Historical perspective

J201 Introduction to Mass Communication

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① What is a media effect?
② Magic bullet/hypodermic needle theories.
② Early studies on media effects.
② Limited effects paradigm.
Wednesday’s main points

① We live in a media environment.

① Professionalization of storytelling.

② Rising mass scale and extent of communication.

③ Increasingly live in a world of mediated experiences.
Modes of communication

Interpersonal communication—two people have a conversation.

Mediated communication—two people talk to each other on the telephone or via instant messaging.

Mass communication—an anchor talks to a camera and his or her image and voice are transmitted to a large number of viewers.
Mass communication model (Shannon – Weaver’s model)
Interpersonal communication model (Schramm’s Interactive model)
Effects of mass communication
China 213 BC, Emperor Qin Shi Huang ordered destruction of all books except those related to agriculture, medicine and prophecy.


Media Effects?

Grey’s Anatomy (May 2010)
Media Effects?

John Hopkins Hospital (Sept 2010)
Conceptualizing communication as a cause (message) that produces “effects.”

But what type of effects?

- Cognitive
- Affective
- Physiological
- Attitudinal
- Behavioral
Early 20th century social scientists assumed powerful media effects. Media was thought to infuse people with messages that they could not resist.

Emergence of “masses.”

Context
- Urbanization and industrialization
- World wars (Propaganda)
Early studies – Payne Fund Studies (Early 30s)

Effects of movies on children
Early studies – Payne Fund Studies (Early 30s)

The Payne Fund Studies

Attitude toward the Chinese

1 — Before
2 — After

Geneva High School, Geneva, Illinois
182 Children of Grades 9–12 Inclusive

Mean₁ (before) = 6.72  P.E.M.₁ = .073  σ₁ = 1.46  τ₁₂ = .57
Mean₂ (after) = 5.50  P.E.M.₂ = .077  σ₂ = 1.54

Dₜₜ₂ = 1.22  P.E.D = .0698  D/P.E.D = 17.5

Son of the Gods

Number

Favorable  Unfavorable

3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10
Early studies – Radio Panics America (Late 30s)
① Extent of panic?

② What was unique about the broadcast?

③ Why only some where frightened?

Early studies – Radio Panics America (Hadley & Cantril Late 30s)
Early studies – Persuasion (Why We Fight Films - Hovland Early 40s)
Experiments

Pre and post test with control groups

Central findings
- Important acquisition of knowledge
- Limited changes in opinion
- No changes in motivation

Early studies – Persuasion (Why We Fight Films - Hovland Early 40s)
Early studies – Voting Behavior (The People’s Choice - Lazarsfeld)

• Study of how media influence the electoral process.
  - Political predispositions
  - Media effects

• Found media mostly reinforced people’s beliefs. Very limited conversion
  - Selective exposure
  - Two step flow of communication
Limited Media Effects Paradigm
1. A media effect is a cognitive, affective, physiological, attitudinal or behavioral response to media content.

2. Early studies found little support for magic bullet notions of media effects.

3. Early studies show some effects, but they tend to be contingent and limited.

4. This led to a limited effects view...
See you on Friday...