites and the status quo in America. In doing so, the media contribute to the maintenance of racial divisions and hostility in society.

10. Since the owners of the mass media in the United States have encouraged the practice of stereotyping blacks through their portrayal in entertainment and new shows, we must assume that the maintenance of racial antipathy is a necessary and central dynamic for ruling elite hegemony.

Areas For Further Research

While the development of communications technology has grown exponentially, research into its social and political uses, has not developed on a commensurate scale. The following are areas which have

been neglected and where further study is required.

Research into the production and decision-making processes. Studies
are required that examine how media producers perceive their role and
intentions. Since the materials produced by the media are largely de-
pendent on the prevailing system of ownership, more research is needed
in this area to determine the relationship between programming and
corporate goals. Specifically, the planning of program schedules and
the allocation of time and revenues to different types of programs re-
quire more intensive investigation. Concomitantly, researchers need to
ask questions concerning the influence of different forms of media fare
(e.g., news, race related issues, entertainment) on social behavior.
In context, the content of media programming should be examined for
values and omissions as well as comissions of fact. As such, in the
case of television research Adorno (1954) suggests that:

> A depth-psychological approach to television has to be focus-
> sed on its multi-layered structure. Mass media are not simply
> the sum total of the actions they portray or of the messages
> that radiate from these actions. Mass media also consist of
> various layers of meanings superimposed on one another, all
> of which contribute to the effect (p. 217).

Also necessary are sociological studies ("system-oriented research)
which locate the media within the larger social context rather than as
discrete institutions operating independent of other economic and pol-
itical forces in society. Specifically, as Smythe (1977) insists,
researchers from a Marxist standpoint, must examine "the commodity form
of mass communications under monopoly capitalism on which a host of
sub-markets dealing with the cultural industry, e.g., the markets of
"news", "entertainment", etc., exist parasitically" (p. 52).

The organization of media research. Researchers, as I have suggested
in chapter two, must be aware of the inadequacies of piecemeal studies.
For example, researchers must design more sophisticated research de-
signs that link media use to trends in political attitudes and actions
(Kraus and Davis, 1976). These research designs should provide plaus-
ible ways for understanding the relationship between behavior and
events which take place at different levels of the social order. Ac-
cordingly, methods must be applied to research in ways that probe
meaningfully the cultural context within which the media operate,
rather than be used to "package" and "market" popular beliefs concern-
ing the nature of the social world. In context, researchers must take
cognizance of the fact that the directions and scope of research is
grounded in a complex of value and ideological orientations as well as
external pressures. We must ask who has done the research? Why was it
done? And what are the sources of funding, types of research and poli-
tical factors that inform the research effort.

The media and race relations. If we are to understand critically how
the media contribute to the maintenance of racial divisions in American
culture, researchers will have to develop more sophisticated conceptual
frameworks and designs than presently exist. Future studies must seek
to develop designs that systematically integrate the audience (social
groups), culture industry, and the ruling order into a historical-
cultural perspective. Especially useful would be interdisciplinary
studies, comparing how the media functions in other multi-racial
societies.

REFERENCE NOTES

1. However, most studies of child viewing behaviors report that black
    children watch more television than white children. A word of
    caution, the studies reporting heavier viewing among black children
    are not based on a random national sample.

2. The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders and the Kerner
    Commission report the contrary. Blacks were found distrustful of
    all media, believing that the media was biased and repressively
    used by the social order. However, the date and regions in which
    these studies were conducted are important to consider in the
    evaluation of the findings.

3. The writer cautions the reader to interpret the findings in this
    study in relation to the ratio used of ten whites to one black.

4. Dimensions of this profile are changing. Blacks are now cast in
    certain roles formerly prescribed for whites (e.g., criminals,
    violent, immoral). The power relationship that situates blacks
    in inter-racial, mostly adult programming, however, is explicitly
    apparent.

5. For a comprehensive review of the literature regarding the effects
    of television content on social behaviors of viewers see, Leifer,
    Gordon and Graves (1974).

6. Slavery as a system of forced labor required justification in the
    Southern mind. The need to debase blacks, was essential, especial-
    ly since the Southern white slavemaster was publicly affirming his
    recognition of and support for the essential humanity of all men.
    The psychological threat posed by this dilemma--the "dualism" of
    how a man could be both a thing and a man at the same time--was
    resolved, or, at best, rendered palatable by reducing blacks to
    things. By ascribing false and inferior traits to the slave, the
    Southern white could justify the status and treatment accorded the
    property he owned. His relation, then, to the slave, was that of a
    man to a thing. The slave's distinct physical characteristics were
    easily singled out and ascribed with inferior qualities that facil-
    itated for the debasement to occur. The phenomena reinforced the
    mental stance the Southern white required to minimize the tension
    caused by guilt within his private life, and publicly, it absolved
    him of any moral wrongdoing.

7. Public concern over the influence of motion pictures on children
    occurred as early as 1933. In one study, researchers Peterson and
    Thurstone (1933), found that white children's attitude toward

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blacks changed less favorably after viewing the <u>Birth of a Nation</u>, a motion picture well known for its anti-black bias.

8. Stereotypic film images of other non-white groups in America parallel that of the black image in film. For further study, see Cripps (1977); Elkin (1950); Woll (1974); Chin (1973); Price (1973); Doscher (1947/48); Wood (1971); Silet and Bataille (1977); and Georgakas (1972).

9. The notion that social categories are "neutral" is problematic. The very existence of the category which cannot be precisely defined may indicate a lack of "neutrality". Any attempt at definition is of necessity a form of stereotyping. In an age when "Black", "Native American", etc., represent attempts at a people's self-definition, stereotypes become unavoidable. Television will have an even greater influence at legitimizing old and new stereotypes.

10. I want to raise an important problematic concerning this phenomena. The world exists in infinite variety. Our method of reducing uncertainty requires categorization. Would such violence continue to exist if the categories changed? Is it possible to eliminate stereotypes? This problem demands further research.

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