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Acknowledgments

When I attended Elihu Katz’s conference at the University of Chile, where I was following the Ph.D. program in philosophy of social science, I never thought I would be writing my dissertation with Katz as a Fulbright/Conicyt Fellow visiting the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania. I do not have the words to express my gratitude to Prof. Katz for his support.

Let me say that I am a newcomer to the field. As a social anthropologist, with both a MA and a Ph.D. in epistemology, I just was in the right place at the right time.

This situation has advantages and disadvantages, as everything I supposed. The disadvantage is that I did not know nothing about mass communication (which I could easily apply to anthropology and philosophy). The advantage is that mass communication is an awesome prospect for me. When I started to learn this new language, I was impressed that field anthropologists working in the subject talked about people as consumers, producers or audiences. Before that moment, I only heard about peasants, indigenous peoples or natives. They also speak about exposure. I understood that technology influenced families, but I never thought families could be exposed to a cultural product, like people taking the sun in the beach. When I read the word viewer, I first thought it was a synonym for anthropologist, because we usually refer ourselves as observers. However, the viewer is not a social scientist but someone who watches television. Then I realized that an observer is not a viewer. In addition, it was interesting to me that viewers consume, interpret, appropriate, resist or negotiate television’s texts. Almost all the social sciences are here, from economics (consume), politics (negotiate) to hermeneutics (interpret). I say almost because the point is that anthropology has yet to join this conversation. For example, during the twentieth-century there was not a book called “Anthropological Introduction to Mass Communication”. At the same time, I felt comfortable as an outsider, fitting the traditional role of an anthropologist.

At Philadelphia, I want to thank the Canadian scholar Mark Bewin who commented on the whole dissertation, helping me to make this work understandable. I received support and friendship from the Bolivian Amalia Prado, the Canadian Avril Orloff, and the Israeli Lilach Nir. I want to thank the Americans Barbara Grabias, Elena Larsen, Jane Appleyard, Ricardo Wray and David Park for their kind hospitality.

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Francisco Osorio
Philadelphia, winter 2000
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1. The Problem. How the Social Sciences Deal with Mass Media, with particular reference to Anthropology

As a member of the social sciences, anthropology until recently (1980s) did not work systematically with mass communication. We did not know if anthropological research were following the same trend or not (comparing to communication research). We did not know if anthropology were answering questions posted by communication research. We did not know how many studies were conducted by anthropologists or where they were writing. We did not know if anthropology could make a contribution. The purpose of the present work is to answer all these questions in order to help in the institutionalization of an anthropology of mass communication. I think it is time to coined the term mass media anthropology.

Mass media anthropology must be understood as a new study object for anthropology, not as a new discipline within the social sciences. I cannot justify the existence of a whole new discipline called mass media anthropology because it makes more sense to define a new area within anthropology than to create an independent domain.

This chapter has three sections. The first one gives the context to the relationship between social science and mass communication. The second section reviews the discussion about the connection between anthropology and mass media and, finally, the third section describes the objectives of this work.

1.1 Media Effects Tradition

One possible way to understand how the social sciences deal with mass media is attending to the summary descriptions of media effect traditions written by Elihu Katz, which appeared in the International Encyclopedia of Communications (see page 5). I think it is justified to take this path because most of the anthropological research on mass communication falls into the media effects tradition. However, before developing this argument, I will concentrate in the way social sciences have dealt with mass media.

Katz’s argument is that there is a popular belief that television (and other mass media) has the power to influence individual behavior. This folk knowledge says that television can change the mind of any member of the society and, therefore, to change individual action. Our friends, neighbors, we ourselves can all give examples from daily life. However, when we ask how this is possible, what is the mechanism underlying this situation, the answer gets confused. Such a mechanism needs to fulfil two characteristics. First, it has to rely only on the broadcast and, second, incorporate an inoculation. The first condition asserts that a television campaign, asking someone to vote for a particular candidate cannot physically bring the candidate into the home but only the candidate’s televisual representation. This symbol is broadcast and penetrates into someone’s mind. Therefore, the broadcasts symbol breaks through barriers (whether physical, biological, social, cultural or mental) and enter the individual. Nevertheless, this condition is not good enough, because other candidates can do the same. If a second candidate uses this media, then it will again change the individual’s mind. In order to avoid this problem, and to be effective, an inoculation is needed for the broadcast. This inoculation has to block any other political message, even if the opponent uses the same television time slot, to produce a powerful effect in someone.

As far as we know empirically, there is no such a mechanism. Politicians and advertisers cannot in a simply way control someone’s will through their broadcast message. The question is whether there is no hope to such enquiry, or do we simply not know it yet. From the point of view of social science, the former path has a longer trajectory than the later. As Katz says, the history of the mass communication research can be described as a persistent search for effects that better describe the social roles of the mass media. In other words, if campaign studies are wrong, then who is right? There is no easy answer to this problem. Different research traditions, anchored in almost every social science, have contributed to the field of mass communication (see the table displayed at the end of this chapter).

According to this literature, drawing on the summary of Emily West (1999), the Uses and Gratifications school investigates the active audience. Instead of assuming a direct relationship between messages and effects, it proposes that audience members put media messages to use, and that such uses act as intervening variable in the effect process. This school views media use not just as exposure to messages, but as the very act of being exposed to a particular medium, within a specific social context. The assumptions of this school are the following:

a) The audience is conceived of as active.
b) Much initiative in linking needs gratification and media choice lies with the audience member –individual and public opinion have power vis-à-vis supposedly all-powerful media– media use is goal-directed.

c) The media compete with other sources of needs satisfaction.

d) Audience members are able to report their own uses of media.

e) Value judgements about the cultural significance of mass communication should be suspended while audience orientations are explored on their own terms.

f) Media consumption can fulfill a wide range of gratifications although media content alone cannot be used to predict patterns of gratifications accurately.

g) Media characteristics structure the degree to which needs may be gratified at different times.

h) It is possible that gratifications can have their origins in media content, exposure, or the social situation in which media are consumed.

Diffusion research, according to Katz, has a different focus. Taking the group or the society as the unit of analysis, it searches for the way in which communication elements are transmitted between people. The assumption of this school is that interpersonal networks filter media messages and influence their interpretation and evaluation. The knowledge gap school, Katz says, explores the possibility that media may widen rather than narrow the information differential between social classes. Socialization studies focus on the influence that family, peers or teachers (primary and secondary groups) can have over the individual and its relationship with the mass media.

Uses and gratifications, diffusion, knowledge gap and socialization argue that there are factors that intervene between a message and the targeted attitude or action. Therefore, Katz calls them models of limited or indirect effects.

However, other models argue for direct or unmediated effects. Such models include agenda setting, technology studies, and ideological (or critical) studies.

The agenda setting approach is concerned with how the mass media can influence people by creating a common theme, or problem, that people talk about in daily life. The assumption is that the media constitute a forum or bulletin board in which society’s central issues are aired for consideration, in Katz’s words. Technology is almost a synonym for Marshall McLuhan’s work. Ideology studies are the application of neo-Marxism and the Frankfurt school to communications studies.

From an epistemological point of view, all these research traditions follow either causal explanations, functional explanations, rationalism, critical theory and hermeneutics. Because at the beginning campaign studies looked for causal explanation, other epistemologies can be seen as reactions against causality. All these theoretical systems are alive, and historically social science has moved back and forth from causality to hermeneutics through the twentieth-century century. Mass communication research can also be understood from this perspective. Campaign studies are mainly concerned with a causal explanation of human behavior. Functional explanation and rationalism were the first reaction, led by the Uses and Gratifications school. In addition, Critical Theory has played an important role in this area. Hermeneutics–semiotics, literature, and symbolism– played a major role in the 1980s and 1990s.

I insist that all these theoretical systems are currently being elaborated by social scientists related to one or more communication schools, and the debate is not over.

1.2 Anthropology and Mass Media

Nevertheless, this debate has a new guest: anthropology. One of the latest social sciences to enter at mass communication research –and let me say an expected participant– began systematic research during the 1980s and 1990s. What is the news that anthropology brings us? First, that most media effects found in America are also found elsewhere, in places such as China, India, Brazil or among Mayan people. The first question that someone could ask is if this is a good or bad news. The good news comes from the fact that anthropological research supports the media effects tradition. For example, now we know that families all around the world spend large amounts of time watching television, or that television is a medium for configuring national identity, either in state-owned (China, India), commercial (Puerto Rico), or indigenous systems (Australia). The bad news is that anthropology did not solve the problems of effects, it only gave more fuel to the flames. Now, what the social sciences have to explain –especially anthropology– is why television viewing is so pervasive (everybody watches television).
Most of the anthropological research confirm old beliefs in communication research (television viewing punctuates time), but also disprove some knowledge (television viewing is a private activity), and adds some new knowledge (television viewing does not alter basic family patterns of the use of space). Nevertheless, before to enter upon the anthropological knowledge, we need first to discuss the points of contact between both disciplines. In the social sciences, few scholars have discussed the relationship between mass communication and anthropology. As far as I know, four authors deal with this question: Dickey (1997), Spitulnik (1993), Eiselein (1976), and Peck (1967).

These scholars are optimistic about the relationship between anthropology and mass communication. Why are they optimistic? In Dickey’s words, anthropologists are entering media studies at a time when the field is coming up with questions that they can answer. Eiselein argues that within anthropology the study of media does not require any new theoretical concepts or methods. Spitulnik thinks that although mass media anthropology is not an institutionalized area, it is growing and it could be a contribution.

Now, I will concentrate in their arguments, making some questions and comparing the essays.

**What does anthropology understand by mass media?** Dickey defines mass media as communications media that are, or can be, widely distributed in virtually identical form, including not only film, video, television, radio, and print periodicals, but lithographic prints, advertising billboards, and the World Wide Web. Eiselein’s definition of communication media is the mechanical amplification of communication to transcend geographic and/or temporal barriers. He thinks that among non-industrial societies, media are found in the form of petroglyphs, artwork, smoke signals, and signal drums. Spitulnik argues that the mass media are at once artifacts, experiences, processes, and processes. They are economically-and-politically driven, linked to developments in science and technology, and bound up with the use of language. Because of these broad characteristics, she says, anthropology can approach mass media as institutions, workplaces, communicative practices, cultural products, social activities, aesthetic forms, and as historical developments.

Considering the previous definitions, there is no argument to exclude mass communication from anthropology (an argument already developed by Peck in 1967). In other words, we are justified to study mass communication as a subject matter of anthropology. But these definitions are saying something more: mass communication is not only an industrial phenomena (a product of a mass society), but exist in non-industrial societies anthropologists had studied. It has always been with us. The point is that we did not see it.

**How does anthropology approach to the mass media?** These scholars agree that anthropology is well aware of the trends in communication research. Spitulnik argues that during the 1990s, the discipline centered its attention in the interpretative practices of media audiences, the diversity of media audiences and media uses, and the multivocality and indeterminacy of media texts. In Dickey’s words, the trend in communication studies has been toward the differentiation of media participants, which anthropology had supported.

According to this, anthropologists have been well aware of media studies. They know the main theories, trends, subject matters, and problems. The point is that so far anthropology is not doing something new and the question of its contribution still remains open.

**What is the objective of an anthropology of mass communication?** According to Eiselein, the subject matter is to explain how media creates integration in a world where the networks of kinship, residence, and social stratification are incapable of providing social and cultural integration on a massive scale. According to Dickey, to study the process of constructing identities in interaction with media, i.e., an understanding of how media are used in mundane and extraordinary practices to create and contest representations of self and other. According to Spitulnik, to integrate mass media studies into the total social fact of modern life, i.e., to theorize media processes, products, and uses as complex parts of social reality. According to Peck, to conduct cross-cultural research in order to test the findings of communication scholars and see if they are only applicable to some Western societies or valid to every culture in this world.

All these definitions are true, in some extent. Peck’s definition describes a very good number of anthropological research. Nevertheless, I do not agree because the consequence of that proposal is that anthropology will prove to be
nothing more a technique. I will further develop arguments against it. Eiselein and Spitulnik write with the spirit of the 1960s and 1970s, i.e., the functionalist view of mass media. Dickey writes in the mood of the 1980s and 1990s, i.e., critical and hermeneutics. All these theoretical systems are well alive, and all are represented in anthropological research. Therefore, we do not have an unified approach to study mass communication, and we do not have an unified object.

Could we understand in another way the objective of an anthropology of mass communication? I think another method is to attend the questions these researchers ask to the field. Peck does not make questions to compare.

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<th>Dickey</th>
<th>Spitulnik</th>
<th>Eiselein</th>
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<tr>
<td>How do different people create and use different media?</td>
<td>How do mass media represent and shape cultural values within a given society?</td>
<td>What is the function of media within a society?</td>
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<td>How are those media embedded in social, political, and economic systems?</td>
<td>What is their place in the formation of social relations and social identities?</td>
<td>What is the meaning concerning the daily lives of people?</td>
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<td>How do viewers (readers, listeners) interpret the messages they receive?</td>
<td>How might they structure people’s sense of space and time?</td>
<td>What is the nature of the interaction between media sender and media receiver?</td>
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<td>How do they use representations to comply with and contest the ideologies embedded in texts, and to create identities and imagine other realities?</td>
<td>What are their roles in the construction of communities, ranging from subcultures to nation-states, and in global processes of socioeconomic and cultural change?</td>
<td>What is the difference between those who use newspapers, those who use television news, and those who use both?</td>
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The questions they ask cannot differentiate anthropologists from other social scientists. Therefore, by this method we do not know the specific mission of mass media anthropology. This situation allows me to give the context of my own research, which I will present as objectives in the following section.

### 1.3 Objectives

We are observing during the 1980s and 1990s the growing relationship between anthropology and mass communication. Because of its novelty, my research deals with the following objectives in order to understand this relationship.

1. To describe mass communication’s anthropological research.
2. To compare this research with the traditions such as sociology and political science.
3. To describe the uses of anthropology by communication researchers.
4. To propose a contribution of anthropology to mass communication.

The structure of this essay follows the same order of objectives. Chapter 1 presented an introduction to the problem. Chapter 2 makes a journal review to answer the question about what anthropology has said about mass communication and what knowledge has come from it. Chapter 3 compares anthropology with other disciplines. Chapter 4 looks for anthropological knowledge outside anthropological journals. Chapter 5 tries to answer why interest in mass media anthropology is growing. Chapter 6 describes how anthropological concepts and methods have been used by communication research. Chapter 7 is my proposal for the anthropology of mass communication. The appendix section includes the databases constructed to make this work.

My research is theoretical. Therefore, I did not make fieldwork research to test my proposal. I would be grateful if this work in included within the epistemology of social science. In addition, I hope that my arguments could help to understand the contribution of mass communication to anthropology.
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1.4 Appendix Chapter 1


She understands mass media as communications media that are, or can be, widely distributed in virtually identical form, including not only film, video, television, radio, and print periodicals, but lithographic prints, advertising billboards, and the World Wide Web.

Dickey is optimistic, saying that anthropologists are entering media studies at a time when the field is coming up with the questions that they can answer. She thinks that anthropological theory and method is well equipped to deal with the following questions.

i) How do different people create and use different media?

ii) How are those media embedded in social, political, and economic systems?

iii) How do viewers (readers, listeners) interpret the messages they receive?

iv) How do they use representations to comply with and contest the ideologies embedded in texts, and to create identities and imagine other realities?

v) How do they organize social, cultural, and political activities around the media?

She says that perhaps one relevant concept to deal with mass media is cultural performance. Citing J. MacAloon (1984) *Rite, Drama, Festival, Spectacle*, these are occasions in which a culture reflects upon and defines itself, dramatizes its collective myths and histories, presents itself with alternatives, and eventually changes in some ways, while remaining the same in others. Maybe, Dickey says, this perspective could be useful to understanding mass media.

Dickey focuses on the 1990s, saying that the trend in communication studies has been toward the differentiation of media participants. Instead of a single message in the text or a single audience mechanically influenced by that message, Dickey thinks that most research is trying to avoid unitary categories and look for diversity. For example, she uses the concept “production” to refer to any shaping part in the creative process, including direct creation as well as financial sponsorship. In one sense a producer is different from a consumer, but Dickey says that producers are also consumers of the media. For this reason, she uses the term “media participants” to refer to consumers and producers together.

She says that the main point made in anthropological studies of media consumption is that audiences are active interpreters of the material they read, see and hear. Dickey gives as an example the work of P. Mankekar on Indian television [see 2.1.1]. She summarizes the argument by saying that Indian viewers interpret its messages from the perspectives of many subjectivities, which have been influenced by the whole discursive practices coming into contact over the courses of their lives. In other words, the media can help to form a subject, but at the same time the ground each medium covers is a contested one, i.e. involving multiple participants whose ends often compete but occasionally coincide. In order to ask where the message is, Dickey says, we must look not in the text itself, nor in the creation process at the producers. Because consumers have a role in constructing the meaning, all these participants must be viewed as a whole, to discern mass media’s meanings. From this argument of media participant differentiation, Dickey gives as ethnographic examples L. Abu-Lughod on Egyptian television [see Chapter 4], A. Davila [see 1.1.2] and her book from 1993 *Cinema and the Urban Poor in South India*.

Dickey asks the following: What do we gain by examining media participants as differentiated actors in the creation and utilization of media? Her answer is: an understanding of how media are used in mundane and extraordinary practices to create and contest representations of self and other. She says that a main function of media is to portray persuasive images. Because these images are widely disseminated, she thinks that the use of representations in constructing identities and imagined realities has increased, along with the contest over their control. Dickey says it is easy to recognize that one of the media’s function is the provision of a space for the play of imagination and the construction of identities. She cites A. Appadurai (1996) as an anthropologist developing theoretical arguments for this point. Dickey’s example is that news reports, novels, radio dramas and films all provide contact with experiences, realities, and aesthetic canons that differ from our own. She says that they create both the awareness of actual and potential differences, and the materials with which to imagine those differences. Another intellectual
source comes from B. Anderson [an argument already discussed by Spitulnik]. Thus, she explains current anthropological research as focusing on the process of constructing identities in interaction with media.

Dickey argues that media are consumed in places like theaters, living rooms, tea stalls, and subways. Therefore, research also has to consider media contexts, as well as producers and consumers. In addition, she says, consumption is not limited to the moment of viewing, reading and listening. There are adjoining behaviors like political activities and fan clubs. The point to stress, she says, is to attend to wider perspectives in order to understand the daily uses of media.

Finally, she concludes that anthropologists have been so deadly serious that do not see pleasure as a research subject. The cost of this is blindness is high, Dickens says, in so far as they are supposed to study culture as a whole. In addition, anthropological research could give a grounded understanding of media by looking at particular uses.


Her first sentence is that there is as of yet no anthropology of mass media. She defines mass media as the electronic media of radio, television, film, and recorded music, and the print media of newspapers, magazines, and popular literature. She says that they are at once artifacts, experiences, practices, and processes. They are economically-and-politically driven, linked to developments in science and technology, and bound up with the use of language. Because of these broad characteristics, she says, anthropology can approach mass media as institutions, workplaces, communicative practices, cultural products, social activities, and aesthetic forms, and as historical developments.

Spitulnik says that the main challenge is to integrate mass media studies into the total social fact of modern life. Therefore, she asks the following questions.

i) How do mass media represent and shape cultural values within a given society?
ii) What is their place in the formation of social relations and social identities?
iii) How might they structure people’s sense of space and time?
iv) What are their roles in the construction of communities, ranging from subcultures to nation-states, and in global processes of socioeconomic and cultural change?

Analyzing the main theoretical points in communication research, Spitulnik considers that there is more consensus among themes than in methods or theories. During the 1970s, she says, the main concern was the power of mass media. Scholars moved between two poles: critical and functionalist. Spitulnik characterizes the British cultural studies as centering on mass media as forces that provide audiences with ways of seeing and interpreting the world, ways that ultimately shape their very existence and participation within a given society. One consequence of this theory, she says, is that the mass media create a fragmented society, forcing individuals to construct images of other social members. She says that this argument is related to B. Anderson’s thesis of society as an imagined community, where members may not all know each other, but where each share the idea of a common belonging through the mass media. Spitulnik says this conceptualization of mass media as vehicles of culture, and as modes of imagining, has had limited empirical support. According to her, studies focusing on the ideological functions of mass media have attended to media texts. The assumptions in these studies, she says, are that a) mediated meanings are to be found in media messages, and b) mass media are sites of collective representations. Those studies lead to the analysis of media production, political economy and social history of media institutions, and media consumption.

Spitulnik says that through the 1980s, the dominant model has been linear: message production, message transmission, and message reception. In other words, she says, the message is taken as the essential unit of cultural meaning and a powerful refraction or reproduction of a society’s dominant ideologies. Functionalist, on the other hand, study mass media power and its role in reinforcing or changing the attitudes, values, and behavior’s audiences. She cites Gerbner’s Cultural Indicators Project as an example (see 2.1.1).

She criticizes both research traditions saying that focus in isolate media messages and “armchair” analysis of media texts. She says that functionalist are interesting in content units for quantification, and critical scholars in understanding audiences as passive receivers.

The reaction to these traditions, Spitulnik points out, has been to divert attention towards the next set of issues.
i) the interpretative practices of media audiences  
ii) the diversity of media audiences and media uses  
iii) the multivocality and indeterminacy of media texts

She says that research following British cultural studies and critical theory understand mass media as dynamic sites of struggle over representation, and complex spaces in which subjectivity is constructed and identities are contested. This research in the 1990s, Spitulnik says, understands mass media in relation to popular culture, modern consumer culture, and mass-produced objects and images in capitalism. They study the centrality of media stars, popular music, magazines in youth cultures, gender construction, and transforming definitions of communal and domestic space. Nevertheless, she criticizes this research because it ignores linguistics. She thinks that linguistic anthropology and the ethnography of communication could be a very useful approach to understanding mass media. For example, she thinks that Hall’s encoding/decoding model could be improved by incorporating a linguistic approach.

Where is the anthropological work in this outline of communication research? The answer given by Spitulnik is that the anthropological approach has been used mainly by non-anthropologists. For example, she says that British cultural studies conduct research based on interviewing audiences in their homes. In addition, communication scholars have explicitly applied other anthropological methods. However, there are few anthropological examples to show for all this, she says. Spitulnik thinks that with the dominance of quantitative research methods throughout the social sciences, and especially as American media research became increasingly written by commercial and political marketing interests, much of the pioneering ethnographic work of the 1940s and 1950s was replaced by audience measurement studies and statistical content analysis. She is thinking here of the early work of the anthropologists 1) W. L. Warner and W. E. Henry (1948) *The Radio Daytime Serial: A Symbolic Analysis* [Genetic Psychology Monographs 37, 3-71], and 2) H. Powdermaker (1950) *Hollywood, The Dream Factory*.

What is happening in the 1990s? Spitulnik says that most of the work being done falls under visual anthropology and ethnographic film. A related focus has been indigenous media, mainly the work of F. Ginsburg [which I will develop in chapter 3]. An important direction is on national media, for example, asking how mass media assist in constructing an imagined community of the nation-state, following the early discussion of the 1970s. Communication studies, she says, in line with British cultural studies, center on the interpretive practices of media production and reception. In addition, some research is asking about the role of mass media in providing common arenas for constructing social relations, concepts of the person, and moral evaluations.

Her conclusion is that although anthropologists have just begun to look at the various political, social, cultural, and linguistic dimensions of mass media, they have already bypassed many of the debates within media studies. Spitulnik thinks that maybe this is because they implicitly theorize media processes, products, and uses as complex parts of social reality, and expect to locate media power and value in a more diffuse, rather than direct and causal, sense.

**E. B. Eiselein and Martin Topper (1976) *Media Anthropology: A Theoretical Framework* [Human Organization 35(2), 113-121]**

**3. E. B. Eiselein and Martin Topper (1976) *A Brief History of Media Anthropology* [Human Organization 35(2), 123-134]**

This is the results of a symposium held in 1970 by the American Anthropological Association. In this moment, Eiselein coined the term media anthropology. According to him, we live in a mass society set in an urban-industrial technological environment. From this starting point, he argues that the networks of kinship, residence, and social stratification are incapable of providing social and cultural integration on a massive scale. Eiselein says that mainly communications media creates integration. From his perspective, the consumption of radio and television provide the individual with a kind of social and cultural commons within the mass of society, an illusion of participation in social and political events, a common perception of the world, and a reinforcement of public opinion.

He says that media anthropology is something that some anthropologists have been doing since the very beginning of the discipline. In his argument, the outstanding media anthropologist is Margaret Mead. Eiselein considered himself as an applied media anthropologist. During the 1970s, he worked at KUAT-TV in Tucson, Arizona. One example of his research is summarized in the following section about television effects (see 2.1.1).
His definition of communication media is the mechanical amplification of communication to transcend geographic and/or temporal barriers. The examples he gives are signal drums, semaphore flags, heliographic mirrors, the printed page, and the modern methods of image-signal transmission, i.e. radio, telephone, television, cable, and audiovisual recording. He thinks that media are pervasive. In non-industrial societies, media are found in the form of petroglyphs, artwork, smoke signals, and signal drums.

During the 1970s, he says that the interaction between anthropology and media has five points of articulation.

i) the study of media
ii) reaching the public with media
iii) gathering data with media
iv) teaching with media
v) applied media anthropology

According to my objectives, I am interesting in highlighting the first interaction. At this point, Eiselein thinks that the theoretical basis for the study of media is already established in anthropology. He gives three examples. 1) An anthropologist could use E. T. Hall’s proposition (1959) in *The Silent Language*, that culture is communication, and investigate media within a cultural framework. 2) To study media based on the models of linguistic anthropology and conceptualize the workings of the various media as a kind of grammar, or 3) use an structural-functional model to analyze media systems as working social systems within a culture. From his perspective, what is most important is to say that within anthropology the study of media does not require any new theoretical concepts.

From the perspective of the communication, Eiselein thinks that the study of media by anthropologists can provide some valuable data and insights. He says that media research has traditionally been rather narrow in scope: concentrating on the audience (e.g., how many, who are they, how often), on the content (e.g., how much violence, how much news), on specific tasks (e.g., effectiveness of political campaigns), and occasionally on the social systems within a medium or a group related media. However, he says, we still do not know what all this means. Eiselein asks the following questions of media anthropology.

i) What is the function of media within a society?
ii) What is the meaning of media concerning the daily lives of people?
iii) What is the nature of the interaction between media sender and media receiver?
iv) What is the difference between those who use newspapers, those who use television news, and those who use both?

He is optimistic that anthropology can give answers to these problems. Furthermore, he thinks that applied media anthropology can make this world a better place to live. He believes that anthropologists have a responsibility to mankind, and media is an area of this concern.


According to Peck, mass communication research is an interdisciplinary field in which all behavioral and social sciences are represented, with the conspicuous exception of anthropology. The objective of his paper is to connect both anthropology and mass communication research.

Peck says that there is no argument to exclude mass communication from anthropology. The fact is that anthropologists had ignored the field. Peck’s argument is that if the mass media is understood as a new form and further development of social communications, then there is no reason to exclude the field given that social communications are present in every culture. Peck says anthropologists have also ignored public opinion research (with the exception of Margaret Mead), which is a byproduct of social communications: the disposition toward collective action or behavior, e.g., acceptance of innovation, change, or resistance to change. Again, in this sense, there is no reason to exclude public opinion from anthropology. An exception, Peck says, is the 1956 book “Elite Communication in Samoa: A Study of Leadership” by Felix and Marie Keesing. They argue that existing patterns determine the use of and response to the media. In other words, the mass media do not arrive in a communication vacuum; they appear, on the contrary, only as a later and special adjunct to an already dominant system of social
communications. Hence, Peck says, we may expect mass communications to be as diverse in their structure, functions and effects as the cultures in which they are found. For example, in Samoa women have a negative reaction to radio programs giving advice for baby care, food or other household issues because Samoans only trust in persons they know possessing high-rank to give technical information and, therefore, they distrust unknown broadcasters.

From this point, Pecks says, one possible contribution of anthropology is to conduct cross-cultural research testing the findings of communication scholars and see if they are only applicable to some Western societies or valid to every culture in this world.

Peck argues that maybe anthropologists do not understand the objectives and motives of communication research. A great part of his paper is devoted to summary the state-of-the-art of mass communication in the 1960s, giving emphasis to the hypothesis of indirect effects.

Peck divides his summary in the following sections: media, communicator, content, recipient, and effects. He gives anthropological examples in every section, supporting communication findings. About effects, he says that effectiveness depends on basic attitudes toward the media, on assumptions about the content, on the source of communication, and on the social context of the reception. Unfortunately, there is no argument but only briefly examples in each section. There is no connection between anthropology and mass communication and, therefore, the objective of the paper is not fulfilled.

Finally, this introduction allows me to give the context of my own research, which I will present as objectives in the following section.

In order to understand what anthropology has said about mass media, I conducted research in numerous anthropological journals. The assumption is that anthropologists write in their own journals about the subjects in which they are interested. Consequently, magazines are good indicators of disciplinary concerns. In addition, looking into the references cited by anthropologists, other articles would appear, as well as books. I selected twelve magazines well established in the professional community.

1. Anthropology Today
2. American Anthropologist
3. American Ethnologist
4. Annual Review of Anthropology
5. Current Anthropology
6. Cultural Anthropology
7. Ethnology
8. Human Organization
9. Man (Old and New Series)
10. Man in India
11. Visual Anthropology
12. Visual Anthropology Review

I chose the years 1970 to 1999 for the reason that the American Anthropological Association’s first meeting in media anthropology be in 1970. The first year in which a mass media article appears is 1976. To classify an essay about mass media, it needed to appear in the title, abstract or journal keyword the next term: mass media, mass communication, broadcasting, or television. Instead of reviewing each journal, I used four databases.

1. Abstracts in Anthropology (Greenwood Periodicals)
2. JSTOR Database On Line (JSTOR Company)
3. Anthropological Index Online (Royal Anthropological Institute)
4. Anthropological Literature On Line (Eureka Database Harvard University)

The first database is on paper only, so I reviewed every volume manually. The other three build on Internet. They use different approaches to classify information. The first one construct indexes by keywords. The second searches the actual text of the article. The third and fourth databases use a combination of both approaches.

To put it briefly, the methodology asked every database which articles matched the keywords in the selected journals between 1970 and 1999.

The results were 45 essays published about mass media in these journals.

To analyze these articles, questions were rounded about: themes and contents presented in the journals, the main concepts used by anthropologists to understand mass media, the medium they had studied, the years spent conducting research and, finally, the methodology employed. In what follows, I will develop each question with the intention of understanding what anthropology has said about mass communication.
2.1 Themes and problems

I grouped the 45 essays into six main categories, according to the themes and problem anthropologists have studied over this period. The argument for classification is attending to the principal question they try to resolve. Therefore, the inquiry is a problem or theme in media anthropology research. In each category, I will present the essays, making a summary and commenting. The table below presents an outline.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Papers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Media effects</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Anthropology and media</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Media anthropology theory (*)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Mass media and ritual</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Family and kinship</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Mass media and health</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(*) Media Anthropology Theory

Under this title, I grouped papers that made an analysis of mass media anthropology from a theoretical point stand, including their history, main concepts, and proposals. Because these essays appeared in the first chapter, I will not comment on them twice. The following are the articles that appeared in the journal research between 1970 and 1999.

1) E. B. Eiselein and Martin Topper (1976) *Media Anthropology: A theoretical framework.*
2) E. B. Eiselein and Martin Topper (1976) *A Brief History of Media Anthropology.*
2.1.1 Media effects

From the journal research in anthropology (1970-1999), I founded 26 articles focusing on media effects. I will comment on them as a whole (a detail description of every article appears in the appendix of this chapter). They are about television effects, except one focused on radio (Spitulnik 1998). This exception share the same concepts and problems, except in the medium. For this reason, I will concentrate on television.

What cultures did anthropologist study? The following are the societies anthropologists have been conducting research on media effects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nations</th>
<th>Minority</th>
<th>Indigenous</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Alsace</td>
<td>Mexican Americans</td>
<td>1. Algonkian(*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Belize</td>
<td>Spanish Americans</td>
<td>(Canada)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Brazil</td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Maya (Mexico)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. China</td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Navajo (USA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Egypt</td>
<td></td>
<td>4. Warlpiri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. India</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Indonesia(*)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Israel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Japan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Malaysia(*)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Mexico</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Nepal(*)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Nigeria</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Philippine</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Puerto Rico</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Syria</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. UK</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. USA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Yemen(*)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Zambia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(*) See Chapter 4.

According to this information, I can conclude that anthropologists largely have studied television’s effects in nations and not in the societies they traditionally study. A naive explanation is that indigenous people do not have access to television. Nevertheless, this is a bad explanation because there is access even in places without electricity because of the use of batteries (Liechty 1994), and even if the cost of a television set is high compared to the monthly income (Miller 1998, Mankekar 1993, Pace 1993). In addition, the Warlpiri of Australia have the own television station (Michaels 1991). A better explanation is that anthropologists have focused on nation-states rather than indigenous societies. Why do they do that? One possible way to explain this is to attend the contents and problems of the anthropological research.

What problems did anthropologists study? Focusing on the problems that anthropologists have been studying in the 1990s, I can conclude that almost all the research is interested in national identity as the main effect of television.

The exceptions are Gordon (1998) describing his experience as an interviewed in an Egyptian talk show, Sherry (1995) about coffee consumerism and Painter (1994) on Japanese meritocracy. Sherry and Painter’s papers understand television as a place where is displayed, respectively, consumerism and meritocracy. I classify them in this way since they do not ask what is television’s influence on consumers or Japanese adolescents, but ask rather how some problems can be exemplified by attending to television programming. In this sense, other media or cultural practices are equally useful for studying consumerism or meritocracy. There are also two theoretical papers. Eric Michaels (1991) and Andrew Lyons (1990) are aware of the new relationship between anthropology and mass communication. Lyons calls for thinking through new proposals from the media effects tradition, while Michaels sees in hermeneutics a key to understand the relationship between culture and television, especially Aboriginal
broadcasting. They do not develop a complete argument, limiting their papers to suggesting new paths in media anthropology research.


I think the reason is that communication research has largely studied American identity and television. Maybe, then, anthropology is moving to other cultures in order to study this subject. My argument is that anthropology scholars in the 1990s are well aware of communication research's knowledge, noticing lacunae in this tradition. One of the gaps is researching outside America: Richard Pace (1993) is explicit about the needed of television research outside America. His discussion includes comments on Lazarsfeld and Gerbner. Raul Ries (1998) is basing his work on Pace, Kottak and James Lull. Cynthia Miller (1998) reviews theoretical perspective on media and the audience. Arlene Davila (1998) summarizes the contemporary research of television in anthropology, citing references to I. Ang (1985) Watching Dallas, and P. Crawford (1996) The Construction of the Viewer. Lisa Rofel (1994) resumes the discussion about the powerful influences of both the reader and the text. Finally, Purnima Mankekar (1993) discusses audience research in mass media tradition.

The 1990s research on national identity says there is a correlation between identity and television. Not only that television plays a manifest role in the construction of a national identity but television viewers create their own identities through television. Television shapes and/or provide the elements for identity. The distinction they try to show is that one way to see the process of identity formation is attending to the messages of national television to viewers (this is the way you have to be). Another way is start from the individual who selectively takes from television the elements best suited with his/her identity (this is the way I want to be). This last thesis of the selective individual was tested where television is state-owned: India (Mankekar 1998, 1993), Syria (Salamandra 1998), and China (Rofel 1994). They founded that in those countries viewers are not passive but active participants of their own identity.

Nevertheless, in all these studies there is no mechanism to explain this correlation. This situation could be given by the hermeneutical approach of many of these studies, which do not look for causal, functional, or general explanations (in short, a mechanism) in order to understand a given phenomena.

During the 1970s and 1980s, there is no single problem but a common area. Throughout this period anthropologists studied American television. In fact, every single research has an American focus. The main themes were serials, viewing (perception and effects), and community programming (Cable TV and public). Interestingly, some authors are not anthropologists. Joseph Woelfel is a communication scholar who conducted two researches in the 1980s with the multidimensional analysis method. His purpose was to test television’s effects in and outside America. Intintoli’s (1988) soap opera analysis falls into the media effects tradition but is not concerned with national identity. The approach he follows is no different from the papers published in classical anthropological journals. He uses the same methods, concepts and share the common problem of television’s effects. The article of Buckser (1989) is about televangelism it is not asking about effects of ministries over the audience. His purpose is to compare organizational structures in order to explain televangelists’ success. There is no audience research, only research on institution structures. Furthermore, the broadcasting structure does not only cause independent religious organizations. The opposite is also true. As for national identity and television, this is definitely not a subject for Buckser’s paper. The anthropological perspective in this essay is closer to British social anthropology than American cultural anthropology. My argument is that Buckser’s main concern is organizational structures. As in comparative sociology, he is comparing social systems. Cultural anthropology usually is concerned with meanings, individual perceptions, and thoughts. Buckser is neither making an analysis at ritual nor broadcasting values. In this sense, his work resembles a sociological approach to religious phenomena.

My argument is that most of this research (1970s to 1990s) is social science more than anthropological research. What I want to say is that if we think about the work of George Lipsitz (1986) on comedy show during the 1950s, Barbara Newton (1986) on the metric scaling of viewers’ perception, and Martin Topper (1976) on Cable Television, then my question is about the anthropological contribution to mass communication. In other words, what is the new perspective that anthropology could give to mass media? Even the work of E. B. Eiselein (1976) concerning Mexican-American television is part of the minorities research tradition inside social science theory. In
all these studies, the theoretical analysis is widely shared by all social scientists. Where is the distinctiveness of anthropology? Susan Kent (1985), working on the use of space, has an interesting perspective. She shows that there is no cross-cultural correlation between television viewing and the use of space. Nevertheless, we still do not know why that is. We need an anthropological theory to explain it, in order to highlight the distinctive approach of anthropology to mass communication. During the 1990s, research focused on national identity following a trend already established by communication scholars.

So far, there is a joke that can recapitulate this situation. Elihu Katz says that God gave cinema to humanities and television to social science. I would add that God gave the following command to anthropologists: Go around the world and prove what American scholars have said about mass communication.

**What are the methods anthropologists have been using?** In all these studies (1970s to 1990s), anthropologists have been using their standard methodological approach. The main method is observation and interviews; some of them added a survey.

**What are the cross-cultural effects of television?** These studies support the following cross-cultural effects of television. Each of these effects appears in at least three different cultures. I included here studies from Chapter 4.

**Antecedents Conditions**
1. The uses of the television set are not culturally specific (every culture uses television to watch television).
2. Television viewing is pervasive (everybody watches television).
3. Families spend large amounts of time watching television.
4. Television viewing is the dominant evening and night activity of people.
5. Children are heavier viewers than adults are.
6. Women in traditional societies tend to watch more television.
7. Television drama is the favorite genre.
8. Female characters represent moral forces in society.
9. Viewers have stereotypical perceptions of sex roles of TV characters.
10. Viewers perceive sitcom characters as “fantastic” and dramatic characters as “real”.

**Effects**
1. Television is a medium for contouring national identity, either in state-owned, commercial, or indigenous television.
2. American television does not determines local effects but every culture defines its own.
3. Television viewing reduces the diversity and the loci of activities.
4. Television drama changes women’s perception of gender and working roles in traditional societies.
5. Television viewing punctuates time.
6. Television viewing does not alter family basic patterns of the use of space.
7. Television increases a viewer’s awareness of the world beyond the society.
8. Television viewing increases consumerism.

Of course, this is not a generalization about the “universal” effects of television. The reason is simple: There are few publications in anthropology. In addition, it is worth noticing that this knowledge comes mainly from nation-states.

Nevertheless, let us suppose that further research supports these findings. What anthropology could say about the effects of television in different cultures? I will develop in here the arguments found in the literature review. The methodology that I will follow will be the use of the media effects chart appeared at the end of Chapter 1, which was developed by Elihu Katz. Therefore, in order to compare anthropology with other research traditions, I will answer the same questions made to the others, using the knowledge of the literature review.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Image of audience member</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td>This situation is manifest from the 90s, where the active viewer’s thesis is founded in every work. During the 70s and 80s, is latent and in one case (Lipsitz 1986) is not supported (critical view).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Societal context</td>
<td>National identity</td>
<td>Local and indigenous identity is contrasted with the nation-state. Research in the 70s and 80s centered in America contrasted with other cultures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The “text”</td>
<td>Cultural values</td>
<td>By analyzing television we can understand the cultural values of a given society. Television displays and shapes culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basis of involvement</td>
<td>Enculturation</td>
<td>Cultural elements are integrated into the members of a given society by the involvement of the viewer with the media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesized individual effects</td>
<td>Syncretism</td>
<td>Individuals accept some elements displayed on television while at the same time reject others, changing the culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesized societal effects</td>
<td>Ethnocentrism</td>
<td>The members of a given society reinforce their cultural values by contrast them with values of other cultures as it is display on television.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theory roots</td>
<td>Media studies, hermeneutics, functionalism</td>
<td>Anthropologists have been using theories and concepts mainly of mass communication research. During the 90s, the trend was toward hermeneutics (the functionalist school remains since the 70s).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typical method</td>
<td>Ethnography</td>
<td>Participant observation and interviews. Some surveys are also made.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key question</td>
<td>Do we all think alike?</td>
<td>Anthropology so far have mainly tested media studies knowledge outside America.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With this chart summarizing the anthropological media effects, I will concentrate in the remaining themes appeared in the journal review.
2.1.2 Anthropology and Media

This subject deals with the representation of anthropological knowledge on television and in the press.

Lewis (1998), Besteman (1996), Hitchcock (1990), and Lett (1987) deal with the press. In fact, the main concern of these four articles is anthropology other than the press. My argument is that they analyze how anthropological knowledge is often absent in journalism, instead of guiding an anthropological analysis of journalism. They go to the press in order to return to anthropology, not to discuss journalism. The dispute between Besteman and Lewis about Somali social structure is a good example. They highlight the press, but the reasons they give for the scarce use of anthropological knowledge in press reports is unsatisfactory for someone interested in mass media. However, if the reader is an anthropologist interested in the arguments of what interpretation and available evidence agrees with Somali social structures, then he or she will find reasons to compare. In Hitchcock’s press analysis of Romania Revolution, he assumes that the western media played a role in the revolution, but he does not say why. In my opinion, he does not give an argument about the role of Western media in the revolution; his only point is to illustrate ethnic diversity, and highlight the fact that Western press concentrated mainly in the Hungarian population. He is interested in showing the ethnographic diversity of this country, which is a convincing argument from an anthropological standpoint. Lett’s article about television news is the closest to mass media research, however, his commentary style stops him from developing reasons for his proposals of mutual benefit between anthropology and journalism. I would argue that instead of a research article, Lent is writing a commentary of his personal experience as a journalist with an anthropological background. His only point is to call for a mutual relationship that would benefit both sides. Therefore, according to my objectives, I found the anthropological analysis of press reports in academic journals unsatisfactory.

Gordon (1998), Banks (1994), Turton (1992) and Singer (1992) focus on television. Joel Gordon takes himself as the subject of the representation. Banks, Turton, and Singer focus on the Disappearing World serials, analyzing the broadcasting to English speaking countries of anthropological films. My argument is that this perspective on representation has the same concern as anthropology and journalism. In the case of journalism, the questions that anthropologists asked were how the press (TV news or newspapers) transmits anthropological contents. In the case of visual anthropology, the problem is the televisual representation of ethnographical documentaries. In both media, the conclusion is that the anthropological approach in underrepresented.

The essay of Page (1997) asks about the representation of African American Culture in American media. From my perspective, I found the lack of arguments in Page unfortunate. There are a good number of examples about African American appearances in the media, but this is not an argument, since there is no mechanism that justifies Page’s interpretation. By mechanism I understand an argument or theory that explains, or makes sense, of the phenomena under consideration, supported by empirical evidence. I did not find arguments of mass media’s role, only examples of African American in media. The way Page thinks about African Americans is not a necessary condition to believe in “representation” or “white public space”. These are very interesting concepts, but exemplification does not demonstrate why the cases cited should be considered exemplars. If there is a role for mass media in Page, it is only as an instrument of transmission. The interest lies in the ideology, not in the medium. Consequently, mass media is, in the end, secondary. From the point of view of my objectives, Page does not develop the anthropological research on the mass media. The article’s relevance is more than anything else of illustrative value.
2.1.3 Mass Media and Ritual

This theme is developed by McLeod (1999), Abeles (1988), Auge (1986), and Landers (1974). These essays use a classical anthropological approach to myth and ritual and apply it to contemporary themes, such as television and presidential politics. These anthropologists are able to use this knowledge, drawing conclusions from the findings, because they are confident in the fruitful use of the concepts of myth and ritual in understanding industrial societies. This argument is important, because it changes the subject of the discipline but maintains the theoretical framework.

The essay of Landers is important because her 1970s proposal was only developed twenty years later. She proposed that television comedies could play the same roles that mythology plays in other societies. Unfortunately, she did not accomplish her objective. Landers limits her essay to an exploratory work in the subject, saying that future works on the area could be very useful to understand the relationship between myth and television programs.

I think the articles presuppose that the reader is a colleague, since they do not develop arguments supporting their proposals. Perhaps they are interested in the approach’s applicability, not the underlying theoretical argument. For example, James McLeod does not develop any of his arguments about “sociodrama theory”, letting the reader look to the references in order to support his argumentation. The main part of the essay applies this analytical framework to contemporary political campaigns, not to making his theory explicit. Also unfortunately, from my perspective, McLeod does not give arguments that could sustain his thinking about mass media. There is only reference to his propositions, and the argument in general is weak. In fact, there is no argument, only unsupported sentences. We cannot take the relationship between mass media and modern American politics for granted. The only believable claim in the article, supported by evidence, is that candidates can create issues from TV series. However, a mechanism by which media interact with politics is absent. Actually, McLeod only credits mass media with minor effects. For him, the important aspect is rhetoric, being merely mass media an instrument for transmission. Even the concept “teledemocracy” is only a synonymous for “modern society”; there is no further examination of the term. I can apply the same argument to Marc Abeles’ article on French presidential politics.

The case of Marc Auge is different. He explicitly proposes using myth and ritual theory to understand American TV series. As regards his first proposal (ritual regularity), I would like to highlight it, because one of the findings in television cross-cultural research is that programming punctuates time. From Auge’s point of view, I think, this is explains as a ritual manifestation of TV series. For example, research in rural Brazil indicates that the evening’s soap opera is an expected time, or ritual, in Auge’s term. In this sense, the soap opera punctuates time because it displays the ritual characteristics of regularity, identification, profile permanence of the hero, ritual themes and, of course, scheduled transmission. In Auge’s proposal, it is ritual, in the end, who punctuates time.

About his fifth proposal (the relative unimportance of the author), this might provide an answer to the question of why Russians were not involved in watching Dallas in Liebes and Katz’s The Export of Meaning: Cross-cultural Reading of Dallas (see Chapter 6). The interesting point is that of viewers from six different cultures, Russians were the only ones who retained the name of writers and directors in the series. If American TV series are myths, according to Auge, then the author is of secondary importance to the viewer. The important inquest is the answer to the question, how the previous conflict would be resolved. This answer comes in the series argument, not in its titles. Therefore, the beginning or the end in a specific series emission is irrelevant. The authors (director, writer, and producer) are manifest in the first and last minutes, appearing as secondary to the involved viewer. Why does a viewer get involved? To participate in the myth. Russian viewers were not attracted to the myth. They did not want to view what was important.
2.1.4 Family and Kinship

This theme is developed by Rodgers (1986) and Das (1980). Comparing the essays about Indonesia (Rodgers) and India (Das), similarities arise in that both view modernization as a central concern in kinship studies. Since India and Indonesia are societies moving between tradition and change, family structures are an important site for analyzing national transformation. Both analyzes are from the 1980s and concentrate their attention on the program’s content, not in the listeners’ interpretations. In India, the analysis is on what advertisements say, not what to the potential spouses think. In Indonesia, the anthropologist interviews neither cassette producers nor consumers, only analyzes the content. Both are good examples of media anthropology. My argument is that Das’ question is the following: what do newspapers tell us about social change? In this particular case, Das is asking about the relationship between changing marriage patterns and industrialization. The study of family and kinship is almost a “trademark” in anthropology. Further, the functionalist question of this research belongs to anthropological theory. Therefore, this is an anthropological work in mass media. In the case of Susan Rodgers (Indonesia), I would make the same argument, except that she does not use a functionalist approach, but a critical one. A final point of difference is on the media analyzed: in India, it is newspapers; Indonesia, cassettes.

2.1.5 Mass Media and Health

This theme is developed by Kannan (1997) and Kendall (1983). Comparing the two essays, I found similarities in methodology because of the use of survey research in intent, because the studies focus on the role of mass media and their influence on health problems (disease in Honduras [Kannan] and prevention in India [Kendall]), and in the use of mass media studies, given that they both cite communication research. The differences arise in the role of mass media. The Honduras case is the opposite of India. In the Honduras, the only electronic medium (radio) has a minimal influence on health messages. In India, television and radio played a larger role than the written media did. Other differences are the setting – rural Honduras and urban India – and the time – Honduras in the 1980s and India in the 1990s. Interestingly, the Honduras’ paper criticizes the agenda-setting hypothesis, while India analysis supports it. Unfortunately, from my perspective, both papers do not develop much theoretical argumentation. A possible, but unresolved question in the first article is that the Honduras project calls Mass Media, but suggests that mass communication is, at best, limited in advertising health treatments. The role of mass media is, then, an open question in these essays.
2.2 Commentary

Taking the 45 essays as a whole, I will summarize them by making some key questions.

**What concepts did anthropologists use to understand the mass media?** So far, anthropologists have not developed specific concepts for understanding mass media. What they have done is apply well-established terms from anthropology (e.g., acculturation) and used concepts from communication research (e.g., audience, viewer, and message). Contemporary anthropology and communication share concepts like text, reader, and discourse. In addition, scholars from both disciplines use terms like identity (resistance, accommodation, and appropriation), the global sphere or public space. My argument is that an anthropologist dealing with the mass media describes the subject using communication terminology (the *native* is called *viewer*). The explanation is basing on anthropological concepts, but also on communication and general social science terms. As I mention in 2.1.3, the most interesting argument comes from the relationship between myth, ritual and mass media. The idea is that a theoretical framework invented to understand primitive religion can be applied to make sense of contemporary mass media.

**What medium did anthropologists study?** The media analyzed by anthropologists are television, newspapers, radio and cassette. Because some articles consider more than one medium, I add the term “mass media”, meaning any combination. Therefore, I can conclude that television is the medium studied most.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Television</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Mass media”</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspapers</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cassette</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>45</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**What cultures did anthropologists study?** Anthropologists have studied mainly nations. Cultures such as Batak, Mursi, Navajo, Maya, and Somalia identified usually with the discipline. Therefore, I can conclude that most of the research has been conducted in non-traditional settings from a classical anthropological point of view.

1. Alsace
2. Australia
3. Belize
4. Batak (Indonesia)
5. Brazil
6. China
7. Egypt
8. France
9. Honduras
10. India
11. Israel
12. Japan
13. Maya
14. Mexican-American
15. Mursi (Ethiopia)
16. Navajo
17. Nigeria
18. Philippine
19. Puerto Rico
20. Romania
21. Somalia
22. Syria
23. UK
24. USA
25. Zambia

**What methods did anthropologists use?** Without exception, in these studies the classical anthropological approach is used. Most of them rely on observation (participant or direct) and interviews. Survey and quantitative analysis in some research is used. Therefore, anthropologists studying mass communication apply the same method as they do in studying other areas.

**What years did anthropologists conduct research?** I can conclude from the following table that the interest in mass communication is growing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. essays</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990s</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980s</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970s</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the next chapter I will compare anthropology with other research traditions. In chapter 4, I will return to anthropology, this time looking for knowledge about the mass media outside anthropological journals.
2.3 Appendix Chapter 2

Television Effects


Spitulnik argues that the history of electronic media in Zambia is quintessentially a story about the complex meanings of modernity on both ends of the colonizer/colonized dyad, and a story about the profound reshaping of consciousness and expression that occurred through colonization. She uses the term “modernity” to denote a cultural construct which holds that people can move towards a better life and a more “evolved” society, through the acquisition of certain kinds of knowledge, goods, technologies, and lifestyle habits.

In other words, Spitulnik says that when she began documenting the meanings of the electronic in Zambia from the colonial period up to the present, she discovered that the introduction of electronic in colonial Zambia went hand in hand with the introduction of a nexus of cultural practices, orientations, and evaluations related to ideas of progress, sophistication, consumption, innovation, and Westernization—a nexus that could be captured by the cover term “modernity” in her terms.

Spitulnik argues that, with the popularization of radio in colonial Zambia, there was an increased circulation and standardization of a basic repertoire of English language expressions for talking about modernity and the electronic. What is significant is that in disseminating and validating certain English language formulations, radio became a powerful agent of ways of talking about modernity, at the same time that it was an agent of both the project of modernity and the experience of modernity.

Spitulnik conducted research on:

a) The successful introduction in colonial Zambia during the 1950s of an inexpensive battery-operated radio specially designed for the African consumer, called the “Saucepan Special”. She studied a report of the letters listeners sent to the radio station in 1950.

b) A series of advertising photos appeared in The African Listener and published by the Northern Rhodesia Information Department to promote radio listening in the early 1950s.

c) The creation of new words (verbs and nouns) into the Bemba language to deal with the radio or the incorporation of English words into it.

d) Eveready battery’s advertisement in printing media.

She found that early radio was simultaneously an agent of the project of modernity, ways of experiencing modernity, and ways of talking about modernity. From the colonial period up to the present, Spitulnik says that electronic media have been associated with an experience of spatial expansion (connections to a wider world), as well as a spatial contraction where distances seem to be shorter. She says that there is a new discourse for talking about qualities of time in terms of temporary immediacy, speed, and timeliness, and this continues to be articulated—and even valued—with direct reference to the operations of electronic media. In addition, the cultural and linguistic associations of electronic media as powerful, exciting, and full of vitality that emerged during the colonial period continue into the present. She says that none of this happened in a vacuum or because of the intrinsic features of the electronic. It was embedded within a particular European colonial project which brought radio technology into Africa, and then aired what were termed “the best songs” and “the latest world news” amidst the messages of a progress-oriented modernity.

Her conclusion is that in the Zambian case, radio has meaning not just as a material object and as a communication modality, but more specifically as a conduit and catalyst for talking about modernity. She argues that from the beginning, colonial radio was a powerful agent of ways of talking about modernity at the same time that it was an agent of both the project of modernity and the experience of modernity.

Finally, Spitulnik thinks that her arguments support McLuhan’s thinking of a global village. She subscribes her analysis inside hermeneutics and thinks that Heidegger’s hermeneutic circle could be applied in this case because,
she says, the meanings of the electronic are about the cultural meanings of modernity, and the cultural history of modernity is dependent on the operations of the electronic.

Attending to the references, Spitulnik cites James Lull (Media, Communication, and Culture), and Richard Wilk (Colonial Time and TV Time).


Mankekar’s objective is to examine how the family was constituted as a unit of reception by Indian television producers and policy makers, and as a unit of consumption by marketing strategists and advertisers in the early 1990s. Mankekar argues that the family was not just the “context” for televisural mediations of modernity in India, but was actively reconfigured through its articulation with the community and the nation, and by its insertion within transnational flows of capital, knowledge, and desire.

Mankekar says that Doordarshan’s (Indian television) objective is to “capture” mass audiences, but it also created and expanded markets for the commodities it advertised. Mankekar’s paper is an ethnography showing that Doordarshan created a desire to acquire new and expensive consumer goods among the Indian population.

Mankekar describes the case of Indian television saying that from the 1980s Doordarshan has shifted from development education to entertainment. The prime time in the 1990s consists of news, entertainment serials (including soap operas based on the Latin American model) and talk shows. She says that Doordarshan was put to the task of constructing a national family, and the viewing family became primary target audience. At the same time, the viewing family was constituted simultaneously as the core of the national audience and as a target audience for advertisers. In the early-1990s, most of the advertisers on Doordarshan consisted either of multinational companies and their subsidiaries or major Indian corporations. Mankekar concludes that in the 1990s the partnership between the bureaucracy and industry, between the state and national and transnational capital, in the production and shaping of national-popular culture was firmly established.

Mankekar says that the proliferation of entertainment serials on Doordarshan was also enabled by a demographic expansion of the middle class, which actively lobbied for more entertainment programs. Conversely, Doordarshan played a critical role in the cultural constitution of “middle-classness” through consumerism. At the same time, consumerism was embedded in middle-class aspirations to upward mobility and transnational discourses of modernity. Mankekar argues that the cultural significance of these developments in India need to be traced through Doordarshan’s crucial role in the creation of desires and anxieties pertaining to different forms of modernity.

Mankekar says that in the early years of television, modernity was articulated chiefly in terms of modernization, which was to be achieved through national development. But since the economic liberalization policies introduced by the Indian state in the 1980s, the investments move from capital goods to consumer goods production. The premise was that India would become a modern nation when its citizens acquired modern lifestyles through the acquisition of consumer goods. The middle class were soon “captured” by television simultaneously as target audience and as market for the goods advertised in its commercials. In Doordarshan’s discourse, Mankekar says, modernity was associated with progress, upward mobility, and higher status. These representations of modernity resonated with the aspirations and anxieties not just of viewers securely positioned within the middle classes, but also those belonging to the lower-middle classes and upwardly mobile working classes.

In summary, Mankekar says that programming decisions, the contents of Doordarshan serials and advertisements and, most significantly, the imperatives of the transnational consumer market converged to constitute families as viewers of national programming. Simultaneously, viewing families were recruited as units of consumption for an ever-widening range of consumer goods marketed through television advertisements.

In addition, Mankekar says, the discourses of consumerism produced—and mediated by Doordarshan—resulted in a reconfiguration of relations within viewing families, and had varied and profound consequences for women’s positions in the household. In some instances, the proliferation of advertisements co-related with a spurt in demands for increasingly ostentatious dowries consisting of consumer goods shown on television. In many cases, the consumerist desires created by Doordarshan led women to seek employment outside the home, either to acquire the
purchasing power that would enable their families to secure middle-class status through the acquisition of consumer goods or to offset the consumerist urges of other members of their family and make ends meet. In other words, through their engagement with television’s texts these women, as viewing subjects, were drawn into larger national and transnational economies of desire and consumption.

Finally, attending to the references in anthropology, Mankekar cites Abu-Lughod “The Interpretations of Cultures(s) after Television” (Representations 59, 1997) and her 1993 essay “National Texts and Gendered Lives: An Ethnography of Television Viewers in a North Indian City” (which appears below in this section).


Joel Gordon is assistant professor of history at the University of Nebraska, at Omaha. In this article, he describes a personal experience as a student of Egyptian popular culture, and a frequent television viewer, who suddenly appears on a television program. With his two-year old son, Gordon appeared on the popular television interview-quiz show “Kalam min Dahab” (Words of Gold). The segment, no longer than four minutes out of a half-hour show, was filmed and aired during Ramadan, the prime television viewing month in the Arab world. For that reason, Gordon and his son became instant celebrities, immediately recognizable to Egyptians of all social classes and ages, male and female.

The paper is a description of what happened in his life after the show. There is no analytical framework, except a reference to modernity in Appadurai’s sense.


Salamandra observes that during the 1980s much of the ethnographic material on television centered on the family or gender relations. In the 1990s, anthropologists and media studies specialists turned their attention towards the role locally produced television programs play in social, ideological and political contests in specific contexts. She characterizes this trend as exploring the ways in which indigenous dramas and local responses to them serve as models of social distinction. In addition, she says, they illustrate the observation that global cultural forms (television) are locally appropriated and transformed to serve culturally specific ends. Salamandra argues that in Damascus sub-national identities are being constructed and reconstructed through identification with or rejection of nostalgic representations of the city’s past, specially in Ramadan serial dramas.

As examples of the 1990s, she cites Purmina Mankekar (1993) *Television Tales and a Woman’s Rage: A Nationalist Recasting of Draupadi’s “Disrobing”* (Public Culture) [In the same year, Mankekar published a related article discussed in section 2.1.1]. Daniel Miller, ed. (1995) *Worlds Apart: Modernity through the Prism of the Local*, which includes Lila Abu-Lughod’s *The Objects of Soap Opera: Egyptian Television and the Cultural Politics of Modernity* [a different paper than the one discussing in section 4.1]. Finally, Robert C. Allen, ed. (1995) *To Be Continued… Soap Operas Around the World*.

Salamandra thinks that throughout the Middle East, local and national identities are being constructed and contested through appropriations of television. An example of this process is Syria’s Ramadan television serials. Ramadan is a season of remembering for Syrian Muslims, Salamandra says, very much like Christmas in some American circles. Religious programming is restricted to the periods just before and after sunset. According to her, these programs reflect the government’s desire to take advantage of the opportunities Ramadan presents for the construction of national culture. They form part of the ruling Ba’th Party’s efforts to incorporate diverse groups under a rubric of Syrian–and beyond this Arab–nationalism.

She does not know how closely Syrians watch these programs. Her observation is that many households, especially those fasting, will turn the television on around sunset, to hear the exact moment to break fast, and to keep hungry guests and lively children occupied while food is heated. However, she says, most tend to treat as background noise the programs aired just before and after sunset, in distinct contrast to those which capture viewers later in the evening. The later period, which might be called “Ramadan prime time”, approximately one hour after the beginning of the fast breaking, is reserved for the year’s most eagerly-anticipated local television production, the Ramadan
Dramatic series. Salamandra says that Syria produces many low-budget serial dramas each year, often on contemporary urban issues, but showpiece productions, usually on historical themes, are always aired in Ramadan.

During the first half of Ramadan in 1993, a series entitled “Damascene Days” occupied the earlier prime-time slot. This series was clearly the media event of the year, says Salamandra. She describes how streets and shops emptied each night during the hour-long broadcast. The series was the subject of endless discussion at parties, in buses and shared taxis, in hairdressers and shops, in restaurants and cafés. “Damascene Days” attempted to portray daily life in an unnamed Old City quarter in 1910’s Damascus, concentrating on family relations, problems between neighbors, and local administration. The series’ concerns are intensely personal and familial, she says, its characters charmingly naïve. In addition, the quarter’s residents resemble an extended, mostly happy family, who help each other financially and calm each other’s anxieties. Disputes are settled with affection. Notables treat their social inferiors with paternalistic concern.

Salamandra says that most Damascene viewers saw in “Damascene Days” an authenticity in keeping with their own sense of local identity. The series was evaluated less for its production or entertainment value than for its historical realism. She interprets that for Damascenes and non-Damascenes alike, “Damascene Days” constituted an evaluation of Damascene culture and its relationship to the Syrian State. People who loved the series considered it realistic, portraying themes of simplicity and purity, in contrast to the complexity and corruption of contemporary life. In other words, she says, the series’ rosy nostalgia was widely read as criticism of the present. By contrast, critics saw “Damascene Days” as part of a wider movement by Damascenes to glorify themselves and their past. Critics were mostly non-Damascenes.

According to her, Ba’th Party censors may have hoped “Damascene Days” glowing portrait of an honorable and heroic past would incite feelings of national pride in all Syrian citizens. In addition, the structure of the Syrian State encourages such over-interpretation among Syrians and non-Syrians alike. Nevertheless, its broadcast intensified centrifugal tendencies instead of promoting national unity.

She concludes that the Syrian case reminds us not to assume that the presence of a state implies a strong sense of nationhood. Salamandra understands contemporary Syria as a battle over which group dominates television. Syrian television dramas and the debates they provoke are not mere celebrations of difference, she says. At issue in these debates over televised representations of the past is the question of who rules, or who ought to rule, in the present.


[American Ethnologist 25(3), 452-470]

Davila analyzed a television comedy show in Puerto Rico, sponsored by an American company. Originally developed as an advertising campaign, the show remained popular during most of the 1990s. The interesting point, according to Davila, is that Puerto Rican discussions and assertions of identity increasingly take part through such mass media products.


She says that television is the medium in which such attention focus, and thinks that contemporary research would center on 1) the historical specificity of television entertainment in cross-cultural settings, 2) its involvement in local politics, and 3) the way in which publics interpret and negotiate media messages. She cites two references to support this argument. L. Abu-Lughod (1993) *Finding a Place for Islam: Egyptian Television Serials and the National Interest* (Public Culture) and, P. Mankekar (1993) *National Texts and Gendered Lives: An Ethnography of Television Viewers in a North Indian City*. [The last essay appears later in this section.]

When anthropologists study television and identity, she says, they focus on.
a) State-owned television. As an example, she gives the reference of L. Rofel (1994) *Yearnings: Televisual Love and Melodramatic Politics in Contemporary China*. [This essay appears later in this section].
b) Historically important local genres such as soap operas in Latin America, or
c) Indigenous media as a response to political and geographical disruptions. She cites in this point F. Ginsburg (1991) *Indigenous Media: Faustian Contract or Global Village?* [This essay appears in the visual anthropology section].

Davila argues that her research is interesting because she studies commercial media and programming. She defines commercial television as not state-owned, not directly responsive to a given state’s political agenda, and primarily aimed at entertainment and commercial production rather than at public service or education however defined. She says that the commercial role of the media has been a central preoccupation in theories of media imperialism, which treat such media as vehicles for marketing and creating consumers of imported products. In addition, she adds, many intellectuals have developed forms of local programming to counter foreign production and global market forces and so educate their nationals to distinct visions of modernity.

Davila asks, what does local mean? She says that 1) we are in an era of communications technologies such as the satellite. 2) Global market forces are leading to an expansion of media deregulation and the growth of privately owned media. 3) Traditionally state-controlled television is becoming private. 4) Commercial advertising is increasing in state-controlled media. 5) Television programming usually promotes foreign, hybrid, and indigenous creations at the same time; and 6) transnational products use cultural specific symbols in advertisement. She says that the anthropological research in “indigenous” or “national” media understand mass media as an identity from the perspective of either local intellectuals or the researches themselves.

Therefore, she questions the concept of “national” television in the current transnational context. Davila cites D. Spitalnik (discussed in the previous chapter) where in saying that contemporary research corroborates the notion that all forms of mass media, in various subtle ways, negotiate and represent cultural identity. Consequently, Davila says, these trends have led to an increased emphasis on the nuanced processes by which people negotiate, appropriate, and transform imported global and commercial messages to fit specific circumstances and experiences.

In this context, her main argument is the following.

a) Mass media are vehicles for shaping and expressing identities by emphasizing the realities of resistance and accommodation in which people increasingly engage while appropriating mass media products and commodities as sites for their own strategies of self-definition.
b) A commercial television program in Puerto Rico, *El Kiosko Budweiser*, is a channel of national discourse, alluding to social and racial hierarchies actively drawn upon to constitute Puerto Rican identity.

The results of her research can be summarizing as follows.

i. Male characters represent the collectivity, and female characters the morality of Puerto Rico.
ii. The show is the ‘newspaper of the poor’. Daily events occur in a context where nothing is ever transforming.
iii. The show helps to display and reproduce some of the cultural hierarchies and conventions that sustain Puerto Rican cultural politics.
iv. It provides a space for social criticism and reversals of hierarchy, but always within the dominant parameters, that sustains colonial Puerto Rican society.
v. Commercial television and commercial shows is use to discuss national identity, even if the show is sponsored by an international comp any like Budweiser.
vi. State-owned television is as a medium for nation building, while indigenous media are a locus of resistance. *El Kiosko Budweiser* provides further clues to the dynamics of resistance and subversive appropriation, which anthropologists have for some time recognized as comprising accommodation to old and new systems of power simultaneously.

Davila’s conclusion is that ultimately the show is bettering understood as a multi-layered text, displaying contemporary Puerto Rican society to itself in some of its contradictory multiplicity. It provides a venue for a Puerto Rican creation, full of everyday language, mannerisms, and humor. This done within a setting where nothing is isolated from commerce, no more than advertising can be separated from the realities of daily life.

6) **Cynthia Miller (1998)** *The Social Impacts of Televised Media among the Yucatec Maya* [Human Organization 57(3), 307-314]

In the greater discussion about globalization, Cynthia Miller thinks that televised media and its social impacts are a fundamental concern. Miller’s research focuses on the ways that mediated images and ideas integrate into narratives of identity and social roles. Her main arguments are the following.

a) Through television viewing, the continuity and contrasts of daily life are re-contextualized within national ideologies and global commodities.

b) Yucatec Maya integrate mass media messages into their expressions of self and community.

c) Mass media provoke some community members into embracing the global sphere, while others reaffirm ties to local identity and established patterns of behavior.

Miller’s review of theoretical perspectives on media and the audience points out that the history of audience studies follows a series of oscillations between two perspectives. Those that stress the power of the text over its audience and theories that stress the barriers protecting audiences from potential message effects. She says that *effects* refer to an interpretation of the communication process as a stimulus-response model. It is characterized by one person affecting the behavior or state-of-mind of another. She bases this definition on the work of Shannon and Weaver. Miller says that *effect* implies an observable and measurable change in the receiver (the audience) caused by identifiable elements (such as theme, plot, characters, and ideology) in the communication process. She bases this definition on Fiske’s (1982) *Introduction to Communication Studies*. In the effect tradition, she says, audiences are “consumers” of media messages, exercising minimal influence over the communication process.

Miller finds two major analytical errors in most audience studies. According to her: 1) they fail to approximate the lived experiences of audiences. 2) They are unable to increase our understanding of the complexities of the interconnections between media and audiences, inserting in wider social, political, and economic contexts.

Miller does not give arguments to support her critiques. Instead, she simply states that theories on the homogenizing influences of global media grounded in the effect tradition. This tradition could be characterized, she says, as the idea that a growing interconnectedness of cultures brought about by the transnational flow of images and information is leading to a global culture that is increasingly Westernized and commercialized. She cites as references for this idea A. Giddens, J. Fitzgerald, and A. Mattelart.

Explicit in subscribing to a critical approach to communication, Miller says that when media messages transmitted for consumption are viewed as institutional expressions of dominant social structures, the field of study becomes charged politically and philosophically. She says that the focus of study should move from the transmission of messages to the point of encounter between intended message and audience. In the latter case, she says, televised media and its products come to be sites of struggle. In these sites, dominant ideologies confront by the interpretive abilities of the audience, as representing “problematic social realities” that must be negotiating by viewers’ sense-making abilities. She bases this reasoning on J. Femina (1981) *Gramsci’s Political Thought*.

Miller thinks that the critical approach has been central to the study of mass media in Latin America, especially the work of N. Garcia-Canclini (1988) *Culture and Power: The State of Research* (Media, Culture and Society), and the non-translated work of J. Martin-Barbero. Miller characterize this research as focusing on the ways in which mass media and their products are appropriated and re-functionalized by disenfranchised people who either belong or have strong links to indigenous cultures. Miller says that these critical scholars have been especially sensitive to issues of social and political power, and to the subtle ways in which consent and resistance interwoven. According to Miller, making sense of mass media texts is primarily a collective activity among popular audiences, carried out within groups of friends, family, and neighbors. Images and messages make a point of departure from which to elaborate on the store of the collective memories of the community. While reading, the group gives its own rhythm to the text. She develops this argument from J. Martin-Barbero.
Miller’s research results are the following.

i. Television viewing in Yucatec Maya is pervasive –cutting across income levels, occupations, and the availability of surplus cash after monthly expenses.

ii. Soap operas are the favorite genre.

iii. Although members of traditional households (Maya speakers) are active consumers of televised media, that is not the image they wish to present; thus they under-report viewing hours.

iv. Television viewing facilitate the changing status of women (resistance to authority, participation in cash economy, challenging gender roles).

v. Women view more television because traditional roles require them to stay home.

Finally, attending to the references, Miller does not cite other mass media research on the Maya, but she does cite ethnographical studies on the population.


This is ethnography of a remote Amazonian town in 1996, with the intention of describing television viewing and its effects. His findings are the following five points.

i. Television viewing punctuates time (changing local traditions).

ii. Television viewing changes traditional working roles. It increases consumerism, and facilitates migration to cities.

iii. Television viewing as a nightly routine keeps people inside the house.

iv. TV alters visitation patterns. Contrary to Pace’s earlier study [appearing lower in this section], Reis found that TV has produced a wave of inactivity and decreased social interaction.

v. Young people and members of middle class families seem to be more attuned to modern notions of privacy and respect for individual space.

His conclusions, Reis says, are the following.

a) Systematic television viewing has played a role in the way Pirabas residents construct their own interpretation of the world and of themselves.

b) There is very little cultural dialogue between that rural community and the dominant Brazilian urban elite: communication between those two groups seems to be a one-way road.

c) Several cultural changes are taking place in the community, possibly because of the systematic and pervasive presence of television programming. Television viewing has affected Pirabas residents’ interpretation of their community and of the world. Those changes reflect in new conceptualization of space and time; the modification of work patterns; a new wave of consumerism; a general shift in expectations towards life and towards the community; and in the displacement of private and public activities.

Finally, attending to the references, Reis cites James Lull (1988) World Families Watch Television, several studies of communication research in Brazil, and the work of Richard Pace that appears in this same section.


This is an analysis not of television but of televised coffee advertising. Sherry says that the televisual product is the subject of her essay, coffee being the particular focus. The reason she gives is that programming does not merely deliver audiences to marketers. It also delivers images of material culture, products in particular, to viewers. Explicitly, she adopts a cultural forum model of television in the tradition of cultural production. As a cultural forum, Sherry thinks, television is a liminal realm that generates rich patterns of meanings from among which viewers select to suit their own personal straits. In addition, she says, television presents society’s myths to society at large. Viewers use television to help produce culture; they interpret programming to “explain”, “extend” and “contain” their lives.
According to her, media anthropologists have not adequately used the ethnography of consumption. Sherry argues that ethnographers have come lately to the study of programming, and have illuminated local phenomena such as the dynamics of fandom, family viewing practices, or the cultivation effect. She mentions Kottak’s research in Brazil, but also cites as anthropological examples leg Ang’s (1990) *Culture and Communication: Towards an Ethnographic Critique of Media Consumption in the Transnational Media System* (European Journal of Communication), Henry Jenkins (1992) *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture*, and four articles from Thomas Linlof, ed. (1987) *Natural Audiences: Qualitative Research of Media Uses and Effects*.

9) **Lisa B. Rofel (1994) Yearnings: Televisual Love and Melodramatic Politics in Contemporary China**

[American Ethnologist 21(4), 700-722]

Rofel describes *Yearnings* as a television soap opera about the intertwined lives, loves, and tragedies of two ordinary families (the intellectuals Wangs and the worker Lius), as the vicissitudes of their joys and sorrows unfold over two decades, from the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) through the late 1980s. She says that *Yearnings*’ popularity was so great in the early 1990s that it aired every night for three hours, playing out its entire 50 episodes in one month. The question that Rofel asks is how is it that a story of thwarted desires and tragic sacrifices as told through the personal dilemmas of family relations could stir such engaging responses in China?

The arguments she develops is the following:

a) Popular culture is a site for the constitution of national subjects.

b) National identity recreates continuously through categories of gender and class, as they constitute in popular narrative.

c) The Chinese Soap Opera *Yearnings* is a melodrama of national and cultural identity occurring within the contradictions created by the state’s efforts to combine socialism with a free-market economy. *Yearnings* embodied the desires set loose by those transformations, as well as the resulting cultural dilemmas about what would count as moral.

She says that her work has been inspiring by the concept of “global ethnoscapes” by Arjun Appadurai (1997) *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Modernization*. In addition, Rofel mentions P. Mankekar and F. Ginsburg, both authors appearing in this section. Nevertheless, in order to understand national identity, she uses the theory of nationalism proposing by Benedict Anderson (1983) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. In line with this theory, Rofel says, nationalism is less a political ideology than a cultural system that, like religion, gives rise to an imagined community. Rofel says that the model of and for what Anderson called “nation-ness” was historically enabled by the development of print capitalism.

Rofel says that in China consumption of television and other forms of popular culture has increasingly become the process through which people are question as subjects of the nation. To understand this process, she says, requires going beyond current debates in studies of popular culture. Rofel characterize them as an oscillation between two poles, 1) a purely textual approach that emphasizes containment of viewers’ desires, versus 2) a celebration of spectators’ or readers’ autonomy from and resistance to the text. Rofel thinks that they are building upon the more general binary opposition of resistance versus incorporation, or opposition versus homogenization, which has run its course through cultural studies and anthropology. Rofel thinks that this dichotomy is insufficient as an analytical tool. Her proposal is that popular culture in China functions as a contradictory cultural site, where domination, opposition, and cultural creation coexist.

From the point of view of Chinese television structure, *Yearnings* belongs to the Beijing Television Art Center. According to Rofel, the content of this soap opera is not from any politburo policy about mass culture, but by the need for the new studio to recuperate costs. Rofel says that the rejection of Maoist socialism and the introduction of a market economy have meant that in the current period of economic reform the state may be clear that it is speaking in the name of a social body, but is much less sure about what it is speaking for. At one moment, party bureaucrats laud productivity and the pursuit of wealth. In the next moment, “socialist morality” is the antidote to the undue worship of money. In Rofel’s thought, this is an argument about the contradictory functions of popular culture.

The main results of content analysis are:
i. Chinese soap opera is a place to debate cultural identity. Although it seems innocuous and apolitical, this dramatic miniseries narrates political allegories of national identity.

ii. Women are icons of the nation in this debate.

iii. Male intellectuals still represent the political power in the debate.

iv. Viewers in China make sense of themselves through soap opera.

Rofel’s conclusion is that Yearnings produced a powerfully seductive knowledge of viewers’ lives that led them, in part, to view themselves as the program portrayed them. Thus, she says, in making cultural sense of this television text, viewers in China were also making sense of themselves. For this reason, she says, as with other forms of discourse, it would be impossible to distinguish the way they spoke about the program from the way the program “spoke” through them, that is, constructed their social identity.

Finally, attending to the references about mass media, Rofel cites an extensive bibliography of communication studies. However, there is no other anthropological research in mass communication cited.

10) Andrew Painter (1994) On the Anthropology of Television: A Perspective from Japan [Visual Anthropology Review 10(1), 70-84]

The American anthropologist A. Painter is interested in Japanese meritocracy. He understands Japanese commercial television as a place where the meritocracy displays itself. Therefore, his analysis of television is always in relation to this social structure. He thinks that the world is increasingly experienced via the mass media, and that the anthropological interpretation of the world has to consider – alongside rituals, representations, and routines – the sounds, images and narratives of television – in his words, telerepresentations.

He says that the anthropology of television examines problems, not programs. Stressing what people do with television rather than what television does to people, it encompasses the everyday practices of television producers and audiences as well as the form and context of specific telerepresentations. Painter thinks that the anthropological understanding of television is distinguished by its broad, comparative, cross-cultural perspective and by an emphasis on relating television to matters of lived experience.

Painter says that Japanese television is composed of multiple and often conflicting or contradictory representations, interpreted and reinterpreted by viewers in a variety of ways. According to him, the Japanese case suggests that, far from homogenizing the world’s peoples, television can bring persons and nations together on one level while also working to keep them subtly yet significantly apart.

Focusing on Japanese programming, he says that a variety of Japanese TV shows exemplify the cultural motif of seishum. This word means youth, freedom, pureness, and intense emotion. It is opposed to adulthood, characterized as routine and monotony. His proposal is that some Japanese programming is a function of the meritocracy. In order to exemplify his suggestion, he gives three examples.

The first one is television coverage of college entrances exams in Japan. In this country, television news broadcasts the results, giving statistical information about regions, high-school affiliation and gender. TV scenes only show the happy faces of the student that succeeded, avoiding the students showing sadness or failure. The reason, TV editors argue, is that they want to avoid embarrassing students. Painter thinks the reason is to legitimate the meritocracy by reinforcing the educational system. High school viewers only see felicity in the faces of new college students.

The second example is the classroom-drama that was immensely popular during the 1970s and early 1980s in Japan. This genre often made seishum its central theme. Painter says that each episode followed the same pattern, where some student became disillusioned with school or interpersonal relations, only to be returned to the fold by the understanding teacher who helped everyone learn from the experiences of their peers.

The third example is the annual National High School Quiz Championship. Since the 1980s, this program has had millions of viewers. Painter says that the program embodies many of the core issues that confront the Japanese today as they negotiate their lives in a rigid meritocracy. Competition, hierarchy, success, failure, elation, good-humored resignation, ability, study, luck, comradeship, support, school spirit, and suffering – these are the themes of the
program and of real life in Japan. Painter says that the master narrative of seisshum links all—this time in the context of a spectacular quiz program.

Painter’s proposal is that on Japanese television, themes of purity, suffering, and effort coexist with images of unity, innocence, competition, and success. In interpreting Japanese telerepresentations, Painter thinks that seisshum is a cultural representation that can be linked to the legitimization and dissimulation of meritocracy in Japan. This ideological aspect, he says, is not consciously intended by television producers, but is constructed and contained within routine practices of television production, and made visible by engaging the telerepresentations in a process of creative and critical interpretation.

Painter thinks that the mass media have profoundly transformed and extended the ways in which representations are articulated and communicated in modern societies. Television does not merely reflect culture, he says, it produces and channels it in socially and historically variable ways. Therefore, television is important because of its more general role in transforming the representational dynamics of modern societies.

According to Painter, the study of television culture is part of a larger movement that actively focuses on the production of culture, not merely upon the analysis or interpretation of pre-existing cultural texts. Within this approach, culture is the sum of all public representations extant in a given population at a specific moment in time. Painter’s proposal is that the anthropology of television focus on the institutionalized production of telerepresentations, their form and content, and on the ways people interpret and reinterpret what they see on TV.


Dorothy Zinn says that her paper offers a cultural inquiry into the role of French television in Alsace as an ideological apparatus of the French State, one that has helped establish a dominant cultural hegemony from Paris throughout the region. She theoretically supports her arguments with L. Althusser, M. Foucault, and B. Anderson.

Zinn says that Alsace is a traditional culture of Germanic origin and character. In 1982, legislation lead to the emergence of regional television historically dominated by Paris. The regions became autonomous in their programming decisions, increasing local broadcasting time. By 1985, Alsace made 60% of its own programming, characterized by transmissions in the Alsatian dialect and developing television formats such as sketches, storytelling, humor, and history. Nevertheless, Zinn says, programmers have consciously attempted to avoid presenting the regional culture as simply folkloric. In this way, regional television has been promoting a distinctive Alsatian identity fully compatible with the modern French nation-state and European Community. In the 1990s, with more networks to fragment the audience shares, Alsace television has maintained high ratings.

According to Zinn, the role of regional television has been to create an Alsatian identity. This process has been done in two ways. First, the Alsatian dialect is actually a group of many local dialects, not all of which are completely mutually intelligible. However, Strasbourg (Alsace’s capital) transmits a single version of it, unifying the region through a common language. Second, foreign immigrants do not appear in content programming, despite their significant presence.

In conclusion, Zinn argues that by authorizing an “official” version of the regional culture and defining who participates in that culture, television creates and not merely reflects an Alsatian regional sub-culture. Alsatian identity, she says, reflects the ambiguities, tensions, and complexities of the polyphony of imagery available to Alsatians from all televisual sources.


Richard Wilk thinks that television has an indirect effect on social groups because television transforms social discourse. His proposal is that by listening to the ways people talk about television, scholars would be able to understand television’s effects.
In 1981 began television broadcasting in Belize, immediately creating a national debate. Wilk cites several communication scholars who studied this subject during the 1980s. However, Wilk argues they did not show any knowledge of local history or culture. For Wilk, it is clear that in the first decade of broadcasting, television became important in the ways Belizeans define themselves and their relationships to each other and to the outside world. For example, some Belizeans think that the problems caused by television comes from outside, usually from the USA.

Wilk heard from some Belizeans that the solution was to intensify the production of local television. This perspective coincides with the cultural imperialism school, so Wilk concludes that academic knowledge was the same as folk-knowledge. The cultural imperialism school thinks that in order to avoid foreign, mainly American, influence, television has to focus on local programming. Wilk does not agree with the cultural imperialism explanation. Following the work of D. Miller (1987) Material Culture and Mass Consumption, Wilk says that the “global” is no longer a unitary category, and that the local is also fragmented by language, culture, class and rural/urban divisions. “Local” programming is a term without meaning. In Miller’s analysis of soap opera in Trinidad (1990) Fashion and Ontology in Trinidad [Culture and History 7, 49-78], he found that Trinidadians’ image of their own culture is best exemplified in their interpretation of a foreign television program. According to Miller, the products of local and global culture must be understood in the context of their consumption, not of their production. Foreign objects and messages are naturalized into a local context through consumption. Wilk agrees with the anthropological study of commodities and consumerism, based on G. McCracken (1988) Culture and Consumption. McCracken says that goods are re-contextualized and reinterpreted at their locus of consumption. Richard Wilk thinks that this idea could be applied to the study of television. For example, citing Katz and Liebes, the drama of Dallas conveys very different meanings to Israelis, Algerians, and Italians. Citing Eric Michaels, Australian aborigines interpret television dramas in ways that would be unintelligible to those who produced the drama in the first place.

Wilk says that in the global traffic of objects and meanings, one major finding of television audience research is that the message of television is interpreted and absorbed socially, rather than individually. Television messages are mediated in the social context of talk about television. He says that studies consistently find that conversation is an essential part of television watching. Therefore, the meaning of the program acquires cultural and social relevance through interpretive discourse. In order to support his argument, Wilk cites Katz and Liebes, M. Lee (1990) Women Watching Together: An Ethnographic Study of Soap Opera Fans in the US (Cultural Studies), and J. Lull (1988) World Families Watch Television. According to Wilk, Lull’s most important finding is that television creates a new genre of “television talk” within existing family interaction.

Wilk argues that most theorists in audience research agree that television talk allows viewers to negotiate different poses, or distances in relation to the program. Wilk classifies these poses into a set of three, based on S. Hall, I. Ang, Katz and Liebes, and S. Livingstone (1990) Interpreting a Television Narrative: How Different Viewers See a Story (Journal of Communication).

a) A dominated viewer places no distance between himself and the program, identifying closely with the characters and situation in a completely uncritical way.

b) A critical viewer has a distance from the program that allows judgment about truth, the motives of its producers, and the impact of the medium itself.

c) In between there is a negotiated position, where the viewer does not dispute the meaning of the program, but interprets and adopts it in light of his own experience and interests.

Wilk says that he was never able to find in Belize someone from category a) or b). However, the folk-knowledge (the way Belizeans talks about themselves) says that those are the main categories. For example, poor people are in category a), while the rich and educated belongs to category b). The same can be supported by empirical studies from communication research, and in theories like the critical school. However, Wilk says that when folk models and academic models coincide so neatly there is a good reason to be cautious.

Wilk infers that if there are no simple social maps to different readings of television, and if these categories of distance are still useful, then television discourse has meaning on a number of levels. A consequence of this argument is that we should expect people to take different positions towards the medium in each social context.
For example, Wilk thinks that in Belize, in the context of the family, dominated and negotiated readings are used. In the context of the rum shop and workplace, negotiation and critical are important. In public and political discourse, critical readings abound. In addition, he finds a profound ambivalence about television at every level society, in every context of Belize. Leftist politicians and journalists tend to be more critical, he says, while those of the right are much less so. Middle class critics tend to focus on national and cultural issues, while working-class people are more concerned about their children and community. The middle class blames more problems on television, but it also sees more benefits. Everyone seems capable of both engaged enjoyment of the medium and critical distance, though rural people speak more frequently and enthusiastically about the pleasures of watching. Moreover, Wilk says, everyone seems to agree on what television was doing to Belize—changing the country profoundly. The disagreement is merely over whether this was a good or a bad thing.

Wilk them asks himself the following question. Has the debate about television changed Belizean society? He thinks that in politics, television has changed political behavior. Politicians are wary of making statements about the medium because television in seen as a populist issue. Among the rural and urban poor and working class and in churches, he says, television has become part of a general moral discourse that existed long before the television invasion. Therefore, television takes its place as one of the many external factors that are corrupting and destroying Belizean families, explaining cultural changes that many perceive as destructive.

Wilk thinks the new linkage between these old discourses about morality and politics is very important. His proposal is that television brings political and moral issues together in a new and powerful ways, widening the field of discourse and involving people from different factions, classes and ethnic groups in a common debate. Where religion was once concerned mostly with the individual and the community, he says, it now speaks to issues of Belizean cultural identity and influences from the United States. In blurring the distinction between political and religious discourse, television has imbued political debate with a new moral content, and has taken traditionally moral issues and secularized them. In the process, it has taken many issues seen once as Belizean, local and even familial, and moved them into a global context. The problems of youth, social welfare, ethnicity and gender roles, for example, are now cast in a global context, of “our way” or “our Belizean traditions” as opposed to “those seen on television”. Wilk says that now that television has presented Belizeans with an objectified “other”, the problem of defining the self has a new dimension. The metaphor that Wilk uses to describe this finding is that differences between Belizeans seem to fade away when confronted with the light from the box. The way that television has accomplish this is by providing a common language for the discussion of otherness and sameness and a visible standard of comparison.

Wilk says that he is well aware that Belize is still a multi-ethnic and multilingual country with disparities in wealth and education. Nevertheless, television has proven a unifying force in two ways. First, all Belizeans with television share access to some of the same sources of news and entertainment. For example, Belizeans have a common conversation about NBA basketball, Alf, and the Cosby Show. Second, television has engaged Belizeans in a common debate about the impact of television on the country, and in the process has made everyone aware of “the local and the global”. For example, although the country remains divided politically, foreign television is seen as a danger in the church and the left. In addition, television has made Belizeans focus on the autonomy of local culture—music, cooking, dance and language—rather than on political or economic autonomy.

According to him, one of the most lasting effects of television in Belize is that the intimate awareness of otherness, presented by the image of America on television, has led Belizeans to objectify a new concept of culture. In the 1990s, Belizeans perceived that there is a thing out there called culture. He says that differences organized by color, ethnicity and class, now are recast as “cultural”. Belizeans actively disagree about just what constitutes Belizean culture, but twenty years ago this controversy could not have existed because the concept of Belizean culture was absent. In the same way, Wilk says that while Belizeans make different moral judgments about what is good and bad on television, they share a common language when they debate these moral issues.


The purpose of her research, she says, is to analyze the ways in which men and women in New Delhi actively engage with and interpret Indian television. In addition, she wishes to explore the place of people self interpretations of their constitution as national and gendered subjects. In other words, she is saying that:

a) Mass media play a significant role in the process of identity formation.

b) Men and women in New Delhi actively engage with and interpret Indian television in constituting their identity as national and gendered subjects.

From a theoretical standpoint, she argues that there is a tendency for some scholars to depict mass media audiences as passive consumers and, in the case of women who live in the Third World, as helpless victims of a total patriarchal system. She does not agree with this perspective. She favors studies attempting to link television with the construction of identity, focusing on the effects of popular texts upon the lives of those who interact with them. Basing her work upon Stuart Hall’s proposal to examine viewers’ active interaction with television’s texts, she can envision popular culture as a site of struggle and not simply as domination.

Mankekar says that if previous research on Indian television centered on texts, she focuses on how viewers interpret specific themes and images in Indian television serials. She says that by situating viewers at the particular context of New Delhi, she can demonstrate that subject positions vary according to the conjunctures in which viewers are questioning. In other words, class, community, gender, age, and household position mediate people’s interactions with televisual texts. Specifically, she is interested in the relationship between the television’s narratives and those that viewers weave of themselves, between popular culture and the viewers’ perception of themselves as Indian men and women.

Mankekar results are the following.

i. Female viewers variously interpret, appropriate, resist, and negotiate the television discourse about gender and nationalism.

ii. Television plays a role in the constitution of discursive practice, but it is not hegemonic.

iii. Viewers position themselves not simply by the text but also by a whole range of other discourses, with those of gender and nationalism being dominant in Indian television.

Therefore, Mankekar concludes that viewers reconstitute themselves as subjects not just by the form and content of serials, but by the manner in which these texts resonate with the viewers’ experiences of dominant social discourses. She says that viewers’ deep emotional engagement with television spurs them to introspection about themselves and their lives. Mankekar thinks that through the deep emotional engagement, viewers learn about their place in the world.

Finally, attending to the references on mass media, she cites several essay on Indian television and cinema studies. In anthropology she cites J. Radway (1988) *Reception Study: Ethnography and the Problems of Dispersed Audiences and Nomadic Subjects* (Cultural Studies).


This essay belongs to a wider research program conducted by Conrad Kottak about Brazil’s television effects during the 1980s (C. Kottak. 1990. *Prime-Time Society: An Anthropological Analysis of Television and Culture*). In this particular case, Richard Pace investigates changes occurring in a remote Amazonian town during the first eight years of televiewing. Pace thinks that research in television has lacunae, translated to questions like the following:

a) What kinds of social and cultural patterns arise as television comes into particular non-Western rural settings?

b) How do the patterns differ from patterns in Western settings?

c) What role does the local culture play in shaping audience interpretation of program content?
To answer the first question, Pace differentiates two broad areas of change: social interaction patterns (displacement effect) and worldview perceptions (content effect). This distinction is basing upon T. M. Williams (1986) *The Impact of Television: A Natural Experiment in Three Communities*. Displacement effect refers to behavioral change that occurs as people alter their lifestyles to accommodate televiewing, as well as duplicating televiewing habits in other areas of their lives. Content effect refers to changes occur in shared knowledge, attitudes, expectations, and beliefs.

Pace says that television research is still in its infancy, but this is not the case with communication research. He says that television research has consistently demonstrated the important role the medium plays in shaping human behavior and cognition. He characterizes non-anthropological studies focusing on the power of television in this way.

a) The power of television is like a new religion, in that it helps create a homogeneous view of social reality. Pace says that this is the thinking of G. Gerbner (1967).

b) An agent of cultural imperialism that undermines the cultural and political values of poor countries. Pace here cites A. Goodwin and G. Whannel (1990) *Understanding Television*.

c) A narcotizing agent that diverts attention from serious social issues. He cites P. Lazarsfeld and R. Merton (1948).

d) A source of information that reinforces the status quo and blocks social reform. He cites G. Gerbner and L. Gross (1976) *The Scary World of TV's Heavy Viewer*.

e) A medium that sets the intellectual agenda by telling viewers what to think about. The cite is to G. Comstock (1978) *Television and Human Behavior*.

The point that Pace wants to stress is that to understand the cultural context of television’s impact, its needed comparative studies based on data from cross-cultural settings. Anthropology is the science that could fill this gap, Pace says, and an example is his research.

Relating to his findings, Pace concludes that.

i. Soap opera is the favorite genre in Gurupa.

ii. Families possessing television sets open their houses for others to view broadcasts.

iii. Television increases one’s social contact with family, neighbors, friends, and even strangers.

iv. During programs and commercials, conversation is keeping to a minimum, especially inside the house.

v. With expanded access to television, fewer people stroll through the streets at night (a traditional custom).

vi. Television viewing punctuates time (changing local traditions).

vii. Viewers have a greater awareness of the world beyond Gurupa.

viii. Television stimulates quests for additional knowledge.

ix. Television lowers viewer’s evaluations of their community (comparing it to the urban life that appears in soap operas).

x. Television helps increases social class awareness, and consequently have possibly augmented those class tensions in the community, which are the products of economic and political processes.

xi. Television has a minimal effect on favorable perceptions of authorities.

To explain the results, Pace uses the work of Conrad Kottak (based on the cultivation effect hypothesis). According to this, high rates of televiewing do correlate with a “distorted” perception of the world that closely mirrors program content. However, the problem is that the population under study apparently does not support the hypothesis, because it has just began television viewing. The solution Pace proposes, using Kottak’s proposal, is that television’s impact upon a population occurs in stages, each defined by length of exposure and the types of changes that exposure engenders. Kottak thinks Brazil could be understood as in a four-stage scheme.

Stage I Initial exposure to television may last five years or more, depending on the pace of diffusion. Here, strangeness and novelty mark the new medium. The medium itself, rather than the message, is the mesmerizer.

Stage II A process of selective acceptance and rejection, interpretation, and reworking of television’s message begins. A population experiences a ten-to-fifteen period of maximum receptivity.
Stage III  Saturation from television exposure begins some twenty years after most homes in a locale have obtained a set. Negative attitudes toward the medium begin to develop. Statistical measures of television’s impact become less obvious and accurate since the medium pervades the population and its presence decreasingly differentiates among residents. At the same time, television has a powerful, yet subtle, influence in shaping worldviews.

Stage IV  Involves lifelong exposure to televiewing for adults. The more profound and long-term sociocultural effects of television become discernible at this point.

In this theory, the population of Gurupa is in the first stage. Pace says that acculturation initiates a series of sociocultural changes, some of which parallel Western developments – television viewing punctuates time – while others sharply diverge – in Gurupa televiewing does not correlate with viewer passivity and increased social isolation, as in America.


In this article, Michaels asks what Aboriginal content means. The question arises since this category is evolving as a criterion for judging the suitability of program services by the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal when evaluating applications where a significant component of the intended audience is Aboriginal. In addition, this question encompasses an aesthetic judgment about the quality of Aboriginal television.

In asking about quality, Michaels gives as an argument for the discussion Yuendumu Television’s case. This local station has a very random schedule. The basic format is usually a kind of video DJ: a compere selects pre-made tapes to show, and announces them along with any other news or commentary she or he thinks worthwhile. Sometimes children come into the studio and read school stories, or old men tell stories live, but the DJ format is the basic one. According to Michaels, the Warlpiri think that one person could turn on and focus the camera, do the announcements, and switch over the tapes. This is because the Aboriginal work ethic demands maximum efficiency without wasting personnel or effort. The more difficult problem in the DJ format is finding a way to let people know when the station is broadcasting. The solution is to turn on some music, focus on a graphic and let that play for a half-hour before beginning programming. Then word of mouth would circulate through the camps and let people know to turn on their TV. Michaels says that Jupurrurla, one of the Warlpiri TV producers, is a big Reggae fan, so for his schedule he begins with Reggae music and focuses the camera on his Bob Marley T-shirt draped over a chair. After a while he focuses on the compere’s desk, walks around and into the shot, announces the schedule and any news, then walks out of the shot, turns off the camera and switches on the VCR. This procedure is repeated for each tape.

As to Aboriginal content, Michaels says that during his fieldwork among the Warlpiri, they wanted to know why they could not make Bruce Lee Kung-Fu movies, which they dearly love, with Warlpiri language and characters. Michaels’s response was that they did not have the money or the equipment.

Michaels’s argument is that a Warlpiri Kung-Fu series would be fine and it qualifies as aboriginal content. In addition, the Yuendumu Television’s DJ format has the quality that Warlpiri want it to have. In both cases, Michaels says, Western ethnocentrism simply is asking the wrong question, imposing a model where it does not fit.


Michaels explicitly says that his model is based on E. Katz (1987) *Mutual Aid in the Decoding of Dallas* [In J. Fiske. Television Culture] and H. Newcomb (1985) *Television as a Cultural Forum: Implications for Research* [In W. Rowland. Interpreting Television]. He does not cite any philosophical source or literature review. His proposal is that the television medium is a negotiation of texts between producers, technology and audiences, a model that
intends to identify some significant features of the social organization of meanings involved in this signifying activity.

His starting point is the question: what does it means that television is a text in a hermeneutical theory? Michaels says that immediately upon applying the metaphor of “reading” to broadcast TV we encounter an analytic problem: just what is the TV text—and where is it? He questions again: Is it the performance that occurs in a TV studio in front of a camera, or the radio waves that circulate from the transmitter, or the picture that appears on any given home TV set?

His first proposal is a hermeneutical circle with three components: text, locale and agent. As such, there is no beginning, and the study object could be in any phase.

Text conceived→produced→transmitted→received→reconstructed→negotiated→
Locale mind→studio→aether→home→mind→society→
Agent producer→electrons→viewer→public→

From this circle, he develops the text component. The conceived text is the work of an author/s (the basic idea to start with). The production text (script) is the product of an industrial process (almost everyone in the process has some say in the production). The produced text is the final product (which could be quite different from the conceived text). The transmitted text may not be the same as the produced text, alongside commercials and other interruptions that modify the produced text. The received text is the TV set reception of the transmitted text, usually with imperfections. The perceived text is a story that individuals tell themselves about the story they have seen. The perceived text is the viewer’s perception of the received text, but there is also a social text and a public text. The social text refers to the commonality of meanings, in so far as individuals belongs to a society. For example, people talk about TV programs, which influences the way they interpret television texts. The public text refers to the audience measurement by television companies, in so far as the audiences, not the programs, are the commodity of TV.

Applying this model to Aboriginal TV shows, Michaels highlights the perceived text. For example, in this society elders’ own knowledge and information and the rules governing its transmission are highly regulated. Therefore, current television broadcasting of secret Aboriginal ceremonies and stories violate the culture. This is the most direct effect of the broadcasting of Aboriginal knowledge by Australian television. In the other hand, the broadcasting of American serials produce minimal, if any, effect. He concludes that the model allows him to discern different components in Aboriginal television.


Because both articles belong to the same fieldwork research, the first being theoretical and the second empirical, I will summarize them together.

According to Andrew Lyons’s essay, the study of the advance of mass media in “other” cultures has much to offer the symbolic or interpretive anthropologist. He says that it is interesting to learn how a set of symbolic messages encoded by Americans in Place A is going to be decoded by Nigerians in Place B. He thinks that it is instructive to learn to what extent the medium itself is the message. In other words, how much media technology itself dictates certain syntax of symbolic material, whatever the cultural context.

Focusing on Nigerian soap opera, he thinks that secular dramas are a unique genre because they use symbols and metaphors. He thinks that they are universalistic in their appeal to their audience, because their content and rhetoric are designed to include large groups of viewers. In the case of Nigeria, the ghosts, shades, witches, and native
doctors of *Bendel Playhouse* and *Hotel de Jordan* are nothing less than symbolic vehicles for a critique of contemporary Nigerian society and political economy. Lyons says that corruption, love affairs, interfamily disputes, and even class relationships are all depicted in a form that reflects the social dramas of everyday life, and the symbols in which they are mentally encoded. He argues that secular dramas have a religious sense, in that the drama reminisces about its society’s origin. From Greek tragedy is borrowed this idea.

Finally, Lyons is well aware of communication research, especially Katz’s work. Lyons cites the 1983 *Anthropologica’s* special issue magazine about Native North Americans and the Media, discussing the rise of community radio and the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation in Northern Canada.

According to Harriet Lyons’s essay, she says that in 1983 Bendelites people move rapidly from a public to a domestic pattern of television consumption, keeping them indoors. She reports that *Dallas* was extremely unpopular in Nigeria. Her research questions are the following:

a) What happens when American television families enter Nigerian households?
b) Does the interpretation of American television families undergo a sea change when faced with a society with different national goals and different expectations about domestic relations?

She says that Benin audiences had a critical attitude to the lack of filial piety displayed by children on American television. The explanation she gives is that in patrilineal systems, fathers must die before sons can attain full masculine authority. In any case, Nigerian etiquette or sacred obligation enjoins extreme respect for fathers and other lineage elders, so that resentment cannot usually be openly expressed or even internally acknowledge. As is often the case with unresolved tensions, Lyons says, the suppressed intergenerational resentment was projected onto the supernatural plane. According to traditional belief, men who did not live to become members of the edion (collective elders of a village), after death became ighele-erimwin, members of the spirits’ ighele, the age grade preceding elder-hood.

Lyons finds that reaction to foreign programming in general, and American family values in particular, was in part correlated with a number of factors affecting status in contemporary and traditional society. She says that people with high rank in traditional Benin society, devout Christians, and older males in general, were most likely to be disturbed by the display of foreign family values. Women who expressed displeasure at such programming were likely to be educated, wealthy, or devoutly Christian. Lyons says that violence, as portrayed through imported media, including news reports from abroad, is perceived as being at once foreign and symptomatic of general lawlessness among youth.

Since selling products is not a major concern of Nigerian television producers, and since production budgets do not allow for expensive stage sets, Lyons says that commodities are not a significant feature of locally produced television drama. If a character in a Nigerian play is show using a luxury item, it is often in a context that emphasizes his greed and selfishness. She says that individual ambition is widely believed to be a legacy of colonialism and neo-colonialism, as traditional African societies stressed obligations to kin and community.

Finally, she says that her study demonstrates the power of television, where it is available, to attract audiences and to enter the structure of their lives. It also indicates that audiences are not passive, that they engage with television images and interpret them in accordance with their life situations, including both hegemonic beliefs and perceived conflicts, which, themselves, may be interpreted in ways consistent with hegemony.

19) **Andrew Buckser** (1989) *Sacred Airtime: American Church Structures and the Rise of Televangelism*  
[Human Organization 48(4), 370-376]

The question Buckser is asking is why independent religious television replaced traditional churches during the 1960s and 1970s. Televangelists are able to take control of a very expensive and technically complex communications medium, despite the superiority in finances and membership of their mainstream competitors, Buckser says. Spotlighting organizational and administrative aspects of broadcasters and televangelists, Buckser thinks that he can make a fruitful analysis of televangelism.
1. Broadcasters
   1.1. Broadcasting requires a great deal of money.
   1.2. The commercial structure of television requires that this money be raised through viewer contributions.
   1.3. Recording and transmission technology eliminates local variations in the messages that broadcast ministries transmit.
   1.4. Messages that broadcast ministries transmit must conform to the requirements of the industry (controversial doctrines and denominational particularism must be avoided).
   1.5. Competition between different programs for limited airtime press broadcasters to seek audience loyalty.

2. Televangelists
   2.1. Attending to the organizational structure of doctrinal authority, Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish religions have different levels of hierarchies between the individual and the higher level. In the case of televangelists, there is no intermediate level between the doctrinal authority and the individual.
   2.2. Attending the financial contributions, mainstream religions have complex systems to collect money. In the case of televangelists, there is a direct relationship between the individual and the ministries.
   2.3. Attending to the services provided, mainstream religions provide counseling at the local level (city or neighborhood). Televangelists provide it at a national level, through a televised service.

Comparing televangelism’s structure with broadcasters, says Buckser, we find a match in organizations, mainly because television appeals directly to the audience, without intermediary levels. The commercial structure of private television requires a strong tie between broadcasters and viewers, Buckser says, and that sort of situation that exists in the case of televangelists. They also collect money through their doctrines, occupies a Sunday morning time slot, give common and uncontroversial faith messages, and maintain audience loyalty. Therefore, concludes Buckser, these could be good reasons to explain the success of independent religious broadcasting.

Finally, attending to the references in mass media, Bukser cites several papers of a research tradition on media and religion from 1960s to 1980s.


This article summarizes Intintoli’s 1984 book *Taking Soaps Seriously*, concerned the making of soap operas in New York City from January 1981 through mid-1982. He understands his essay as an invitation to think about the symbolic forms underlying soap operas. He wants to know how symbolic forms can be related to the social and cultural context out of which they emerge and into which they are distributed and absorbed. Specifically, Intintoli is interesting in how a soap opera reflects society. He subscribes to the thinking of the social construction of reality’ school (Alfred Schutz). However, he is also interested in Dell Hymes, Sol Worth, Richard Chalfen and British cultural studies.

Intintoli says that the anthropology of mediated communication has a great deal to contribute to the understanding of mediated communication in relation to cultural and social life. He thinks that one way to do it is by relating the various contexts of production, the kinds of social experience and participation in the process and the way people actually use and interpret performances and products. Intintoli is interested in illuminate both the structures of power and the character of experience.

The questions Intintoli asked in the book were the following.

i. What is the nature of the symbolic world in soap performances generated by the production process?
ii. How and why are organizationally controlled resources made available for the production and distribution of soap operas?
iii. How do the goals of organizations affect the kinds of performances soaps made available, particularly in terms of story creation, selection, and realization?
iv. How is the work process organized, hierarchically and as a form of collective action involving an elaborate division of labor?
v. How do people in various roles, particularly producers, directors, and actors, adapt to the pressures, risks, and conflicts between personal or occupational goals or skills and the requirements of work on a soap?
vi. What are the major visual, audio, and musical conventions that are embodied in soaps that structure and influence the potential experience of performances?

vii. How have technological developments affected or been incorporated into the work process?

viii. How do people who work in soap production perceive the viewing audience, and how do they arrive at those perceptions? What are the patterns of interaction between the audiences and the producers?

Among his results, he says that story creation and selection are: a) Influenced by the perception and measurements of success in reaching the ideal audience, with a distinctive and appealing product in competition with other programs. b) Concerned with reducing uncertainty about whether the audience will be entertained –literally held by the story, and c) Designed to minimize the risk of offending viewers who might not only avoid the program, but also bring legal or political pressure to bear.

According to him, commercials aired during soaps fall into two categories. One set embodies the ideal of romanticized domesticity through soaps, detergents, towels, etc. Another set stress domestic romance with deodorants and hairspray, making women more romantically appealing.

Intintoli thinks that soap operas reflect the economic interests making them available. Soaps are made (and he says literally were invented) to capture a female audience. Soaps largely focus on domestic romance and avoid dealing with the nature of work, including housework. The structures of power—corporate, state, class—are largely taken for granted, he says. Individuals endlessly pursue the ideal of intimacy and social success, and are only faulted if they hurt others in the process.

Therefore, he understands soaps as “reflexive”, as providing a way people might reflect on their experience. He thinks that soap operas create a domestic symbolic world that is an adjunct to commercials romanticizing domesticity and romance, aimed at women who largely view soaps in a domestics setting—their own home.

Finally, attending to the references, he mentions R. Chalfen (1978) Which Way Media Anthropology? (Journal of Communication). Chalfen wrote his dissertation at the Annenberg School in 1974 about film. Intintoli wrote his dissertation in 1983 at Temple University. Both schools are located in Philadelphia and have a strong tradition of communication research.


The argument that Lipsitz develops can be summarizing as follows.

a) Television is a discursive medium in American culture, making new economic and social relations credible and legitimate to audiences.

b) Television comedies in America during 1950s (Mama, The Goldbergs) negotiated complex tensions caused by economic and social change in postwar.

c) They evoked the experiences of the past to lend legitimacy to the dominant ideology of the present (consumerism, individualism).

According to Lipsitz, commercial network television played an important role in the emerging American economy after 1945, functioning as a significant object of consumer purchases as well as an important marketing medium. However, Lipsitz thinks that television’s most important economic function came from its role as an instrument of legitimization for the transformation in values initiated by the new economic imperatives of postwar America. He says that for Americans to accept the new world of 1950s’ consumerism, they had to make a break with the past (the depression years). The entry of television into the American home, he says, disrupted previous patterns of family life and encouraged fragmentation of the family, pushing family members into separate segments of the consumer market. The priority of consumerism in the economy at large and on television might have seemed organic and unplanned. However, he says, conscious policy decisions by officials from within both private and public sectors shaped the contours of the consumer economy and television’s role within it.

The theory that Lipsitz uses to analyze America serials is the next, according to his summary.
a) The literary criticism of Mikhail Banktin—including his notes of the dialogic imagination—demonstrates how all texts inherit part of the historical consciousness of authors and audiences.

b) Cultural studies theorist Stuart Hall notes that commercial mass media seek legitimacy from the audiences by effectively representing diverse aspects of social life, including memories of past experiences, current contradictions, and potential sources of division and opposition.

c) Sociologist Jurgen Habermas observes that contemporary capitalist culture destroys the very motivations that it needs to function effectively, such as the work ethic or the willingness to defer gratification. Consequently, capitalist societies draw upon the borrowed legitimacy of cultural values and beliefs from the past, like religion or the patriarchal family, in order to provide the appearance of moral grounding for contemporary forces inimical to the interests of tradition.

Therefore, Lipsitz concludes that American comedies in 1950s are clearly cases where the commercial mass media tend to direct popular consciousness toward consumption and away from production.

Finally, as to the references on mass media, he cites several studies in communication research. However, there are no references to media anthropology.


This is a study conducted in America, Japan, England, the Philippines, and Israel during 1979. The authors argue that most television research has been on the effects of television viewing and content on attitudes and behavior. They say that in the majority of these studies viewers’ perceptions of television have been treated as an interviewing variable between exposure to a particular type of content and resulting attitudes and behaviors. They say that the assumptions have been that television’s effects are being enhanced or mitigated by such factors as:

a) Viewers’ perceptions of reality.
b) Viewers’ perceptions of characters’ similarities to themselves.
c) Viewers’ familiarity with the situations portrayed.
d) Viewers’ stage of cognitive development.
e) Viewers’ pre-existing beliefs and attitudes.

However, they say, little research has focusing on viewers’ perceptions of television as a dependent variable.

The purpose of this research is to provide evidence about the following aspects:

a) The differences in the ways that parents and children perceive TV characters.
b) To determine if a “reality-fantasy” dimension can be observed in cross-cultural data.
c) The extent to which viewers perceive TV characters as sex stereotyped.
d) To see if viewers put themselves closer to characters perceived as similar to them.

The theory behind this research is based on J. Woelfel and E. L. Fink (1980) *The Measurement of Communication Processes: Galileo Theory and Method*. According to the authors, it says:

a) Each culture may be describing by a mathematical ‘space’ in which the objects distinguished by the culture are arrayed as points. Objects that are similar in meaning are close to each other, while objects that differ greatly are far apart.
b) Differences in cultural beliefs that may arise from television viewing would appear as differences in the structures of the spaces of the heavy viewers and the light viewers.
c) Changes in cultural beliefs brought about by television viewing would be visible as movements in those objects whose meaning has changed.

The conclusions of this research are:

i. Children were much heavier viewers across all countries.
i. In all countries, the most dissimilar concept from *television was me*. The most similar was the TV character.
iii. Male and female adults show more agreement on the meaning of the concepts than do male and female children. The most differently perceived concepts by mothers and fathers across countries were either a TV character or me.

iv. The concepts that may have been perceived as more “real” (the sex-role concepts and the more dramatic/realistic characters) tended to be placed closer to me. Concepts that may have been perceived as more “fantastic” (sitcom characters), were placed farther from me.

v. All viewers have stereotyped perceptions of TV characters’ sex-role.

vi. Most viewers choose to put themselves closer to one TV character than another.

Finally, attending to the references on mass media, they cite several studies in communication research. However, there are no anthropological references.


This report is part of a larger study on the cross-cultural use of space. Kent asks if television viewing alters the home in three cultures: Navajo, Spanish-American, and Euro-Americans.

The results of her research are the following:

i. Television viewing did not alter ethnic group’s basic patterns of the use of space.
ii. Every family with a television, whatever the ethnic group, spent large amounts of time watching it.
iii. Television viewing was the dominant evening and night activity.
iv. Television viewing reduced the diversity of activities.
v. Television viewing reduced the number of loci at which activities occurred.

Therefore, she concludes that.

a) Television viewing does not alter ethnic groups’ basic patterns of the use of space.
b) Television viewing effects the diversity of activity performed by families.

Finally, attending to the references, she cites to G. Comstock (1978) Television and Human Behavior as a study with an anthropological approach.


The purpose of this study, they say, is to determine the effects of mass media on culture. Specially, television’s impact on institutions (family and church), values (prosocial and antisocial behavior), and interpersonal behavior. In order to accomplish this, they propose the methodology called multidimensional analysis. Because this theory was exposing in the previous work of B. Newton [see number 8], I will not develop this proposal twice. Nevertheless, I will highlight the relationship between culture and mass communication, as it appears in this article.

The authors subscribe Durkheim’s culture definition, that is, a collective consciousness. They understand it as an aggregate psychological configuration of objects. An object, they say, may be abstract aspects of belief, attitude, ritual, and patterned activity including such things as language, religion, or the nation-state. The multidimensional analysis, through the software Galileo, can measure these objects.

They say that previous attempts to compare cultures have failed in methodological aspects, citing as an example the work of G. Gerbner and L. Gross (1976) Living with Television: The Violence Profile (Journal of Communication). Knowing as cultural indicator project, the authors say that this analytical system base on the conception that it is possible the description of trends in the composition and structure of mass media messages. They say that these message systems constitute the common culture through which societies cultivate shared, publicly held ideas about facts, values, and contingencies of human life. Any change in the social bases and economic goals of mass-mediated message, they say, results in a transformed common symbolic environment. The realized change in this environment
has social meaning such that it directs human activity. The authors say that the cultural indicator project does not have a technique with methodological rigor in order to make precise prediction and explanation.


The authors think that causal modeling of the relationship between the mass media and the development has failed. One reason is that maybe the media are changing simultaneously along with the other factors of development. This is an argument, they say, for a research strategy that can measure these factors simultaneously.

Returning to the article’s purpose, the data collection for the study was a sample of undergraduate and high school students in United States, Australia, Mexico, South Africa, Micronesia and Israel. The authors say that they are well aware of the arbitrary sample selection, so they do not want to generalize.

They conclude that in all nations there is a consistent view of the mass media and its relation to other institutions and values in society. Some small differences, they say, apply to Israel and Mexico. The authors attribute this deviation to the difference in language and economical development. They do not give any other information about single results.

Finally, there is no reference in anthropological research on mass communication.


This research project was design to evaluate television programming in southern Arizona and develop content for the Mexican-American population.

The authors conducted research in 1969 in order to understand the potential viewers within the Mexican-American community: their viewing patterns, the general format that would attract and hold the largest possible viewers, and the type of information that should be broadcast. They founded that the potential audience was about 200,000 Mexican-Americans, viewing patterns followed one similar the American television audience, their preferred format was live show, and their preferred information mainly news.

With this in mind, the authors produced a series of 20 half-hour weekly programs. The results of *Fiesta* were.

i. Television programming designed for Mexican Americans reached most of the households and kept strong popularity.

ii. Viewers look for music, information, and local news in the program.

The conclusions they give are that public television can effectively compete with both locally produced and nationally produced commercial material; in addition, that minority programming is viable. They say that *Fiesta* has shown that applied anthropology can be a useful tool in action oriented broadcasting.

Finally, there are no references on mass media research.
Guiding by the hypothesis that Cable TV is a type of communication that might lead to more effective political action by people in the community, in 1972 they studied the town of Reston, Virginia. The local Cable TV Company asks for this research, so the anthropologists (Topper) conducted audience research and became involved as producer of a news program.

The results of this audience research were:

i. Cable viewers tend to watch local news, even when there is public television news.
ii. Cable viewers read the Reston Times newspaper regularly.
iii. Cable viewers prefer in-depth local news about their community.

The researchers decided to produce This Week in Reston, a television program that proves to be successful. Their explanation is that it provided the community with the kind of news services it wanted, that it was covering many of those stories that the respondents of the audience research said they wanted covered. The authors say the program gave the viewer a full half-hour of news about Reston. No other TV news source could do this. Furthermore, This Week in Reston is a very sensitive news source, they say. The reporters were close to the community, and Reston was still quite small. According to the authors, the reporters were local residents and they surveyed the audience many times.

The conclusion of the authors is that the program contributed to a change in the political structure of the local community by increasing the amount of available information on Reston politics. Although, they note, with the passage of time could only be noticed the change.

Finally, attending to the references, they do not cite mass media research.
Anthropology and Media


Lett is interested in both communicating anthropological knowledge to the public and developing journalism from an anthropological point of view. He thinks that the public wants to know about anthropology, but the discipline itself does not want to know about others than colleagues. However, in journalism, he does not think television news (he works at CBS) nor anthropology very much interested in knowing each other.

About the journalist’s work from his viewpoint as anthropologist, Lett thinks that broadcast journalist do not have a precise definition of news. He believes that they understand news as information about the real world. Either it has the potential to alter the lifestyle of a significant portion of the audience, or it has intrinsic entertainment value for a significant portion to the audience. The ideal news story would have both characteristics. About television journalism, Lett adds the idea of the “visual”, meaning the necessity to show moving pictures in order to hold attention. In newspapers, Lett says, the reader can skip over the contents, but television viewer cannot. That means that TV news is looking for a mass audience, most of the time seeking simplicity and avoiding complexity, because the lowest common denominator guarantees the widest possible audience. In addition, television journalists frequently tend to view the world in terms of polarities, he says. They perceive conflict as dichotomies. From this idea, Lett says, follows their definition of objectivity. For a TV journalist, if the scientific research says that smoking can damage health, then a journalist will ask the Tobacco Company for his version. Journalists do not work like scientists, looking for evidence. They bring polar points of view to television, in order to present “the truth”. In a word, Lett says, a journalist values authority over experience.


By media, he means Western press reports. His argument is that the Western media played a role in the build-up to the revolution, but at the same time overlooked Romania’s ethnic and complex composition. Minorities like Gypsies, German-Romanians, Serbs, Russians, Jewish are non-Romanian populations, as are Hungarians, but the last were the main ethnic group of interest to the Western press. Furthermore, Romanians themselves are ethnically different (Szekelys in southeast Transylvania, Csango in Moldovia, and the mixed of Romanian-Hungarian population in Transylvania).


Besteman follows Hitchcock’s strategy of questioning journalistic coverage of ethnic and nation conflicts. According to Besteman, the U.S. press during the early 1990s presented a simplified analysis of Somali warfare. Rather than the clan-based explanation given in press, Besteman argues, the violence pattern bases on a complex dynamic of status hierarchies, class, race, and language. By press she means mainly *The New York Times* and *CNN*. Based on her own fieldwork in Somalia, Besteman also finds a misunderstanding of Somali culture in the anthropological literature. Her intent is to not only give an alternative understanding from that of the press, but also of scholars that, she says, use similar assumptions that privilege conservative thinking.

4) I. M. Lewis (1998) *Doing Violence to Ethnography: A Response to Catherine Besteman* [Cultural Anthropology 13(1), 100-108]

Lewis is a British anthropologist, and a specialist in Somali culture with fieldwork research. thinks that Besteman misunderstands Somali social structure, specifically the segmentary lineage political system. At this point, my own argument is that both authors forget the press and concentrate on “true” Somali culture, turning the discussion to an anthropological misunderstanding rather than an analysis of the American press on Somalia. Both articles center their main arguments on fieldwork research, with media analysis turning into a secondary goal, and coming only at the beginning and final part of each article.
Finally, attending to the references of these four articles, Lett cites a 1967 essay by R. Lawless called *Anthropology and Journalism*, published in the “General Education Journal of the University of the Philippines”. From the 1970s, Lett cites the work of E. B. Eiselein (who coined the term media anthropology). From the 1980s, comes the work of Lett himself, specially his essay *Anthropology and Journalism*, which appeared in the “Communicator” (1986). Hitchcock, Besteman, and Lewis do not give references on media studies.


Banks thinks that there is no necessary or natural relationship between the word television and anthropology. Television and anthropology mean the following: filmed ethnographies of the kinds of people anthropologists usually study made by a Television Company and broadcast on national television.

He compares the nature of British anthropology’s relationship to television with zoology. He says that wildlife and nature films are a classic British documentary production with an audience of eight to ten million (compared to two to three million for anthropology). Nevertheless, academic zoologists take little if any interest in television films and series such as these. British zoology departments generally do not maintain video libraries by taping relevant material off-air, nor does “visual zoology” exist as a component in undergraduate courses. In anthropology, the situation is exactly the opposite, and Banks does not understand why.

Singer and Seidenberg think that there is no demand for anthropology on television, and that anthropological series have survived by a coincidence of factors such as environmental concerns and the fact that A. Singer is a BBC editor. Their main argument is that television fulfils a different role in British society than does documentary film in visual anthropology. The nature of the television image is ephemeral, they say. It differs from ethnographic film in that it is normally viewed only once. In other words, the television image is not constructed to be viewed repeatedly like the ethnographic film. Nor can the television image fully be divorced from its major purpose –as a form of entertainment. They say that ethnographic film, on the other hand, has an intended permanence often linked to literature and is not generally seen as entertainment. In contrast, they conclude, the main importance of television is of transitory communication to a non-specialist public.

David Turton, following the same argument, thinks that the commitment of television to an uncommitted audience is a fundamental feature of the culture of broadcasting and explains a great deal about the nature of television programs. He prefers to understand the “Disappearing World” series as a program rather than a film, because to understand their objectives and to judge their success they should be seen, he argues, as products of the culture of program-making rather than of filmmaking. His argument is that what drives the program-maker is the desire to hold the attention, on one brief occasion, of the “floating” viewer. What drives the filmmaker is the desire to give unique and permanent expression to his or her experience. The program-maker sees him or herself as a communicator, the filmmaker as an artist. Turton also thinks that the anthropologist needs an audience as well, one made up primarily of members of his or her own society, with whom, therefore, he or she shares some cultural understandings.


According to Page, since 1980 the representation of “black male” imagery across diverse media formats has escalated in America. By representation, she means assumptions about African Americans created by dominant cultural white practices, as presented in local and national media. Page says that the Association of Black Anthropologists has demonstrated that the representation of racialized gender and other media-enhanced instruments of social stratification perform special social functions in the new world order. It is characterized by elevating African Americans and other nonwhite inner-city denizens to the bottom of a bimodal “information city”. An
increasing lack of access to high-level technical skills inhibits minorities potential for any kind of economic or status success in the information age.

Page gives lengthy examples of black imagery in television programming: news, reports, serials, and talk shows, film, and press. She concludes with cases in which African American men whose acts were declaring positive by other blacks but were deemed negative from a mainstream perspective, what Page calls “white public space”. She says that is racially filtered the information inscribed in the contemporary black male through the whiteness of the American national seeing I/eye. Page says that once filtered, the I/eye trains the national audience to viscerally-react to African American man’s physical features and patterns of interaction and to regard them with suspicions.

Finally, attending to the references about mass media, Page cites four articles in the 1990s focusing on African American and Media, and one article in the 1980s about media and epistemology.
Mass Media and Ritual


His main interest is to analyze the 1992 and 1996 American presidential campaigns through the concepts of ritual and rhetoric. In order to explore his thought, I will divide his article in two themes: a) ritual and b) media.

a) The main theoretical framework in the McLeod essay begins from the concept of *sociodrama*, a hybrid concept mixing “social drama” (Turner), “plastic drama” (Geertz), and “cultural performances” (Singer), and meaning the *ritualization* of the American presidential cycle. According to this view, McLeod says American society *disarticulates* metaphorically every four years and then *rearticulated* through the election/inauguration cycle. Presidential elections, then, are the ritual core of American society. If presidential elections are rituals, then political campaigns are “rituals of rebellion”. This means they are cultural ceremonies whose overt purpose is the expression of antagonism against political institutions. Their covert purpose is the reintegration of society through a kind of integrative catharsis. McLeod thinks that through rhetorical skills, sound bites, and televised performances, American voters participate ritually in the sociodramas of presidential rebellion. These performances, McLeod says, provide links to the values and achievements of the past. However, they also act as a means for the introduction of new values and symbolic elements in American civil religion. McLeod says that presidential elections are modern political rituals that provide mythical charters for the expression of economic and social relationships. Therefore, McLeod says, classical theories of anthropology, developed to understand primitive cultures, can also be applied to modern politics.

*The 1992 Clinton/Gore Bus Tour.* As McLeod says, the symbolism of the American Dream can be seeing in this 1992 political campaign. The bus tours transformed the candidates into members of the American middle class, close to the average people, in contrast to Bush campaign. The key to the success of the Clinton bus tours, say McLeod, was its emotional appeal to those in the country who were economically less fortunate. The sociodrama the tours created was successful. The American Dream, McLeod says, is a multivocal symbol for Americans that invokes the prospect of prosperity, increasing affluence, home ownership, and economic security. As interpreted by McLeod, it has power in the lives of Americans because homologize economic affluence within the culture with patriotism and the American destiny in the family of nations.

*The 1996 Dole vs. Clinton Campaign.* The sociodrama that Republicans built in 1996 referred to the symbol of a “bridge to the past”, which also meant traditional family values and women inferior position in traditional American society. In the 1992 campaign, the Republican vice presidential candidate criticized a television show (Murphy Brown) because it undermined traditional family values. Clinton, on the other hand, constructed a symbolism of a “bridge to the future”, which represented changing patterns in society. For example, women do not look like “housewives” in this sociodrama, staying in home and raising children. Republicans constructed a sociodrama that did not appeal to the feelings of most Americans. Clinton, as in 1992, was able to represent citizens’ contemporary reality.

b) McLeod thinks that candidates can create campaign issues even from the fictionalized world of television (as the “Murphy Brown Affair”). In addition, he says, the media coverage of the election has become the election. Media coverage is not a simulation of real events, but the actual election process itself. McLeod says that the selection process for the presidency has become an exercise in *teledemocracy*, where failure to create effective rhetorical strategies means electoral failure. According to McLeod, the power of political rhetoric in presidential campaigns lies in the ritualization of political authority. He argues that the power of media to create and transmit these sociodramas is enormous. Nevertheless, the important point is that media transmit rhetoric, which in turns create the symbolic world in which we live.

As a hypothesis, McLeod predicts that to the extent that voters feel they are part of a group linked by communications technology, the process of presidential campaigning will become more ritualized and not less.

Finally, attending the references cited, McLeod mentions the essay of Abeles about Mitterrand. Most of the references are about political anthropology, without mention of media anthropology studies.

Originally published in French in 1986, it appears in English in 1988. The starting point in Abeles is to question the pejorative use of “political drama”, which it is a contemporary way of understanding politics. It means politics is immersed in a sea of appearances that effectively mask the realities of conflict and domination. The role of news media is to show this fiction, modern politics being a “show business”. Against this perspective, Abele says that modern politics displays ritual forms of legitimacy rather than appearances. The role of mass media is to serve as a mirror of the manifestations of political ritual, although sometimes it does so in a distorted form.

Comparing General de Gaulle’s versus Mitterrand’s approach to media, Abeles argues that the former use television more directly, presenting in effect, a “High Mass” of French national unity. Mitterrand, instead, does not directly use the media. He performs rituals, which are transmitting by the media. This is, in Abeles’ sense, an influential way to communicate political ideas. The French ethnologist analyzes two cases of Mitterrand’s actions in order to demonstrate his argument: an inauguration and a commemoration.

The first case is the train journey from Paris to the town of Nevers, in order to inaugurate the new railway station there. Three issues are analyzed here: a) the meaning of the journey, b) the presidential activities, and c) the role of the press.

a) According to Abeles the ritual analysis of political power which attends to the presidential journey is valid. It is widely documented in anthropology and history that the political center goes to the peripheries as a function of state cohesion. Usually people from distant points of a given political system go to the center, in which the power resides. However, as documented in Africa, Europe and Indonesia, the king travels through his land promoting and establishing political order. The journey is a ritual of social cohesion and political unity. This is a difference, Abeles says, between General de Gaulle and Mitterrand. The former almost never traveled through France, preferring to be in the center and promote national unity by through broadcasting a national discourse. Mitterrand prefers to establish unity by visiting France in a ritual journey of integration, broadcast by the news media.

b) During his visit, Mitterrand inaugurated the railway station, assisted an exhibition, presented the Legion of Honor to a general, inaugurated block apartments, and unveiled a plaque in memory of the founder of a children’s village. In all these places he gave formal speeches and talked informally with people. According to Abeles, Mitterand’s day can understood as a ritual because it displays ritual characteristics, such us “focalizing elements” and “dramatization”. The first concept means that every presidential activity is an element in which participants focus its meanings. Every time that the president participated in an event, the attention of the media, the people and the authorities focused on the activity. The second concept emphasizes the idea that the president tries to mobilize public support by appealing to his audience. Abeles says that presidential events share formalism and artifice, drama and sentiment. The ethnographer thinks that the presidential speech or the act of cutting the ribbon is a formal situation, artificial, like expressing respect when people really do not know each other. Nevertheless, people are highly involved in the act, they express emotions, and with their presence and proper behavior, they import meaning to the ritual. Abeles says that the ritual functions as a “snare for thought”, in the sense that everything is acceptable because no one asks more in that moment than to believe. For example, people do not talk aloud during the minute’s silence. Why is it so? Abeles says that ritual does not generate but presupposes solidarity. Another characteristic of ritual explains this idea: “contextual dramatization”. In Abeles’ definition, all the presidential events during the day are almost the same (inaugurations), but like rituals, the repetition confers on them a special atmosphere, linking one to the other in a microsequence. The main characteristic of this atmosphere is that celebration occurs on the margins of ordinary life, in a kind of parenthesis to daily life. This contrast in time and event is a necessary condition to capture “thoughts”.

c) How did the press communicate this presidential day? Abeles compare his observations with the headlines of the main newspapers the following day. They highlight the conversation between the president and the journalists in the train when they were travelling to the provincial town. This talk was about the legislative elections held within the month. Abeles thinks that as far as the journalists were concerned, what seemed to be important was said in the train before the beginning of the presidential tour. The information inside the newspapers transferred the context of the ongoing political debate on the role of the President of the Republic –
in the event of a victory by the opposition in the legislative elections—accentuating the relationship between the elected president and the civil society.

The second case that Abeles analyzes is a commemoration. Since 1946, Mitterrand has made on the Monday of Pentecost an annual pilgrimage to Solutre to relive in memory the war years when, newly escaped from Germany, he went into hiding nearby. Abeles says that once he became president, Mitterrand remained attached to the ritual he had created. This indeed continued substantially unchanged, except that journalists were invited to follow the presidential progress. As in every ritual, Abeles discerns stages to this event. In this case, the ethnographer find three parts: a) the ascent of Solutre Rock, b) the meal at the local restaurant, and c) the presidential message.

a) In the ascent Mitterand looks like a normal man, wearing sporting clothes (Abeles says that the clothing has a meaning, relating the man to the soil). To Abeles this ritual has double significance. On one hand, it is the promise of a single man to remember his past. On the other, the ascent with his relatives and friends speak to alliance and loyalty.

b) The phase at the restaurant is a transition to the press conference after lunch, which the president shares only with his family.

c) This stage is where the anticipatory messages of political action take place. According to Abeles, it is a mix of reflections on the solitary exercise of power and very concrete observations about the immediate concerns of the French. Mitterrand usually predicts the political future of his country, as part of this meeting.

Abeles says that we have to be aware that this ritual is more than Mitterrand’s utterances. To the ethnographer, the ascent is important in the Mitterrandian symbolism because it projects the theme of verticality, the idea of the movement of the character up the political hierarchy. The ascent also gives us evidence of the physical condition of the president, and the presence of his family and friends. According to Abeles, this political ritual has a strong religious dimension. Mitterrand invokes the sacred when establishes a dialogue with the transcendent history of France (going up to the summit and thus meditating France, down to the journalists). Abeles says that Mitterrand acts as a mythological hero, confronting the nation and its history. In this sense, the ritual constructs a richer and more complex image of its protagonists than emerges from the customary eulogies of the president in the news media. This being the day the holiday of Pentecost, Abeles says, the religious significance of the festivity could help reinforce the ability to understand and be understood the ritual message. Mitterrand also makes prophecies about France in politics. The religious dimension of politics is further highlighted in the question of the values evoked in both the inauguration and the commemoration: Nation, Republic, Land, Family, and History. Furthermore, the important point in Abeles is that the President of the Republic conforms to a distinctive logic of representation that pre-exists him. This logic orders the relations of the central government with the different territorial segments and decides the representation form of the Republic’s elections. Ritual labor, says Abeles, engenders the insignia of legitimacy within this framework.

Abeles’ final argument is that French political rituals make no difference with societies studied by anthropologists. For him, modern political ritual also could have other characteristics: invention (Mitterrand creates his own pilgrimage) and message (as it appears in mass media). Abeles emphasizes that ritual constructs a historic form of legitimacy, an image of the elected person that is reflected, inevitably in distorted form, in the mirrors of the mass media.

3) Marc Auge (1986) Teleculture Heroes; or, A Night at the Embassy [Current Anthropology 27(2), 184-188]

This essay was first published in French in 1983. It was translated into English in 1986. Its proposal is the following.

(a) American TV series constitute a ritual incarnation of certain great myths.
(b) These myths have a universal relevance.
(c) This relevance lies precisely in the fact of anchoring in a specific cultural identity.

The wider intent of Auge is to question the idea of American cultural imperialism, specifically the idea that culture is an exportable assembly of “products” and “productions”. Auge says that the common idea of culture is of Homer, Hugo, or Zola, meaning that the greatest writers, musicians, or painters produce culture. The consequence of this view, says Auge, is that the common people —usually the people who prefer to watch TV series— have no culture. Auge, who likes American TV series like Dallas, argues that this confession does not make him a person without
culture. Besides, the fact that more people can identify the name of J. R. than Victor Hugo, tells us something about the world. In a word, says Auge, he does not agree with the proposal that true culture is to be found anywhere other than in TV series.

Let us suppose, says Auge, that cultural imperialism is right. Then, what we have is a given culture (America) disseminating its indigenous values worldwide. In addition, you have to believe that TV shows woven the values of American society. However, if every culture has its own values, how do we explain the successful dissemination? How do American TV series both entertain and propagate cultural messages? Maybe, says Auge, the explanation is not imperialism but that American TV series are purveyors of myths.

Marc Auge watched *Bewitched* in the Ivory Coast, an African French-speaking society where sorcery is a serious matter, and the people there liked the series. In France Auge watched *The Man from Atlantis* and *Dallas*, having no difficulties understanding its meanings. What is the explanation? Auge thinks that American TV series have three general themes, which are culturally universal.

(a) The idea of space-time, associated with the idea of appearance and reality, identity, and liberty. *Star Trek* represents this show in the science-fiction genre.
(b) The theme of violence, relations with others (especially relations between the sexes), the necessity of law and its arbitrariness. This genre is representing by detective shows, like *Charlie’s Angels*, *Starsky and Hutch*, and *Magnum*.
(c) The epic or the basis of social order, the ambiguity of power, and the nature of legitimacy. This is the Western genre, with examples like *Bonanza*, *Little House on the Prairie* and *Dallas*.

Auge does not develop these themes further, but he focus on the idea of mythic hero or, in his own words, the telecultural hero. He has five propositions.

His first proposal is that the actor’s person is almost inseparable from the identity of the character. In other words, you cannot change the actor who is performing J. R. every time you wish. Auge thinks that the various ways of identifying with the hero-figure would be impossible were it not for the sketchiness of his psychology and the permanence of his profile. He says that only because one can identify him instantly can one identify oneself with him. The same is true, say Auge, with the African ritual mask, in the sense that the mask deceives nobody, for the reason that all of its being is in its seeming, like a symbol. Auge says that a consequence of this characteristic is that the attack on a televisual (or sporting) ritual, or a television hero, is to commit sacrilege and will provoke scandal. Because of television’s ritual regularity, we must not be disappointed in our expectations. Auge says that this situation is difficult to see in America, given the large number of TV channels. However, in Africa, where the options are smaller, suppression of a series episode could be a serious situation (as in fact happened, Auge notes).

Auge’s second proposal is that the telecultural hero, by his own nature, is a being associated with others of its kind. Auge says that heroes usually come in twos, and they are rarely heterosexual, like Greek or African gods. In Auge’s interpretation of *Dallas* the tragedy is found in the confrontation of male figures: J. R. and his brother Boddy. Women can change status, but the hero always confronts one of its own kind. Auge also finds support in *Magnum* and *Starsky and Hutch* for this idea. Male detectives come in pair. The case of *Charlie’s Angels* can be seeing as association by kind, and as a ritual of inversion, because they are a female team investigating and fighting like men.

Auge’s third proposal is that the characteristic of ambiguity in the Greek and African mythic hero can be seeing in the telecultural hero. By ambiguity, Auge means that we are not always sure what the hero is it. In *Bewitched*, we watch the female character (Samantha) sometimes as wife (normal human) and sometimes as witch (non-human). Is the *Six-Million-Dollar Man* a man or a machine? Is there a woman under the skin of *The Bionic Woman*? However, the ambiguity is manifest in sexuality. In *The Man from Atlantis*, we are not sure about the sex of the character. Heroes in *Magnum* and *Starsky and Hutch* do not act like normal men about women. They often laugh about women and they act as a homosexual pair. *Charlie’s Angels* is the same situation. Furthermore, we watch the boss Charlie surrounded by beautiful women, but doing anything, except being with them. Auge’s interpretation of *Dallas* is that J. R. and Bobby present this homosexual ambiguity, adding the component of incest and, therefore, ambiguity in family relationship: who is the son’s father?
The fourth characteristic in common with epic, Auge says, is that the author is not describing contemporary events. The story could be anytime in the past or the future. In this interpretation, Auge says that the idea of episode implies that what begins again is always the same story. The consequence is that TV series, like rituals, have a non-historical dimension, and because of that, they can continually remind us the social order repeatedly. In Auge words, the American TV hero establishes, interprets, or applies the law but asks himself no questions about it.

The fifth proposal is that in every culture, one can ask about the characters of a myth, the drama, and the message, but the identity of the author does not matter. According to Auge, with TV series is the same. As he says, the actor needs to be the same every episode, but the author could be different and the series could go on.

Finally, his conclusion is that the theory of cultural imperialism cannot explain the popularity of American TV series, because it does not consider the ritual aspect of them. If cultural imperialism is right, say Auge, it is precisely because these series are cultural, i.e. that they are ground in a specific tradition, expressing myths and epic episodes of humankind.


Landers’ objective is to analyze a small sample of prime time television comedies and dramas to see if they play the same roles anthropologists contend that mythology plays in other societies. In other words, she says that from an anthropological perspective one is able to compare with some rather interesting results the role of mythology with the role of prime time television in contemporary life.

Unfortunately, she did not accomplish her objective. Landers limits her essay to an exploratory work in the subject, saying that future works on the area could be very useful to understand the relationship between myth and television programs.

Considering the work of C. Levi-Strauss and B. Malinowski, Landers argues that myth helps to make order out of chaos. It defines for members of a culture what the world is like, what to expect of it, and how to get along in it. Taking Victor Turner, Landers says that the purpose of the myth is to make clear and unmistakably apparent beliefs and ideas that cannot be directly perceived.

In communication research, Landers often cites the work of George Gerbner, who said in 1977 that popular entertainment in news, drama, and fiction has become the universal source of public acculturation. Landers argues that Gerbner’s statement must be proven by anthropological research.

Landers does a content analysis of several television programs broadcast in 1971 such as Daniel Boone, Bill Cosby, and Bewitched. Her findings are as follows:

a) Nature of the World
   The setting for all the shows was completely and undeniably mid western urban middle class.

b) Nature and Culture
   The problem of nature versus culture is solved by denying that nature exists. Most action took place inside buildings. No natural life crises were allowed to intrude. Not only there was no death, there was no suggestion that such a thing existed, and there were no old people: everyone appeared to be under 40. People seldom touched each other. No one ever sweated, scratched, blew his/her nose or passed wind.

c) The Family and Male/Female Roles
   The ideal in American middle-class culture is the nuclear family. However, the single parent family is becoming ever more prevalent. Male and female roles are becoming problematic, but in the end they are differentiated in classical terms.

d) Honesty in a Corrupt World
   Middle-class Americans ideally are honest, even at the risk of job, family, and friends. Social life, as shown on the sitcoms, includes a good deal of dishonesty.
e) Non-acceptance of the Concept of Chance
Western European cultures have trouble accepting the explanation of events embodied in the word “chance”. Situations need to have a rational explanation.

f) The Nature of People of Other Cultures
One of the problematic areas of life is how to conceptualize people who are not of one’s own culture. The TV programs give three answers: 1) No matter how strangely people dress or where they come from they are all alike. 2) People may act differently, but they are like little children and can be taught the right way of behaving. 3) Others’ beliefs are wrong and ridiculous.

Finally, Landers concludes that she has tried to indicate how prime time television could be examined to expose the values and judgments built into program contents. In prime time television, characters are written and ideas are expressed in comedies and dramas that did not appear a few years earlier: black characters, single parent families, working women. Landers says that research may give ideas of what social conflicts which were previously important are no longer important, and which ones are becoming so. It may also give some clue to the role of television in easing the audience through ideological changes and contradictions.
Family and Kinship


Rodgers centers her attention on how national communication media shape local ideas about kinship. She says that Indonesia in the early 1980s has many planes of communication co-existing at the same time (oral, written, musical, mass media, local ethnic language, Arabic, and Indonesian). Although the medium is different, however content follows similar patterns. Focusing on kinship, she is interested in comparing oral family culture with written family culture.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oral family culture</th>
<th>Written family culture</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marriage is an alliance between lineage.</td>
<td>Marriage is a social alliance between individuals, living, biographic men and women.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World mythically divided between a) wife-givers and wife-receivers, b) right and left, c) upperworld and mundane level, etc.</td>
<td>Marriage alliance is dealing with analytical not mythical, terms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humans are in the center of the world, dealing with agonistic terms of good and evil.</td>
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What happens with the electronic media? What is their family content? According to Rodgers, tape-cassette dramas accelerate the process towards modern kinship, already begun by written culture. These tape-cassette dramas, produced in the 1970s, follow family narratives like *Dallas* or *Dynasty*, but in a radio serial format. Here, the Angkola marriage alliance and patrilineal clan descent is apparently being reduced to a relatively simple (Rodgers says easy to understand) system of family relationships. Dramas deal explicitly with journeys and transitions, but the portrayal of success is complex. The hero conquers the city, while maintaining his family’s ties to the village. Life in the village is associated with loyalty, hard physical work, order, orderly speech, safety, and social intimacy. City life is morally chaotic, threatening, and anomic, but full of money, says Rodgers.

She thinks that tape cassette dramas are devices that work as rites of modernization, dealing with the dilemmas of swift economic modernization and the consolidation of old Batak chiefdoms into the national state. According to Rodgers, focusing on certain aspects of kinship as a code for talking about social change in general is a particularly apt choice. She thinks that Angkola’s ideology of descent, alliance, and household relationships points in two directions; first, toward a mythic world where Angkola life emanates from the very structure of the cosmos. Second, toward a world of humanly controlled social relationships, where the Angkola Batak live in the historically created state of Indonesia, with Javanese, Minangkabau, Chinese-Indonesians, and Westerners. She says that cassette dramas confront the tension inherent in these two views and engage listeners in the excitement of making the transition between the two.

Finally, attending the references cited about mass media, she mentions an anthropological study of American soap operas by Susan Bean in 1982, and her own dissertation about kinship and oral literature in 1978 (University of Chicago).

2) Mitra Das (1980) *Matrimonial Advertisements: An Examination of its Social Significance in Mate Selection in Modern India* [Man In India 60(3/4), 187-203]

Das points out that Indian newspapers during the late 1970s replaced traditional go-betweens for potential spouses such as family or friends, so that the eligible singles found each other through newspapers advertisements. According to Das, analyzing matrimonial ads is a way to understand modernization in India, since the function of these ads is not only marriage, but the reorientation of contemporary Indian society, especially among the upper castes (classical term) or middle class (new term).

Das says that modern urban structures demands special skills to people in administration, business enterprises, and technical professions, giving emphasis to personal qualities, such as higher education, modern carriers, over family
position. Potential spouses look for these qualities in matrimonial advertisement, as well as physical attractiveness and individual income. Das says the change affects a small number of the population, given the low literacy in India. However, these are the people likely to occupy important places in bureaucracy and industry in the country in the near future, which may be the reason why newspapers’ ads place so much emphasis on the achieved status and personal qualities of the individual.

In terms of the references, Das cites a 1958 article called *A Study of Matrimonial Advertisements in Northern India*, published in “The Eastern Anthropologist”. Similar studies appear in the references from the 1960s and 1970s in sociological and family journals. Given this information I conclude that the research is not original and that it belongs to a research tradition. Perhaps the novelty could be methodological, considering the large number of cases (1327 advertisements) used, coded, and tabulated by a computer program specially designed for the purpose.
Mass Media and Health

1. R. Kannan (1997) *Man Media and Health* [Man In India 77(1), 15-27]

Kannan thinks that in India mass media play a vital role in the transmission of health care messages to the people, especially through the newspaper, radio and television.

As regards newspapers, the study found that 58% of the informants that read newspapers also read health care reports. Kannan’s interpretation is that health themes are not regular messages in press, but they are highly attractive to readers looking for health information. Nevertheless, he does not suggest that health organizations use newspapers for mass communication campaigns, since the reader is highly selective with printing material.

Relating to radio, Kannan says people with higher income and education often hear health programs in the medium. In his interpretation, radio supports beliefs about health consciousness that listeners already have.

As for television, 57% of the informants who regularly watch television indicate this is the best medium for carrying health care messages. However, the study reveals that people give more importance to news, cinema, sports and drama than to health programs in their choices.

Kannan finds its interesting that research he himself conducted in the 1980s showed radio was the preferring medium. These more recent results suggest visual tradition is surpassing the oral and written traditions, he thinks. He cites an Indian study in 1991 that concluded that electronic media have surpassed other media in popularity. The author thinks that could be further investigated the agenda-setting hypothesis in order to improve health media messages, but he does not develop this idea.


In the early 1980s, the World Health Organization created the Mass Media and Health Practices Project, establishing Gambia and Honduras as the countries in which a diarrhea disease control program using radio, print materials, and face-to-face contact would be cross-culturally evaluated. This paper describes the Honduras case, using most of the space to give information about the disease. Relating to mass media, the article says that from the beginning the project decided, based on bibliographical research, to use a mix of agenda-setting media messages and face-to-face contact. The argument for this strategy is that traditional mass communication models affect few changes in practices. The source of this statement is the book *Communication Networks* by E. Rogers and D. Kincaid (1981), but the essay does not develop the argument.

The project evaluation found that only 11% of the target population knew about the cure proposed on the radio. Nevertheless, it proved to be successful, since most of the families did learn how to cure the disease. How do the authors explain this? About 40% of the target population learned from reading a printed packet accompanying the cure, 23% from the health clinic, and 21% from village health workers. According to this information, face-to-face contact is the answer to treatment, with mass media having a very limited role in health programs. The paper also gives a theoretical explanation for the results. Based on Rogers and Kincaid, they think that their success found in a model that an appreciation of different psychological and social realities. The project suggests classical models of mass communication are limited because they are based on a *Linear Model of Communication* (source, transmitter, receiver, destination). The basis for this statement is also the work of Rogers and Kincaid.

In the references, the authors cite another communication study from Schramm (1973) *Men, Media and Messages.*
3. Comparing Treatment of Anthropology in Journals of Sociology, Political Science and Visual Anthropology

Because of the small number of essays in anthropology as they appear in the Chapter 2 (45 papers), I decided to compare anthropology with other research traditions, such as sociology, political science, and visual anthropology (film and cinema). The methodology I used followed the same pattern as the previous chapter.

In the case of sociology, I used *Sociological Abstracts*, through Penn Library Ovid Database Online. I searched this database articles that matched the keywords mass media, mass communication, broadcasting, and television between 1970 to 1999. The journals selected were the following:

1. American Journal of Sociology
2. American Sociological Review
3. Annual Review of Sociology
4. British Journal of Sociology
5. Sociological Inquiry
6. Sociological Quarterly
7. Sociological Review

In the case of political science, I used the JSTOR Database Online, asking the same question. Because this database has a different structure, the journals selected varied in the final year considered.


In the case of visual anthropology (film and cinema), I used the same anthropological journals from the Chapter 2.

The complete databases are in the appendix. The results are summarized in the next table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journals</th>
<th>Essay No.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Anthropology</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthropology</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Science</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Continuing with these findings, I will make an analysis of sociology, political science, and visual anthropology. I will develop their theoretical arguments, focusing on television research.
3.1. Sociology

From this comparison, sociology has the biggest number (69 essays). Attending to the abstracts of each paper, I argue that the main subject is mass media effects, especially the following topics: a) TV news and press, and b) violence and suicide.

a) TV news and press

Of the total number of articles, 12 focus on news and the press. For example, G. Husting (1999) *When a War is not a War: Abortion, Desert Storm, and Representation of Protest in American TV News* [Sociological Quarterly 40(1), 159-176], analyzes American televised media coverage of the Gulf War’s activists and abortion’s protesters, concluding that in the news, activists and women were positioned outside the sphere of normal politics. Through this marginalization of protest, Husting argues, broadcast news contained the threat of activism to the national imaginary of the US in both conflicts. D. Altheide (1997) *The News Media, the Problem Frame, and the Production of Fear* [Sociological Quarterly 38(4), 647-668], focuses on the role of the news media in promoting a public discourse of fear, concluding that the news media use a secular version of morality that promotes messages that resonate fear and danger. R. Senter (1986) *The Presidency and the Print Media: Who Controls the News?* [Sociological Quarterly 27(1), 91-105], focused on the relationship between the US presidency and the press, concluding that in 1970 the newspapers often changed their policies in ways desired by the Nixon administration, and that the more professional the editor of the newspaper, the more likely was the newspaper’s editorial policy to change in ways desired by the Nixon administration. However, Senter also finds support for an independent press. C. Grover (1999) *Bigamy: Neither Love nor Marriage, but a Threat to the Nation?* [Sociological Review 47(2), 322-344], argues that British newspaper reporting of bigamy constructs bigamists as being an internal threat to Great Britain and the institution of marriage, while the threat from outside is from minority ethnic men marrying female bigamists to gain residential status in UK. Other papers deal with the concepts of time in the structure of TV news, and the press’s effects on social problems, disease perception, and representation.

b) Violent Behavior

Ten of the essays focus on violent behavior. For example, J. Baron (1985) *Same Time, Next Year: Aggregate Analysis of the Mass Media and Violent Behavior* [American Sociological Review 50(3), 347-363], says that most researchers believe mass media are an important cause of homicide, suicide and other violent behavior. He thinks that both the methods and theories of such research are open to criticism, and proposes a method for testing the hypothesis. In the other hand, D. Phillips (1983) *The Impact of Mass Media Violence on U.S. Homicides* [American Sociological Review 48(4), 560-568], and A. Mazur (1982) *Bomb Threats and the Mass Media: Evidence for a Theory of Suggestion* [American Sociological Review 47(3), 407-411], both argue that there are reasons to believe that mass media are a cause of violent behavior. Phillips find evidence that heavyweight prizefights stimulate aggressive behavior, while Mazur says that the press influences bomb threats. In another study by Phillips in 1982, called *Imitative Suicides: A National Study of the Effects of Television News Stories* [American Sociological Review 47(6), 802-809], the author says that highly publicized suicide stories appearing in the TV evening news leads to increased suicides for the following ten days. In 1996, a study conducted by R. Felson called *Mass Media Effects on Violent Behavior* [Annual Review of Sociology 22, 103-128], concludes that while TV violence may have a small effect on some viewers, repeated studies of the media’s effects on violent behavior have not produced evidence of a significant influence on aggressiveness. While most of the studies focus on television, there is also research on magazines and newspapers.

Other subjects in sociological studies are film, postmodernism, video and gender, evangelism, morality, holidays, sports, and theoretical essays centering on sociology and mass communication.

An analysis by date exhibits that most of this research is from the 1990s. The next table displays the articles by year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Essay No.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990s</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980s</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970s</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Therefore, I conclude that mass media research is growing in sociology.

### 3.2. Political Science

In political science, the main subject is mass media effects in areas such as justice, racial belief, political belief, economic evaluation, political reception, voting, electoral change, news content, and presidential campaigns. Other themes are TV and press secretaries, campaign media ads, media and sex-gender, global communication, Soviet-American relations, and personal experience. The principal medium analyzed are press and TV.

For example, M. Hetherington (1996) *The Media’s Role in Forming Voter’s National Economic Evaluations in 1992* [American Journal of Political Science 40(2), 372-395], says that in terms of economic voting, voter’s perceptions of economic indicators can be more important than the statistics themselves. This suggests, he says, why George Bush lost his reelection bid despite an economy that had rebounded from recession well in advance of election day. K. Fridkin (1992) *Does Being Male Help? An Investigation of the Effects of Candidate Gender and Campaign Coverage on Evaluations of U.S. Senate Candidates* [The Journal of Politics 54(2), 497-517], argues that a content analysis of newspaper coverage shows that male and female Senate candidates are covered differently in the news, which tends to favor male candidates. Fridkin says that female candidates covered like male candidates have more chances of success at the polls. As a final example, G. Caldeira (1987) *Public Opinion and the U.S. Supreme Court: FRS’s Court-Packing Plan* [The American Political Science Review 81(4), 1139-1153], says that there is a considerable impact of the mass media on public attitudes toward the Court, citing as evidence the role of political events in the making of public opinion. Caldeira focuses on a 1937 event, when Franklin D. Roosevelt sought legislation to “pack” the high bench with friendly personnel.

An analysis by date exhibits that there is no research in the 1970s, with a growing tendency from the 1980s through to the 1990s.

### 3.3 Visual Anthropology

From the beginning, fieldwork in anthropology has routinely used film and photography for documentation. The term visual anthropology now includes video and electronic media, such as television or computing devices. *Visual Anthropology Review*’s first number appeared in 1974. *Visual Anthropology* has been running from 1987. Nevertheless, this research tradition has not developed mass media studies. I would argue that media anthropology is a wider term than visual anthropology, as it includes radio, newspapers and other printing materials. However, the fact is that visual anthropology is an well-establishing research tradition, but media anthropology is not. For example, there is no media anthropology journal.

Visual anthropology is associated during the 1980s and 1990s mainly with the work of Faye Ginsburg, Terence Turner, and the late Eric Michaels. Ginsburg is someone within the tradition who has developed a theoretical framework for visual anthropology. Therefore, I will concentrate on her arguments. Her essay from 1994, *Culture/Media: A (Mild) Polemic* [Anthropology Today 10(2), 5-15] is especially interesting, because she explicitly thinks about the relationship between mass media and visual anthropology.

Ginsburg’s main proposal is that we live in a world in which people learn of their own and other’s cultures through visual media such as film, television, and video. According to her, because of the transnational and intercultural diffusion of visual media, the question about mass media’s effects is a central concern to scholars. The answers given, she says, move between two poles. Those who think in terms of mass media’s hegemonic power, and those favor utopian thinking of electronic democracies and global villages. In the first case, she cites H. Schiller (1976) *Communication and Cultural Domination*, and on the extreme end of the second pole M. McLuhan’s (1964) *Understanding Media*. She says that two emerging topics concern a) the multiple ways that culture is encoded in film, TV, video, and b) how these representations are interpreted as they mediate across time, culture and prejudice. As examples, she cites L. Abu-Lughod (1993) *Finding a Place for Islam: Egyptian Television Serials and the National Interest* (Public Culture), and P. Aufderheide (1993) *Latin American Grassroots Video: Beyond Television* (Public Culture).
Ginsburg prefers to use the term “anthropology of culture and media” as a label for thinking through the contemporary relationship between the discipline and all forms of media. She thinks that various trends are important in the 1990s:

a) Scholars are paying closer attention to how local knowledge is produced and interpreted, because of the growing circulation of images across and within societies around the globe.

b) Anthropologists are abandoning positivist models of thinking in favor of more hermeneutic approaches.

c) The understanding of media as part of larger social formations. Ginsburg cites references from A. Appadurai and S. Hall.

d) A growing use of ethnographic methods in communication research.

e) The growth in anthropological research of television.

f) Increase in conferences and publications within anthropology.

Ginsburg asks: What distinguishes a contemporary anthropological approach to mass media as opposed to studies in communications, semiotics, or cultural studies? Her answer is that anthropology centers on people and their social relations rather than in media texts or technology. Anthropology is interesting in the analysis of media as a social form, she says, whether focusing on its production, modes of representation, or reception. She questions the word mass in the term “mass media”, saying that anthropology should recognize the complex ways in which people are engaged in processes of making and interpreting media works in relation to their cultural, social, and historical circumstances.

However, Ginsburg says that anthropology’s main goal is to understand the ways mass media (especially television) are contributing to the mediation and construction of cultural difference within and across societies. The assumption behind this goal, says Ginsburg, is that people, communities or nation-states increasingly mediate and comprehend their identities and placement in the world in relation to televisual and cinematic structures and experiences. Therefore, the object of study for media anthropology is the screen representation of cultural meanings and differences.

Summarizing her position, Ginsburg says that whatever the power and reach of media institutions and messages, the people who receive it continue to have unpredictable and creative responses to such processes. Ethnographic research, she says, is especially well suited to understanding these dynamics.

I will concentrate now on Ginsburg’s essay *Indigenous Media* [Cultural Anthropology 6(1), 92-112]. Here, she says that during the 1980s indigenous and minority people used a variety of media, including film and video, as new vehicles for internal and external communication, for self-determination, and for resistance to outside cultural domination.

Instead of following the political arguments in Ginsburg, I want to highlight the Australian Aboriginal television describing by her. In January 1988, Imparja Television began broadcasting in Central Australia to the Aboriginal people. The initiative began in 1982 when the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies created The Warlpiri Media Association, hiring the American anthropologist Eric Michaels to develop Indigenous media. In 1985, the Australian government launched the AUSSAT satellite, and The Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association asked for the satellite’s downlink license to Central Australia, winning the Regional Commercial Television Services contract. Consequently, the private commercial station Imparja (“footprint”) Television was born. In 1988, says Ginsburg, of the 70 hours of broadcasting, only 3 hours were locally produced. The reason is that a 30-minute program cost about $10,000 or $20,000, and the advertising is not attractive, because of the small indigenous population. Broadcasters also refused to sell commercials for alcohol. Another characteristic is that in 1988, says Ginsburg, just 10% of the television staff were Aboriginal, although some local people were taking courses for television production.

In a paper from 1994, Ginsburg cites another example of an Australian Aboriginal TV station called Ernabella. This station has been broadcasting since 1985, producing local material for South Australia. Although beset by economical difficulties, they have managed to survive without State sponsorship.

Finally, the other visual anthropology’s articles complement these ideas. Terence Turner (1992) gives an example of indigenous media from the Kayapo of Brazil. Eyal Ben-Ari (1991) works on Japanese culture and photography.
James Weiner (1997) and James Faris (1993) develop some critiques from this tradition, focusing on film. In addition, Eric Michaels develops a critique of McLuhan from his Australian research.

In other words, visual anthropology is a tradition research mainly concentrated in cinema, video, and photography. All the production in mass communication within anthropology is 45 essays (according to the journal research). In the same time, anthropology produced 60 essays about film and cinema. If we go back in time, the number will increase. Nevertheless, it is justified to say that mass communication studies are increasing within visual anthropology.

3.4 Commentary

The disciplines of anthropology, sociology, political science and visual anthropology all share the questions of television’s effects. The differences between them are to be expected. Anthropology (and visual anthropology) is mainly devoted to understanding world cultures, while sociology and political science center on the United States. Sociology focuses on TV news, press, violence, and suicide. Political science’s main subject is mass media’s effect on voting and political campaigns. Visual anthropology is mainly concerned with the representation of anthropological knowledge through television. Therefore, while sharing a central theme, every discipline gives an answer from its own tradition, concepts and methods.

An important difference is the number of essays within each discipline. Sociology has almost the same number that anthropology (without cinema studies) and political science together (69 comparing to 71). This situation, nevertheless, is somewhat misleading. Sociologists abandoned communication research long before the 1970s; therefore, I expect some of them are writing in communication journals. Political science has a small number, but surely it would be increased if the journal Public Opinion Quarterly is included. Visual anthropology has the smallest number but from mass media research. In film and cinema studies, this journal has produced 60 papers in the same period. As a whole, nevertheless, social sciences are well below the production of communication journals.

From the point of view of the publication years, all the disciplines share a growing interest in mass communication, especially in the 1990s.

Finally, from sociology, political science and visual anthropology, I argue that anthropology differentiates itself only from the places where the knowledge is found. In other words, so far the contribution of anthropology is to test the knowledge born in American communication research, outside of America. The problems and concepts are very much the same. Anthropology contributes with its own theoretical background and particular methods. I think that the ethnography of television is a good label for the anthropology of mass communication. The descriptive knowledge is new, but the problems and concepts are the same as communication research in other social sciences. It is interesting, therefore, in the next chapter to look for anthropological knowledge outside these journals.
4. Where else Anthropologists do Write about Mass Media?

Not all the research in media anthropology is in anthropological journals. Some important anthropologists in this area, such as Lila Abu-Lughod and Conrad Kottak, wrote “outside” articles that often appear in references. The first section of this chapter is concerned with anthropological papers on mass communication in non-anthropological journals. However, anthropologists also write books and dissertations. The second section presents this knowledge. I will not consider at this time other sources as the Internet or encyclopedias.

In this chapter, I am not able to summarize all of what anthropologists have been writing outside anthropological journals. In fact, chapter 2 and 3 only summarizes the knowledge of 12 magazines within the discipline. I used the criterion to attend to articles with two or more references as they came out from the previous chapters. Another factor is that it is difficult to know if the writer is an anthropologist, because not always publications are explicit about the author’s professional career.

4.1 Communicational Journals and Other Journals

I will use the same methodology of the Chapter 2, asking some questions to the essays that fall in this section. A detail description of every article appears in the appendix of this chapter.


As I said, this is not an exhaustive research. From the journal research, these five anthropologists are cited frequently. I am not justified to say the next because of the small number, but I found interesting that three of the essays come from the 1990s, two from the 1980s, and one from the 1970s, following the same trend discovered in the previous chapters.


What themes and problems did they follow? Abu-Lughod (1993) proposes the argument that if the Egyptian serials produce a national community and its television is state-controlled, we should say to discover how the entertainment provided to these large audiences (that cross boundaries of class, gender, and region) articulates national politics, policies, and cultural identities. Her answer is that television serials reflect the central question of public life in Egypt during the 1980s: What is the place of Islam?

Caldarola’s ethnography (1992) studies the ways in which the cultural values of local audiences in Indonesia relate to interpretations of television. He says that his research contradicts in many ways the cultural imperialism school, because his evidence proves that the local pattern of interpretation is not an effect of American television. He says that these patterns mediate between local values and norms, and the unprecedented incursion of foreign perspectives associated with television since its introduction in 1977.

Kottak’s work (1991) is an anthropological examination of the cultivation effect hypothesis applied to Brazil during the 1980s. Kottak’s basic argument for explaining the differences between Brazil and America is that Brazilians have a generally shorter home TV exposure. This means that the effects that scholars have found in America will be found with time in Brazil. Among those differences, Brazilians heavy viewers have high income, while Americans heavy viewers have low income.

Turner (1985) extended in his essay an invitation to anthropologists to study mass communication. He applied his theory of liminality to television, saying that maybe television provides similar functions in industrial societies that rites of passage played in primitive societies. He says we need more research in the area, being his essay a proposal not further developed.

Granzberg (1982, 1977) studied the impact and meaning of television among Indians of Canada. He says that classical anthropology states that as an item diffuses from one culture to another, its form, function, and meaning may vary independently. He thinks that although Western television has diffused to the Indians, its Western
meanings and functions have not. They have added and substituted new meanings and functions which seem to have heavily influenced television’s impact while, at the same time, preserving their own culture and smoothing acculturation processes.

**What media and cultures did they study?** Television is the medium studied in Egypt, Indonesia, Brazil, and Indians of Canada.

### 4.2 Books and Dissertations

In this category I grouped writings from anthropologists either in the form of books, essay compilations, chapters of books, or dissertations. Some of them are specifically devoted to mass communication, while others have this theme as one of their subjects. I came to them by reviewing the references appeared in the journal research. A complete summary appears in the appendix of this chapter.


**What themes or problems did they write about?** Appadurai (1996) argues that electronic media allow scripts for possible lives (imitating films stars), and that the electronic media provide resources for self-imaging as an everyday social project (identity). These arguments were used by Liechty (1994) in his study of media in Nepal, and by many other anthropologists studying national identity (see Chapter 2). In the same context is Adra (1996), when she describes initial audience reactions to televised messages in a small rural community in Yemen. Adra says the most important change was the ways people perceived themselves in relation to the outside world (difference) and relative to other Yemenis (identity). Kottak (1990) says that television is a very important phenomena to be avoided by anthropologists. He agrees that television affects behavior, either as a technology and as a content. As an example, he gives his research on Brazilian television (see appendix of this chapter).

Therefore, as in the journal research, the 1990s presents a central concern for identity and effects, except for Allen (1994), who writes about anthropology and journalism.

During the 1980s and 1970s, research covered different themes. Agrawal (1985) wrote a methodological handbook for anthropological evaluation of television in India, especially the Satellite Instructional Television Experiment called SITE. Wilder (1982) makes an ethnography of a rural community in Malaysia during the 1970s. The interesting point is that he understand kinship as communication, economy as communication, and so and so forth, using the approach of Leach (1976) and Hymes (1964). Therefore, this is a classical ethnography with a different perspective by that time. Leach (1976) argues that culture communicates. He is not saying that culture is communication (an idea developed by Hymes in 1964 and Hall in 1959), but that anthropologists can decode the messages embedded in the complexities that they observe by using the structuralist methodology proposed by Levi-Strauss. His whole book try to accomplish this objective.

The great exception is Powdermaker (1950). She is a representative of the “National Character” school of anthropology, which uses a psychological theory of culture to understand modern societies. She argues that films satisfied the human need for escape from his anxieties. Therefore, films provide Americans with solutions to their problems and models for human relationships. She applied the classical ethnographical approach to Hollywood in order to understand this social system after the World War II. (A complete argumentation for this point is developed in Chapter 5.)

**What media and cultures did anthropologists study?** The medium was television studied in America, Brazil, India, Malaysia, Nepal, and Yemen.
4.3 Commentary

The purpose of this chapter was to discern if there is some difference between the knowledge appeared in anthropological journals compare to other sources. The answer is no.

Lila Abu-Lughod wrote in 1993 about Egyptian television and national identity. Adra (1996), Liechty (1994), Caldarola (1992), Kottak (1991), and Granzberg (1982, 1977) were interested in testing communication knowledge outside America (Yemen, Nepal, Indonesia, and Brazil respectively). All this research fall into the media effects tradition. The knowledge they produce supports and increases the research within anthropological journals.

In the twentieth-century, there is no book *Anthropological Introduction to Mass Communication*. Arjun Appadurai (1996) is concerned with mass media, but his main objective is to understand modernization. Susan Allen (1994) wrote *Media Anthropology*, but her main point is to develop a relationship between anthropology and journalism in order to communicate an ethnographical perspective to citizens. Kottak (1990) with *Prime-Time Society: An Anthropological Analysis of Television and Culture* is close to the point. Nevertheless, his technological argument has no support in communication research and his argument about content is, at the end, socialization theory. Kottak tried to support cultivation hypothesis and latter he abandoned the field. Finally, Wilder (1982) and Leach (1976) developed a communication approach closed to linguistics.

Therefore, most of the anthropological research about mass communication and the essays that analyze them is published in journals. As a whole, they are concerned with the same themes and problems as analyzed in Chapter 2.

Anthropological journals in Chapter 2 did not study the following cultures appearing in this chapter: Indonesia, Indians of Canada, Malaysia, Nepal, and Yemen.

What about Turner (1985), Agrawal (1985), and Powdermaker (1950)? They are exceptions. Agrawal thinks anthropology could contribute to communication research because (1) the holistic view of the discipline understands television in the context of the whole society under study, (2) anthropology follows a process analysis, which means a systemic perspective of culture where every element is related to another, (3) through an emic approach, focusing on the native point of view instead of the external view, (4) through a comparative perspective, and (5) through participant observation. Turner (1985) saw in the idea of media events a bridge between anthropology and mass communication. Powdermaker conducted a kind of research that waited 30 years to be considered within the discipline.

What are seeing some anthropologists in mass communication? Why communication scholars are interesting in anthropology? The following chapters try to follow these leads.
She argues that after something of a hiatus, anthropologists have returned to questions about the making of national culture. Inspired in part by debates generated by Benedict Anderson’s notions of nations as imagined communities, they are interrogating the processes by which national ideologies are constructed, internalized, and contested. The questions she makes in the paper are: What are the internal politics of Egyptian productions? Meant to entertain, are the serials free of political messages? Who controls these messages and who is excluded? In other words, Abu-Luhog says, if the serials produce a national community and television in Egypt is state-controlled, we should say to discover how the entertainment provided to these large audiences (that cross boundaries of class, gender, and region) articulates national politics, policies, and cultural identities.

Within Egypt, the local productions are more popular and widely viewed than imported films and television serials, which –she says– are subtitled and therefore largely inaccessible to the non-literate. Abu-Lughod concentrates her analysis in serials from the late 1980s. Her argument is that television serials reflect the central question of public life in Egypt: What is the place of Islam?

Her analysis shows that Egyptian serials deplore the moral state of the nation in modern times; they ask whether the harsh but all-too-familiar circumstances of inadequate housing, low wages, and rising prices must lead people to abandon their principles. The serials, in other words, are often about the struggles of good, decent people and families to remain so in these trying times. Nevertheless, these serials maintain a noticeable silence of the Islamic movements and deliberately ignore the alternative vision these movements offer of Islam’s place in Egypt’s future.

She says that in the serials there is an absence of religion as a source of morality and an avoidance of overt signs of Muslim piety and identity in the protagonists. This is not to say that religious programming on television does not exist, but that they are generally segregated from the more popular shows, especially the serials.

Then she asks why these things are excluded. In her answer, Abu-Lughod says that Egyptian television began in 1960 under President Nasser and was used, along with radio, as an instrument of national development and political mobilization. She thinks that this ideology persists in the directors of television serials. Some of them diagnose the problem of Egyptian citizens as cultural illiteracy and see television drama as the best instrument for eliminating such illiteracy. The discourse of other influential figures in television, she says, is a somewhat patronizing one of the guidance and education of the Egyptian masses. Therefore, their serials uphold the secular national institutions of the post colonial state, promote the ideals of informed citizenship, and deplore what directors view as abuses of basically good institutions like the law, government, education, and the family. Although somewhat controversial, she says, the social criticism they offer remains within the boundary of the familiar paradigms of the official political parties.

According to Abu-Lughod, such is not the case for the self-proclaimed radical Islamic reformists ignored in the serials. She characterizes Muslim activist groups as asserting that Islam (referring to sources like the Koran and the model of the Prophet and his first community) can and should provide a blueprint for society and government and should inform every aspect of life. In this case, there is no distinction made between public and private. She says that in Egypt this alternative vision of a self-consciously Islamic path has widespread appeal because it seems to offer people a moral way to deal with the times.

Because this discussion takes place in urban settings, she asks it affects rural areas. Her argument is that there is a distinct local regional identity of villagers, which is closer to the Muslim activist groups. By contrast, the national urban identity is seen as an association of mass-media values (romantic love, companionate marriage, education and careers for women) and the new Islamic identity (distinctions between secular/religion, public/private).

Interestingly, she says, villagers on the margins of the dominant national culture did not perceive the contradictions between the new Islamic pious activism and the dramas of secular television, because the people involved were
equally associated with the non-local—with the major cities of Cairo and Alexandria or even the provincial cities and towns closer to them.

Her conclusion is that television can be a powerful national cultural force, but that it never reflects or produces the interests of the Egyptian nation-state. She highlights two oppositions in Egypt: the secular/religious and regional/metropolitan identities within the nation-state.


Indonesia is a multicultural nation of more than 300 distinct ethnic groups and 50 local languages. Therefore, the national television audience is extraordinarily diverse. The study focuses on one of Indonesia’s minority cultures in order to examine the ways in which the cultural values of local audiences relate to interpretations of television. According to Caldarola, the introduction of television to the interior Hulu Sungai region implies a particular cultural response that continues to influence viewing behavior and interpretations of television programs. He says that these interpretive patterns mediate between local values and norms, and the unprecedented incursion of foreign perspectives associated with television since its introduction in 1977. Because these interpretive structures are not products of the medium or its content, he says, the question is whether viewer interpretations emerge.

Caldarola argues that the following characteristics compose the pattern of interpretation.

a) Extension of visual narratives

Whether watching at home or in public, television viewing in Hulu Sungai is usually accompanied by audience commentary concerning the events on the screen.

b) Assignment of truth-value

Viewers assign truth-value to informational and dramatic programs based upon dual standards involving narrative structure and similitude to real life. They generally believe that television programs either are literally true, in the case of news and informational material, or are based upon true events, in the case of drama. In both cases, they assign a truth-value based upon the perception of the truth of the program’s content and upon the structure of the narrative’s form. There are two parallel concepts of truth among them: the mundane and the ideal. The mundane truth derives from the realities of everyday life: that which is directly observed or determined by personal experience or interpersonal contacts. By this measure, a media program must satisfy criteria of verisimilitude with direct experience. The second form of truth, ideal truth, is associated with ideal notions of the human condition: a sense of the way life should be, a higher truth. The apparent authenticity of television dramas derives from the visual realism of the filmic image in combination with highly constructed story narratives. The combined effect suggests to viewers that these stories are in some sense true, even if they recognize that the programs are staged performances. In fact, recognizing the staged character of these programs seems to enhance their truth-value by emphasizing the ideal, moralistic quality of the stories, thereby suggesting that these are important stories that carry moral truths or, as they say, examples of life.

c) Instrumental role of audience values

Whereas viewers tend to accept television news and dramas as true stories, they are not necessarily receptive to the values promoted by these programs. Audience values intercede between that which is promoted on television and that which viewers ultimately accept as valid for themselves and their communities. Although viewers identified with values perceived as convergent, they did not reject those perceived as divergent: unfamiliar values were always negotiated rather than rejected outright. This is because truth-value assignment to television dramas predisposes viewers to accept what they see as valid, although perhaps not for themselves. Thus, imported programs were often accepted as true “for foreigners”, and their divergent values negotiated by viewers as analogues to their own value system.
d) Perceiving prosocial and moral messages

    Audiences tend to perceive prosocial and moral messages in all media stories, including dramatic television programs and news, and they assume that these messages provide lessons that can be applied to the problems of real life.

e) Uncritical acceptance of media sources

    They have an uncritical acceptance of media sources as socially and politically neutral entities that benevolently produce television programs for the social and moral benefit of the audience.

f) Akal versus hawa nafsu

    Viewers tend to interpret television as a broad negotiation between two fundamental concepts associated with Islamic orthodoxy in Indonesia. Akal and hawa nafsu constitute a conceptual scheme through which the actions of men and women are interpreted and meaning is derived in real-life and the media. They are oppositional elements that represent humanity’s dual nature and establish the basic premises of a moral order. Using the analogy with the Greek Tragedy, akal means the Apollonian (order, peace) and hawa nafsu the Dionysian (chaos, war).

Finally, Cardalora says that his research contradicts in many ways the cultural imperialism school, because the evidence proves that the local pattern of interpretation is not an effect of American television.


This work is an anthropological examination of the cultivation effect hypothesis develops by the communication scholar George Gerbner and his college Larry Gross. I will present their results in the next table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Brazil</th>
<th>USA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Demographics</td>
<td>Heavy viewers have high income, most are women.</td>
<td>Heavy viewers have low income, most are women.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Trust</td>
<td>Heavy viewers do not see the world as dangerous and are not less trustful of citizens. But, the length of home exposure correlates with lack of trust in government.</td>
<td>Heavy viewers see world as dangerous and are less trustful of citizens.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Fear and Danger</td>
<td>Heavy viewers are not afraid to walk alone at night. But, fears correlate with listening to radio than watching TV.</td>
<td>Heavy viewers are afraid to walk alone at night.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Reading and Literacy</td>
<td>Viewing level correlates with greater use of print media, and with literacy.</td>
<td>Heavy viewers tend to read more, but comprehend less.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Social Isolation and External Orientation</td>
<td>Viewing correlates with external contact.</td>
<td>Viewing correlates with internal contact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Length and Amount of Television Viewing</td>
<td>Longer home exposure correlates with 11 variables, but current viewing level (average daily hour) correlates with 7 variables.</td>
<td>Longer home exposure correlates with most variables.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Kottak’s basic argument for explaining the differences between Brazil and America is that Brazilians have a generally shorter home TV exposure. This means that the effects that scholars have found in America will be found with time in Brazil.


This essay is interesting because of the explicit call for a mutual collaboration between anthropology and mass communication.

Turner says that the electronic media, particularly television, have added a new liminoid direction in our age. He explicitly mentions the work of Elihu Katz and his colleagues, saying that here we have a new sociocultural reconstruction of reality in terms of the media event. He thinks that “reality” is often a liminoid fabrication, a selection of images and spectacles in accordance with covert criteria.

He says that liminal phenomena tend to predominate in tribal and early agrarian societies, possessing what Durkheim has called mechanical solidarity. Instead, he uses the term liminoid for the phenomena that flourish in societies with organic solidarity. His proposal is that in tribal societies, liminality is often functional, in the sense of being a special duty on performance required in the course of work or activity. In other words, its very reversals and inversions tend to compensate for the rigidities or unfairness of normative structures. In industrial society, the rite de passage form, built into the calendar and/or modeled on organic processes of maturation and decay, no longer suffices. He says that leisure provides the opportunity for a multiplicity of optional, liminoid genres of literature, drama, and sport, which are not conceived of as “anti-structure” to normative structure, where “anti-structure” is an auxiliary function of the larger structure.

He concludes that this thought needs to be developed with arguments and research, extending an invitation to anthropologists to discuss this subject.


I will summarize both essays because they belong to the same research: the impact and meaning of television among Indians of Canada. This research was conducted by Gary Granzberg, a Canadian anthropologist at the University of Winnipeg, Manitoba. It began in 1973 and its conclusions appeared as a book in 1980, edited by Granzberg and Steinbring, with *Television and the Canadian Indians* [Winnipeg: University of Winnipeg]. The 1982 essay *Television as Storyteller* summarizes the book.

Granzberg says in 1977 that classical anthropology states that as an item diffuses from one culture to another, its form, function and meaning may vary independently. He thinks that although Western television has diffused to the Algonkian Indians (who speak the Cree language), its Western meanings and functions have not. The Algonkian, Granzberg says, have added and substituted new meanings and functions which seem to have heavily influenced the impact of television while, at the same time, preserving their own culture and smoothing acculturation processes.

Broadcasting to the Algonkian Indians began on December 23, 1973. In order to understand the cultural context in which the Algonkian situate television, Granzberg asked how Algonkian culture traditionally conceptualizes communication. He identifies two aspects. First, how communication with distant points is established. Second, how transmitted sights and sounds are interpreted.

The Algonkian believe that they have always had the ability to bring “live” sights and sounds from distant places into their midst through “conjuring”. Granzberg concludes from the belief that telephone, radio and television are not new for the Algonkian. The best example of conjuring is the ceremony of “shaking tent”. At the beginning of the ceremony the village shaman enters a tubular tent and calls upon various spirits to enter. As they enter, the tent begins to shake and its shaking increases or decreases depending upon the activity of the spirits within the tent. The shaman summons the spirits for many purposes. Once the spirit is summoned to the tent for questioning by the
shaman, the spirits must respond honestly. According to Granzberg, this ceremony has died out in the more accessible Algonkian communities and telephone, radio, and television partially fulfill the former role of this ceremony.

The Algonkian have given TV as well as radio the same Cree name by which the shaking tent is known: koosabachigan. Granzberg infers that the meaning of the shaking tent has passed to television. For example, in keeping with the “truth telling” spirits, the events on television, even the fictional ones, are often taken to be real and of practical consequence. Granzberg says that the failure to distinguish between real events and fictional ones on television is a pervasive phenomenon among the Algonkian and their neighbors the Saulteaux.

Granzberg says that most traditional Algonkian refuse to allow their children to watch television. They believe that children are not equally safe from the evil consequences of television, because communication across great distances and the bringing of news is the business of the shaman who is able to defend himself against spirits and evil conjures.

Granzberg says that Algonkian children prefer programs such as “Tarzan”, “Cannon”, and “Hawaii 50”. The superheroes are given personal meanings by the boys that are analogous to the personal meanings of the spirits in the shaking tent. The shaking tent spirits are “friends” and “magical helpers” of the shaman whose friendship was obtained through dreams. In return, the shaman obtained a new name and new behavior and personality traits reflective of his “superhelpers”. In like manner, modern Algonkian boys become much attached to certain superheroes on television. The name of their superhero becomes their new nickname and the behavior of the superhero is closely imitated.

Among the Algonkian, Granzberg says, dreaming is a method of communicating with distant points. Through dreaming, they know about the world, about things going on elsewhere and about events happening all around. Dreaming is also a method of conducting the future behavior. In like manner, the Algonkian turn to television to study the programs for omens, for dangers, and for directives concerning proper behavior pathways into the future.

Granzberg concludes from his research among the Algonkian that we cannot consider television to be a cross-culturally uniform phenomenon.

In his paper of 1982, Granzberg adds that analysis of economic, sociological, and psychological data reveals that outgroup identity and stress have increased since the arrival of television. Outgroup identity refers to an individual’s tendency to adjust behavior according to models presented by a group to which he or she does not belong. In the case of Algonkians, it refers largely to the tendency to model after the behavior of Euro-Canadians.

**Books and Dissertations**


   This is a collection of essays from the 1980s and 1990s. From this book, which media anthropologists often cite, I will only highlight his arguments about mass communication.

   He says that implicit in his book is a theory of ruptures that takes media and migration as its two major, and interconnected, diacritics. His interest is to explore their joint effect on imagination as a constitutive feature of modern subjectivity.

   Appadurai argues that electronic media decisively change the wider field of mass media and other traditional media because they offer new resources and new disciplines for the construction of imagined selves and imagined worlds. He says that this is a relational argument, adding that electronic media mark and reconstitute a much wider field, in which print mediation and other forms of oral, visual, and auditory mediation might continue to be important. In his thought, electronic media (whether associated with the news, politics, family life, or spectacular entertainment) tend to interrogate, subvert, and transform other contextual literacy. Therefore, he is interested in the ways in which electronic mediation transforms preexisting worlds of communication and conduct.
Electronic media, he thinks, give a new twist to the environment within which the modern and the global often appear, in his words, as other sides of the same coin. Always carrying the sense of distance between viewer and event, these media nevertheless compel the transformation of everyday discourse. At the same time, he argues, they are recourses for experiments with self-making in all sorts of societies, for all sorts of persons.

Appadurai’s argument is mainly the following.

a) Electronic media allow scripts for possible lives.

These lives follow the glamour of film stars, he says, and fantastic film plots and yet also to be tied to the plausibility of new shows, documentaries, and other black-and-white forms of telemediation and printed text.

b) Electronic media provide resources for self-imaging as an everyday social project.

He says that the central problem of today’s global interactions is the tension between cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization because of the sheer multiplicity of the forms in which they appear (cinema, television, computers, and telephones), and because of the rapid way in which they move through daily routines of life. In his words, a vast array of empirical facts could be brought to bear on the side of the homogenization argument, and much of it has come from the left end of the spectrum of media studies.

2. **Najwa Adra (1996) The “Other” as Viewer: Reception of Western and Arab Televised Representations in Rural Yemen** [in Crawford 1996]


Adra’s study describes initial audience reactions to televised messages in al-Ahjur, a small rural community in Yemen’s northern highlands. She says that one Wednesday in May, 1979 the first television transmitter was installed, and the residents borrowed the only television set in the valley to see if it worked. On Friday morning, the heads of ten families of this village of approximately 150 adults went into the capital, a two-hour drive away, to buy television sets which cost 300-500 US$ each. On Friday night, she says, village residents were all invited to watch TV in homes where sets had been installed. This pattern was repeated in villages all over the valley. By Saturday evening, most of al-Ahjur’s 4,000 residents had seen a television program, most of them for the first time. Some of these people had seen their first photographs only months earlier; the vast majority had never seen a film. Adra says that for a few weeks, television viewing was a nightly affair in which almost everybody participated. The previous evening’s TV programs became the main topic of conversation. Newborn children were named after television personalities of characters in television programs.

According to Adra, television broadcasting went from 4 p.m. to 11 p.m. Television programs included newscasts; religious readings and discussion; variety shows, including local comedy skits, comedies from other Arab countries and acrobatic displays; television dramas, both locally written and imported; American Westerns and police films (Kojak); documentaries on customs and activities in other parts of Yemen; music and poetry recital; and dancing from Yemen and elsewhere.

Adra says that the favorite genres were comedies and soap operas filmed in Yemen and other Arab countries, and displays of athletic and acrobatic skill from all over the world. Audiences enjoyed the series of lighthearted, locally produced, comic skits on injustices in the social system. Ahjuri audiences appreciatively discussed these short plays, Adra says, spoken in Yemeni dialect and set in familiar surroundings. During the month of Ramadan everyone watched dramatic serials produced in Kuwait about the epic heroism of the early Islamic period. She says that a drummed ceremony, traditionally announcing the last day of Ramadan, was ignored in favor of watching the last episode of this show.
Adra says that the initial impact of television in al-Ahjur was multi-faceted, ranging from appreciation and identification to rejection and censure. Rarely questioned were television’s benefits. The most important change was the ways that Ahjuris perceived themselves in relation to the outside world and relative to other Yemenis.

Radically altered were perceptions of the nature of the world outside Yemen. According to Adra, the first surprise was with the technological and architectural complexity of other countries. They were proud of their civilization but, after television, some began to question the adequacy of their own lifestyle. She says that superior to local knowledge were considered messages presented by experts on television. A new awareness of the distinctiveness of countries began to replace the tendency to dichotomize the world into Yemen and a homogeneous, foreign “other”. A country was characterized and judged by its television production. In addition, television content was judged by local standards of morality. For example, many viewers disapproved of the immodest clothing and overt expressions of sexuality seen on Egyptian soaps.

Adra argues that dissonance between the values of American producers as represented in televised images and Yemeni values, led to considerable misunderstanding and the formation of negative opinions about the United States. For example, in Yemen fantasies and emotions are expressed freely, but only at home or in other intimate contexts. Ahjuris could not imagine that Americans, Adra says, would be so unsophisticated as to publicize their fantasies. It followed, then, that what they saw on television must be an accurate reflection of life in the United States and that what they saw was the very best face America had to offer.

Adra says that among Yemenis, there are highly developed traditional mechanisms for averting violence. Conflict, while not repressed, is ideally kept under cover, to be dealt with quietly through mediation. Public confrontation is considered offensive. Yemenis do not share the Western concept that violence is a natural expression of people’s darker nature. Locally produced programs are more likely to be didactic or comic than sinister. It is, consequently, difficult for many Yemenis to appreciate much of the open conflict and unrestrained violence they see on TV.

Media portrayals of women, courtship behavior and sexual activity were also shocking to Yemenis. According to Adra, in rural Yemen, formal courtship is nonexistent and informal courting behavior is ignored. Legitimate sexual activity occurs in the intimacy of the bedroom. From this perspective, the idea that bedroom scenes could be televised is absurd.

Adra says that in United States, an individual’s primary responsibility is to self and the nuclear family. Responsibility to others is secondary. Yet, social responsibility is one of the most important values in Yemeni society. That an individual may not recognize his or her responsibility to society is incomprehensible; that producers of internationally aired televised programs may not consider people accountable for the morality or immorality of their programs consequently, is literally incredible.

Therefore, Adra explicitly asks: What happens when Western filmic representations are shown to people whose assumptions about human nature, intentionality and the nature of society are almost exactly opposite of those in the West?

Her answer is that initial reactions in al-Ahjur included confusion and rejection. Also damaging to images of the U.S. was the “export” of American prejudices. Adra says that Ahjuris asked her husband repeatedly if he was afraid of the violence of American blacks, because they have seen black criminals on television. Adra’s explanation is that the commercial media do not show high status, professional and wealthy dark skinned Americans. In addition, the prejudices of Yemenis from the northern highlands are not based on skin color but social status.

Finally, the reception of locally produced programs about life and about the government in Yemen itself was positive. Exposure to these resulted in increase knowledge of other parts of the country. Adra says these programs provided the rural population with recognition and visibility and helped forge a sense of unity with other Yemenis. Because they were so well understood, they could be criticized or imitated. Discussion centered on differences in dialect, music and economy. Similarities with Yemenis from other regions became part of daily conversation. Ahjuris began to define themselves as Yemeni nationals rather than as tribesmen.
Her conclusion is that perhaps the simultaneous exposure to clearly “foreign” and dissonant Western images helped cement such feelings of unity. She says that the central government in Yemen has gained the popularity it enjoys largely through the channel of television.


Allen says she was the first anthropologist to obtain a Ph.D. in Media Anthropology (University of Kansas). The chapters of this book give us a good idea of its purpose: the anthropologist as magazine writer, as editorial writer, as newspaper journalist, as trade book author, as television subject, as television journalist, as television producer and as radio producer.

Allen argues that media anthropology is a proposed new sub-discipline for both anthropology and the communications professions that synthesizes aspects of journalism and anthropology for the explicit purpose of sensitizing as many of Earth’s citizens as possible to anthropological or holistic perspectives. Because of this definition, the book is not relevant for my objectives.


Kottak asks in the beginning of the book why a cultural anthropologist, trained to study primitive societies, should be interested in television, which is the creation of a complex, industrial society. He develops three arguments as an answer. Before giving the arguments, Kottak says that he became interested in television because he saw that its effects are comparable to those of humanity’s most powerful traditional institutions –family, church, state, and education. According to him, television is creating new cultural experiences and meanings. It is capable of producing intense, often irrationally based, feelings of solidarity and *communitas* (“community feeling”) shared widely by people who have grown up within the same cultural tradition. He concludes that nothing so important to natives could long escape the eye of the anthropologist.

Kottak’s three arguments are the following:

a) New cultural patterns related to television’s penetration of the American home have emerged since the 1950s.
b) As technology, television affects collective behavior, as people duplicate, in many areas of their lives, habits developed while watching television.
c) Television content also influences mass culture because it provides widely shared common knowledge, beliefs, and expectations.

His technological argument is that the very habit of watching television has modified the behavior of Americans who have grown up with TV. Kottak has no scientific evidence to support this argument. He only relies on his experience as a professor. He says that televiewing causes people to duplicate inappropriately, in other areas of their lives, behavior styles developed while watching television. He says that anyone who has been to a house has seen examples of TV-conditioned behavior –teleconditioning. People talk, babies cry, members of the audience file in and out getting snacks and going to the bathroom. Students, Kottak says, act similarly in college courses. In the 1970s, isolated students sometimes did these kinds of things. What is new in the 1980s is a general behavior pattern, characteristic of a group rather than an individual. This cultural pattern is becoming increasingly pronounced, and Kottak links it directly to televiewing.

His next argument is that content affect behavior. Kottak says that culture consists of knowledge, beliefs, perceptions, attitudes, expectations, values, and patterns of behavior that people learn by growing up in a given society. Above all else, culture consists of shared learning. If television transmits new culture, then television changes behavior.

Finally, the book presents Kottak’s research in Brazil. I will not summarize it twice because appears in the beginning of this chapter.

SITE means Satellite Instructional Television Experiment, a direct broadcasting program for education and development, which the Indian government conducted from 1975 to 1976 in 2330 villages. The purposes were to improve the general primary education, provide teacher training, improve agricultural practices, health, hygiene and nutrition, contribute to family planning in villages, and promote national integration.

According to Agrawal, anthropologists in India have been working for several years in AIR (the Audience Research Unit of All India Radio). These anthropologists tend to work like audience research officers rather than anthropologists.

The government asked Agrawal to make an anthropological evaluation of SITE in 1977. The book was a methodological handbook of how to fulfil such a requirement. Unfortunately, the book does not mention the results of the evaluation or if the expected effects actually occurred. The book centers on how to choose villages, how to use the camera and tape recorder, how to take notes, how to collect data in the field, how to construct a village survey, what questions to ask and other methods and techniques needed to conduct such research. Field anthropologists wrote some chapters of the book, describing their experiences based on notebooks and diaries.

Agrawal thinks that anthropology can contribute to communication research in five ways. 1) The holistic view of the discipline understands television in the context of the whole society under study. 2) Anthropology follows a process analysis, which means a systemic perspective of culture where every element is related to another. 3) Through an emic approach, focusing on the native point of view instead of the external view. 4) Through a comparative perspective, and 5) Through participant observation.


This book is based on fieldwork from 1964 to 1966. A second visit took place in 1976. The perspective is grounded in the work of D. H. Hymes (1964) and E. R. Leach (1976). Therefore, this is not a book on mass communication but anthropological research of communication as understood in the early 1970s.

Wilder says that his study understands communication in a broad sense. He analyzes the patterns of rural modern Malaysian in terms of its communications networks, taking into account what he calls the whole range of the message-facilities of a Malay peasant village. His argument is that: a) social organization depends on a regular flow of messages between members of the constituent groups in society, and b) message-facilities in society are bound to be many and varied. c) Therefore, it is necessary to examine the whole broad spectrum of communications system in order to arrive at a concrete and comprehensive knowledge of the social structure.

This ethnography, taking the concept of communication as its backbone, is divided in the following chapters: History, Marriage, Kinship, Speaking, Mass Media, External Networks, Administration and Development, and Associations. In this sense, history is understood as communication, marriage is understood as communication, and so and so forth.

The chapter on mass communication is divided in the following sections: Modern Roads and Transport, Money, Literacy, and Radio. There is no mention of television. Wilder argues that each of the mass media he describes link the village to the country and the international community.

7. Edmund R. Leach (1976) *Culture and Communication: The Logic by which Symbols are Connected. An Introduction to the Use of Structuralist Analysis in Social Anthropology* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press]

This is not a book about mass communication, but it is relevant for the subject for two reasons. First, Leach postulates the thesis that culture communicates. He argues that the complex interconnectedness of cultural events itself conveys information to those who participate in those events. Therefore, anthropologists can decode the messages embedded in the complexities that they observe. The whole book uses a structuralist methodology (in the sense of C. Levi-Strauss) to accomplish that objective.

Second, attending to the index of the book is amazing to find out that the eighteen chapters describe part of the history of communication research. For example, ritual and communication (Carey), communication and rite of passage (Dayan & Katz), and communication and sacrifice (Marvin) are included. The first five chapters explain structuralism and the remaining chapters apply the method to ritual subjects.


This book is original. There has been no other anthropological book in the subject since Powdermaker. However, the book has acquired a sense of the context of anthropological research after World War II. Powdermaker applied the “National Character” anthropological school [see Chapter 5] to America, whereas Ruth Benedict applied the theory outside. That is the reason for the book’s title: Dream Factory. This theory is based upon psychoanalysis, Wallace and Malinowski’s psychological theory of culture.

Powdermaker’s argument is that movies meet human need for escape from his anxieties. They help assuage his loneliness. They give him vicarious experiences beyond his own activities. They portray solutions to problems. They provide models for human relationships, a set of values and new folk heroes. In one word, she has a psychological view of human needs satisfied by films.

She believes in indirect effects of films, in the sense we now called Agenda-setting research. (She does not use this vocabulary).

So original is the book that the first chapter starts with the question: why has an anthropologist studied Hollywood? The first reason she gives is that Hollywood can be understood in terms similar to any other community which anthropologists study. Hollywood residents are treated with the same respect that natives of other cultures.

The second reason is that the book tries to explain how the social system underlying the production of movies influences them. A social system is a complex coordinated network of mutually adapted patterns and ideas that control or influence the activities of its members. Therefore, the social system in which movies are made significantly influences their content and meaning.

Powdermaker asked what aspects of the system of production and which individuals most influenced movies. She studied the locus of power and its exercise, the taboos which circumscribe all production, the values as represented in goals, historical and economical factors, and the introduction of new technology and new ideas with resulting conflicts between old and new.

She argues that Hollywood is no mirror-like reflection of American society, which she says is characterized by a large number of conflicting patterns of behavior and values. Hollywood has emphasized some, to the exclusion of others. It is the particular elaboration which is important for study, concludes Powdermaker.

Finally, Powdermaker says that her fieldwork was conducted between July 1946 and August 1947, which was composed of 900 interviews covering every status in the community.
Taking consumption as the key cultural dynamic of Nepalese modernity, he says that the study examines how an increasingly consumer-oriented (and globally-inflected) cultural economy may transform the language, logic, and symbols through which people understand themselves and their society's social categories. According to my objectives, I will concentrate in the mass media content of his work.

Liechty says that although centrally concerned with media in everyday life, the study situates media within the processes of consumption, and the nature of consumer culture. He argues that the study presents media and other commodities as parts of large cultural assemblages that interact in vast, cross-referencing spheres of meaning. For example, young middle class women and men consciously fashion their lives after mediated images and personalities in magazines and films. Liechty’s argument is that people increasingly interpret their lives, locations, and systems of value through the ever-expanding frames of reference offered them in television and print media, cinema, international music, and the new realm of commodities from around the world.

Nepal television began in 1985. According to Liechty, the fact that television sets are still often called “screens” suggest that for many people the TV is primarily a machine for watching videos. He says that many people pointed out that in Kathmandu video technology made film viewing a truly mass phenomenon. He argues that although cinema halls had long been popular, video parlors, which were literally in private homes, allowed everyone—from infants to grandmothers—to watch an international smorgasbord of commercial cinema. Through the 1980s, more and more middle-class families acquired VCRs.

Significantly, in his opinion, cinematic entertainment for the middle class is not a “mass” experience (as opposed to working class). Whether watching video films alone or with small groups of family or friends, Liechty says that these people shun the mass emotions of the cinema hall in favor of the more individualistic freedoms and conveniences of home viewing.

While the family may watch a film together in the evening, just as often groups of women watch together during the slow hours of the early afternoon. He says that for many women in middle class homes—with husbands at work and children at school during much of the day—video viewing has become a regular feature of their daily routines.

Liechty was struck by how video viewing helps to stem the boredom of day-to-day existence in urban middle-class homes. He says that unlike women in rural farming areas, for whom there is a never ending supply of work to be done, or lower-class women in the city, who neither must work outside the home or cannot afford servants, the life of urban middle-class women is often one of more or less house-bound monotony. He describes how women in joint families often have each other for company, but with the arrival of the VCR, what they share is often video viewing, in which “time passes quickly”. Video technology thus serves, he says, as both a marker of middle-class homes, and—in the creation of routines—a focal point around which middle-class experience is constructed.

His conclusion about mass communication is that shared media experiences do not so much dictate what people will think about, but rather begin to shape the ways people think about their own lives. He says that when groups of people watch the same movie, rather than talking about the movie itself, they use the shared movie experience to talk about their own everyday experiences. Film becomes one source of frames, or mirrors, that people can use to evaluate or interpret their lives. At this point he cites Kottak’s work, interpreting it as demonstrating that as people’s daily lives become more and more deeply invested in media consumption, the narratives, narrative logics, and images of media serve more and more as interpretive resources for life, ways to make sense out of life, and eventually methods to interpret life. The power of realism, Liechty says, is not to make media images real, but to make reality an increasingly mediated experience.

Other dissertations in the subject are the following.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AUTHOR</th>
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<tr>
<td>Espinosa, Theodore Paul</td>
<td><strong>Text-Building in a Hollywood Television Series: An Ethnographic Study</strong>. Ph.D. dissertation. Stanford University. 1982.</td>
<td>Conceptualizing the television studio as an anthropological village, this ethnographic case study focuses on text-building activities occurring in the social activity of the story conference. The study gives emic descriptions of heroic figures, the media in which they were presented, and the use of those representations in social contexts among the third grade age group.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Miller, Levan Clifford</td>
<td><strong>Marginal Power: The Symbolic Operation of Popular Culture Heroic Figures among Third Grade Boys (Television, Fantasy, Play, Action-Figure, Cinema)</strong>. Ph.D. Dissertation. University of Oregon. 1985</td>
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5. Why Is Interest in Mass Media Anthropology Growing?

The fact that the 1996 Routledge Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology has an entry for “mass media” is an indicator of the growing interest in anthropology for the subject. Philip C. Salzman wrote the article, basing his analysis on Conrad Kottak [see Chapter 4] and Sara Dickey [see Chapter 1]. Salzman distinguishes traditional forms of mass media, the printed media, and the electronic media. About the first, he says that mass communication can be seen in traditional forms widespread for millennia, such as sermons, plays, town criers, musical concerts, and in the use of loud instruments such as drums or horns. Later, the development of printing made the written word into a medium of mass communication. However, he argues at the end of the twentieth century the reading of newspapers and books are limited considering the total world population. This situation changed with the electronic media, he says, because this medium is coded through the same human skills of speech and body movement that are characteristic of face-to-face communication. Salzman argues that television broadcasting is at the same time highly diverse and notably similar. It is diverse, he says, because media broadcasts travel and are transmitted across cultural boundaries. It is similar because they tend to come from industrial countries to non-industrial countries, from central regions to peripheral areas. In the same year, Salzman published The Electronic Trojan Horse: Television in the Globalization of Paramodern Cultures (Arizpe 1996). He became interested in television after his fieldwork with nomads in Africa, because they watched a lot. This essay is an invitation to anthropologists to study television. His argument arises from the fact that Tuareg nomads of the Sahara postponed a major migration in order to find out who had shot J. R., which is a compelling argument for anthropologists to study television. Finally, Salzman mentions the work of G. Granzberg (1977, 1982, 1985) and Liechty [1994] as relevant research.

The purpose of this chapter is to answer why anthropology exhibits this growing interest in mass media. In order to accomplish the objective, I will review three research traditions that I argue can help in the understanding of this growing interest. The histories of both anthropology and mass communication are brief. They have in common a starting point in World War II.

My first argument is that the “Culture at a Distance” school brought the mass media and nations into anthropology as objects of study. Second, nations and nationalism remained the most important political systems in the twentieth century, and anthropology participated in the study of them because of their effects on local cultures. Third, a new discipline grew up in this context: development anthropology. It shares the same interest of campaign studies: persuasion. Anthropology, under the guidance of modernization, is interested in cultural change on some nations, in the direction that modernity theory predicted. Campaign studies share the same interest, under the hypothesis of mass media’s powerful effects.

Briefly, World War II, nationalism and development are the antecedent conditions that provoked mass communication research within anthropology.

5.1 Studying Cultures at a Distance (World War II)

The institutionalization of anthropology within universities defined its role as a social science studying primitive people. This situation changed with World War II. At that time, the American Office of War Information asked Ruth Benedict to help understand enemy countries. Benedict’s work on Japanese-American communities, among other Columbia’s scholars, is important on many levels.

a) Methodologically, anthropologists could not rely on fieldwork for obvious reasons. Therefore, they invented methods to understand “culture at a distance”. They were able to interviewed migrants and captives, but other sources came onto the scene: novels, diaries, newspapers, films, and radio programs. In other words, the mass media.

In 1953, Margaret Mead and Rhoda Metraux published The Study of Culture at a Distance, dedicated “To Ruth Benedict who inaugurated Columbia University Research in Contemporary Cultures”. The introduction, written by Mead, is very clear about the purpose of the handbook.

“This Manual is concerned with methods that have been developed during the last decade for analyzing the cultural regularities in the characters of individuals who are members of societies which are inaccessible to direct observation” (Mead & Metraux 1953).
The structure of the book reflects this concern. One of the chapters is “Group Research”, which is a novelty for classical anthropology. Ethnographers used to work alone in the field, and monographs had one author. In this book, methods are developed for anthropologists to work together. Other chapters divergent from the tradition are “Written and Oral Literature” and “Film Analysis”. The chapters “Projective Tests” and “Imagery” reflect the theoretical approach of this school.

b) A new object of study appeared for anthropology: nations. Culture at a Distance conducted studies for Romania, the Netherlands, Germany, Thailand, and Japan. The last one is the most famous, because of the 1946 Benedict’s book *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword: Patterns of Japanese Culture*.

The book describes Japanese culture. The first chapter is a good description of the new problems that Benedict faced when studying Japan without fieldwork. I will highlight part of the *Acknowledgments*, which were very unusual for an anthropological book, but characterized the spirit of that time.

> “Japanese men and women who had born or educated in Japan and who were living in the United States during the war years were placed in a most difficult position. They were distrusted by many Americans. I take special pleasure, therefore, in testifying to their help and kindness during the time when I was gathering the material for this book. My thanks are due them in very special measure. I am especially grateful to my wartime colleague, Robert Hasima. Born in this country, brought up in Japan, he chose to return to the United States in 1941. He was interned in a war Relocation Camp, and I met him when he came to Washington to work in the war agencies of the United States” (Benedict 1946).

c) To study nations, the Culture at a Distance project walked from the Culture and Personality School, specifically on the national character concept. According to the 1997 Oxford Dictionary of Anthropology, national character refers to the basic personality structure or psychological pattern of the citizens of contemporary nation-states. This concept is based on the work of Anthony Wallace, the anthropologist from the University of Pennsylvania.

### 5.2 Anthropology and Nationalism

What remains from the national character school is the study object, not the theory. Anthropology has not abandoned its traditional object but added nations into its scope. If Ruth Benedict represents this interest in the 1940s, in the 1960s Clifford Geertz gave it a second wind with his book *Old Societies and New States*, and in the 1980s Ernest Gellner kept the area in movement with *Nations and Nationalism*. Geertz and Gellner have heavily influenced anthropologists to move into the study of nations. Although these anthropologists studied nations different from their own, the shifting interest in nations allowed anthropological research to focus on America and Western Europe. Through this shift, mass society came into anthropology and, with mass society, mass communication appeared on the scene.

The knowledge that anthropologists have produced in mass communication, and especially television, take nations as the unit of analysis. Even if the ethnography is conducted in a city or village, anthropologists are interested in the nation. In fact, a recurrent question is television’s effect on national identity. However, research on nationalism does not have to be understood as a unitary field of study. What nations and nationalism are remains an open question. In order to give a general framework for this research, I will review the following essays.

Anthony Smith (1994) says in *The Politics of Culture: Ethnicity and Nationalism* that although some scholars think nations and nationalism have always existed, most research argues for a modern origin of those concepts. Theoretically, there are two main approaches in this area: primordialism and instrumentalism. The first assumes that nationalist ties and sentiments are primordial and even natural. The strong form of primordialism holds that the ties themselves are universal. The weak form claims that members feel that their community has existed “from time immemorial”, and that its symbols and traditions possess a “deep antiquity”. Instrumentalism, in the other hand, understands nationalism as a resource to be mobilized, or an instrument to be employed, by particular groups in pursuit of further ends, usually of a political or economic nature. Anthropologists such as C. Geertz and E. Gellner, and scholars such as B. Anderson, follow the weak version of primordialism, whereas the anthropologist Peter Worsley (see below) follows the instrumentalist view.
Smith argues that neither primordialism nor instrumentalism offers a neutral or detached analysis. Strong primordialism supports a retrospective nationalism, which would treat some communities or groups as “nations” with “nationalist” movements and programs. Weak primordialism supports a modernist perspective, Smith says, that serves the interests of international intellectuals for whom nations constitute unwelcome barriers. This modernist view exaggerates the break between traditional and modern societies and the novelty of modern conditions. Instrumentalism, also, is clearly a critical way of thinking with a strong political view. Smith does not see any kind of theoretical consensus in the way that scholars understand nations and nationalism.

Smith's main argument is that nationalists create the nation, but they do so only within circumscribed boundaries and with the ethnic materials provided by previous generations within their community. Nations were not created from the nothingness, Smith says, but from a social stratum which he calls ethnic community or *ethnie*, i.e., a human group whose members share common myths of origin and descent, historical memories, cultural patterns and values, association with a particular territory, and a sense of solidarity, at least among the elites.

Smith says that nationalism signifies many things. What he calls the ideology of nationalism holds that:

a) The world consists of separate, identifiable nations, each with its peculiar character.

b) The nation is the sole legitimate source of political power.

c) Every individual must belong and owe supreme loyalty to one and only one nation.

d) Nations must be autonomous, for only then can global freedom and peace be assured.

To this “core doctrine”, Smith says, nationalists add their own secondary elaboration, which varies in every political context. Alongside with these ideas, he says, the symbols are in nations’ flags and anthems, memorials and monuments, parades and ceremonies, coins and insignia, capitals and assemblies, arts and crafts, music and dance.

Peter Worsley (1994) in *The Nation State, Colonial Expansion and the Contemporary World Order*, says that although the nation-based political system was consolidated in the 1880s, it was only after World War II that nations and nationalism took form in almost every place in the world. For example, seventeen African countries were born in 1960. The ideal of political autonomy, Worsley says, has less empirical support than nationalists would accept. Worsley prefers to use the term “semi-colonies” for most nations, especially Latin America and African countries, because historically the most important political system has been imperialism and colonialism. In fact, the relationship between colonialism and anthropology is so close that the discipline could be explained from this historical situation. Nations, he says, cannot avoid the fact that some countries have a better position because of the development of world history and capitalism. Even nations that followed the communist model of change during the 1990s into mixed systems with capitalism. Worsley concludes that we have to extend our perspectives and consider the historical transformations that modernity has produced in the world. Therefore, modernization and development is another important element of analysis.

**5.3 Anthropology and Development**

Another reason for the growing interest of anthropology in mass communication is the relationship between the discipline and development theory or modernity. As an example, the 1996 book about development and anthropology from UNESCO (*The Cultural Dimensions of Global Change: An Anthropological Approach*, edited by Lourdes Arizpe and including essays from names such as Fredrik Barth, Eric R. Wolf, and Maurice Godelier) has a chapter about television written by Philip C. Salzman.

Development is strongly related to nationalism as discussed before. I will present the argument of the anthropologist Jonathan Spencer as a general framework.

Spencer wrote the entry for modernity in the 1996 Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology. He argues that the history of anthropology could be read from the term *modern*, divided in four periods.
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<th>Key Word</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Before 1950</td>
<td>Modern</td>
<td>Anthropologists are modern people studying pre-modern cultures.</td>
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<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>1950-1960</td>
<td>Modernization</td>
<td>Colonialism is understood as an economic process under world modernization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>1960-1980</td>
<td>Modernism</td>
<td>Anthropology itself is understood as part of a broader intellectual movement in the West known as modernism.</td>
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<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>1980-1990</td>
<td>Modernity</td>
<td>The West is characterized by some social, cultural and intellectual features, which collectively may be called modernity. This condition could be investigated ethnographically like any other. Therefore, modernity is an ethnographic object, and the new objects of study are science, capitalism, consumption, and the mass media.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Consequently, the mass media appears as a new object of study to anthropology because of the theoretical shift from modern to modernity.

What is the name for the empirical research into modernity? The answer is development.

Alan Hoben (The Dictionary of Anthropology 1997) gives the next argument that helps to understand the “gaps” on mass media anthropological research. As we know, Ruth Benedict worked in the 1940s and 1950s with the mass media. During the 1960 and 1970s there is almost no research, which grows up from the 1980s to 1990s. Ruth Benedict (as well as Clifford Geertz decades later) worked for the government. However, anthropologists have had an ambivalent relationship with government-sponsored development. Hoben distinguishes four periods.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>1950s</td>
<td>Anthropologists were employed to facilitate the diffusion of improved technology by overcoming resistance to change grounded in traditional values, institutions, and practices. Scholars such as Goodenough and Mead wrote guidelines for community development, and anthropologists were placed in many aid-missions overseas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>1960s</td>
<td>Anthropologists largely abandoned the field and in the United States, virtually all anthropologists left the Agency for International Development (AID), which administered the largest development programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>1970s</td>
<td>New policy emphasized on delivering development assistance directly to the rural poor, and by the end of the decade scores of anthropologists were working in AID and other major development agencies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>1980s-1990s</td>
<td>Anthropologists became instrumental in the articulation of new development initiatives focusing on the environment and sustainable development.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Hoben’s argument, I can see a correlation between mass media studies and development projects. When anthropologists worked in the middle and later part of the twentieth-century in development agencies, studies on the mass media grew. In the opposite case (1960s and 1970s), the studies decreased.

Another way to understand the relationship between anthropology and development is attending a summary from J. Ferguson dividing the history of the discipline in two questions: How do primitives become modern? How could they be help (or made) to make this transition? The anthropologist James Ferguson (Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology 1996) says that the term “development anthropology” was coined only in the 1970s. (Its is important to highlight that “media anthropology” appeared at the same time. In fact, Eiselein understood his own work as “applied anthropology”). Ferguson says that from the 1970s the term development replaced or subsumed the anthropological studies of culture contact, acculturation and cultural change. However, as Ferguson points out, development anthropology has problems. Among them is the often unconnected communication between professional anthropologists and academic scholars, the sometimes strong Marxist approach polarizing research and policies, and more important, the need for a theory to explain development and produce successful effects.
In summary, I argue that it is justified a correlation between (a) the “Culture at a Distance” school in the context of the World War II, (b) the study of nations and nationalism influenced by Benedict (1940s), Geertz (1960s), and Gellner (1980s), (c) the professional work of anthropologists in development (from the 1950s to the 1990s), and (d) the mass media.

This situation could explain why anthropology did not come to mass communication before, because if we agree with the hypothesis that the mass media exist in every society and that anthropology was always theoretical and methodologically equipped to deal with them (Peck 1967, Eiselein 1976, Salzman 1996), then there is no epistemological reason to exclude mass communication from anthropology. Therefore, the reason could be found in the antecedents-conditions external to the discipline, which are in this case the World War II, nationalism, and development. Anthropology entered into mass communication as a reaction, not as a quest.
6. What Can Anthropology Contribute to Communication Research?

This chapter is about the use of anthropology by communication research. The main argument is simple: anthropological concepts and methods have been used by communication scholars both extensively and prior to the arrival of professional anthropologists into the field. Therefore, the question about the anthropological contribution to mass communication has a positive answer. Nevertheless, there is still the question if professional anthropologists could say something more or, in the best case, something communication scholars never saw before. An answer to this last question is trying in the next chapter. Meanwhile, anthropologists would be surprised to read in this section how well communication research has interpreted us and use our knowledge. In reading the following, I thought many times why we, as professional anthropologists, did not write it before.

The chapter’s structure consists of four parts. The first one starts with the 1975’s essay *A Cultural Approach to Communication* by James W. Carey. Perhaps this was not the first call for anthropological concepts, but certainly, it is an influential one. Then, I review the 1999 research by Carolyn Marvin in order to show the continuation of this call. The second part gives examples of the use of anthropology by communication scholars, centering on the book *Media Events*. The third part focuses on anthropological methods applied in communication research and, finally, the fourth part highlights concepts used and that could be used by mass media studies.

According to my objectives, I will concentrate in the text’s anthropological content. Therefore, the communication knowledge will be scarcely sketched.

6.1 Call for Anthropological Concepts

The reader do not have to be surprised if I return to the 1970s looking for some calls of anthropological concepts, because it is in this decade that began the manifest relationship between anthropology and mass communication. James W. Carey (1975) helped in this process, writing *A Cultural Approach to Communication*. As a communication scholar, he was able to relate a classical concept such as ritual and a new theory such as symbolic anthropology, and applied them to the definition of communication. From that time on, we distinguish the transmission view and the ritual view of communication (see appendix of this chapter for the argument).

However this is the first step, because Carey proposed an *approach*. What we have been waiting so long is a *theory*. Carey’s essay could be seen as an invitation to anthropology to contribute to mass communication. He gave the first step by creating the distinction based on anthropological concepts. While proving that this is possible, now we have to move on explaining why this is justified. Carey’s attempt went through hermeneutics. Nevertheless, thirty years later this research tradition within anthropology do not have a theory to propose in the area of mass communication. Manifest attempts have been made by Spitulnik (1998) and Michaels (1991), and latent ones by the 1990s research on national identity and television.

Interestingly, Pamela Landers (1974) made a similar call within anthropology using the concept of myth to understand American television (see summary in chapter 2 appendix). This is also an exploratory work, drawing what the time has proved to be a resourceful source of ideas (Marvin 1999, McLeod 1999, Rothenbuhler 1998, Katz 1989, Abeles 1988, Auge 1986). She approached the subject saying that the role of mythology could be the same that the role of prime time television in American life. What the essay invite us is to think a theory to justify this relationship.

The communication scholar Carolyn Marvin (1999) took the ritual view a step further in communication research. She argues that the mass media are a myth and ritual mechanism of American nationalism (see appendix of this chapter for a summary). Marvin was able to think the logical consequences of relating myth, ritual, and the mass media. Therefore, she has proved that we are justified in think about the relationship between anthropology and mass communication, by using classical concepts from the study of magic and religion.

So far, this situation shows there are reasons to believe in an ongoing program. Therefore, I think it is justified to say it. Now, I will concentrate in another communication scholar, Michael Schudson (1989), because he takes the main anthropological concept (culture) and applies it to the study of television.
Schudson is interested in the direct influence of cultural objects, i.e., whether exposure to certain symbols or messages in various media actually lead people to change how they think about the world or act in it. He argues that certain conditions of cultural objects may produce a change in a person’s behavior. In his words, sometimes culture works and sometimes it does not. The term “work” is understood here as “it produces a change in behavior”.

He identifies five conditions: retrievability, rhetorical force, resonance, institutional retention, and resolution. In his words, a cultural object is more powerful the more it is within reach (retrievability), the more it is rhetorically effective (rhetorical force), the more it resonates with existing opinions and structures (resonance), the more thoroughly it is retained in institutions (institutional retention), and the more highly resolved it is toward action (resolution).

This is a hypothesis waiting for an anthropological test. So far, anthropologists have ignored Shudson’s proposal. In my view, the most important condition to be explore by anthropology is what Shudson calls resonance. The first papers in mass media anthropology highlight the idea, which in my words can be described as the cultural conditions by which the mass media can found a place in a given culture because that culture had already a place for them. It sounds strange but it is not. Some other way to say it is that the mass media have to be relevant to the host culture, make sense or have meaning. The mass media do not come alongside with meaning but resonate in a given culture. It is the host culture that accepts or rejects the mass media. Some conditions in there make possible the relationship. Therefore, the mass media is cultural dependant on resonance conditions. The question is which are they.

In other to continue, I have presented a brief review of the call for anthropological concepts from communication research. Let us say something about empirical research.

### 6.2 Examples of Use of Anthropology in Communication

I will present the following examples describing briefly some research connecting anthropology and the mass media.


   I think the best example of use of anthropology in communication research. My argument is that the main concepts to explain this television genre and the whole perspective are anthropological. For example, the authors themselves say that conceptually speaking the book is an attempt to bring the anthropology of ceremony to bear on the process of mass communication. Supporting this idea they cite E. Durkheim, D. Handelman, C. Levi-Strauss, and V. Turner. The book’s main points are the following.

   1. Societies see themselves reflected, sometimes upside down, in their ceremonies.
   2. Media events are holidays that spotlight some central value or some aspect of collective memory.
      2.1. Often such events portray an idealized version of society, reminding society of what it aspires to be rather than what it is.
      2.2. The public must authenticate the portrait.
      2.3. Professional and independent broadcasters must authenticate the portrait in democratic societies.
   3. Certain media events celebrate not only unity but also pluralism.

Briefly, a media event is a television genre characterized by interruptions in the television viewing routine (it can be aired any day, imposing the event over the normal schedule), monopolistic (most, if not all, channels transmit the event), live (a media event happens outside the channel stations), organized outside the media (mostly by government agencies), preplanned (viewers know that the event is going to happen), broadcast with reverence and ceremony, asking for reconciliation, and electrifying very large audiences (sometimes the world). The marriage and the funeral of Princess Diana are media events, but not her death. The later fulfilled most of the characteristics, but fundamentally it was not preplanned (nobody knew that she was going to die). The marriage and the funeral were high holidays of mass communication, and fulfilled all the characteristics of media events. The main thesis is that social integration of the highest order is thus achieved via mass communication.
Dayan and Katz explicitly say that the subject of these broadcasts is ceremony, the sort which anthropologists would find familiar if it were not for the scale. According to my objectives, in what follows I will select some ideas in order to show the authors’ anthropological perspective.

For example, explaining the idea that television overcame distance, they say that “symbolically the medium serves as a continuer of the tradition which requires a young bride on her wedding day to distribute fragments of what she is wearing to the brides-to-be who surround her, in order to associate them, by some sort of magical contagion, with the mana which inhabits her on that day. Instead of fragments of her veil, Lady Di circulated television images of the dress, thereby offering to share her good luck with all the maidens of England. Television overcame distance, performing as a medium of physical contiguity” (page 99).

Anthropologists can see the knowledge of magic applying, in the previous example, to the circulation of television images. The authors also say that television organizes the circumstances of viewing, surrounding the event with other programs –before and after– which make the event appear as the only important reality. Thus, television submits its spectators to a complex rite of passage, subverting the usual definition of what is important, real or serious.

Maybe some anthropologists would be struck by the use of the concept rite of passage, because its usual context is the passing of an individual or a community unmediated by television. Nevertheless, the concept has an important use in Dayan and Katz. For example, they say, “we have tried to show how television superimposed its own rite de passage upon the ritual contained in the event. How, within the construct of liminality, it had the essential responsibility of constituting the limen” (page 108).

As the authors explicitly say, the concept rite de passage is borrowed from A. Van Gennep, liminality from V. Tuner. The interesting point here is the novel use of the concepts. Something that, as far as I know, anthropologists never saw before. Dayan and Katz say that “ceremonies are turning into fiction texts, and fiction texts are consumed in an increasingly ceremonial fashion. Turner’s description of liminality as a laboratory of forms is directly to the point. It is indeed through liminality, either in its subjunctive form (media events) or in its carnivalesque form (cult movies), that a new type of public event may be entering our lives” (page 117).

As a summary, the authors say, “media events are rituals of coming and going. The principals maybe ritual entries into a sacred place, and if fortune smiles on them they make ritual returns. The elementary process underlying these dramatics forms is the rite de passage, consisting of a ritual of separation, of entry into a liminal period of trials and teachings, and return to normal society, often in a newly assumed role (Van Gennep, 1909). Such liminal periods, according to Turner (1977), evoke the subjunctive –thoughts of what is, or what should be, rather than what is. No less than the principals, we—the witnesses to these events—traverse the same ritual stages” (page 119).

Seeing mass communications as rituals is something that, I think, most anthropologists would find justified. However, Dayan and Katz add something more from the previous quotation. The media event’s mechanism is the rite of passage. Therefore, the authors’ main argument is anthropological.

Finally, they also have an anthropological theory of change. “It is correct to regard most media events—no less than the traditional ceremonies studied by anthropologists— as ‘reinforcing’ or ‘hegemonic’, in the sense that they remind societies to renew their commitments to established values, offices, and persons. (...) However, certain media events serve as harbingers of change. (...) We demonstrate how the ceremonial broadcast of a proposed change can, under certain conditions, actually induce such change. The process is reminiscent of what is called symbolic efficacy by anthropologists in their analyses of shamanic healings and transformations (Levi-Strauss 1963). Responding to the subjunctive moment when viewers of such events become converts, at least for the moment, to a new definition of the possible, the ceremonial leader, now endowed with the feedback of charisma, urges a next step” (page 147).

Another classical anthropologist is used as an argument, the French Levi-Strauss. This time his theory of symbolic efficacy helps in understanding change. In this example, as the others, Dayan and Katz take a theoretical corpus developed to understand primitive societies into the contemporary world of television.
Liebes and Katz say that the name *Dallas* in the 1980s became a metaphor for the conquest of the world by an American television serial. *Dallas* meant an international congregation of viewers (one of the largest in history), gathered once weekly to follow the saga of the Ewing dynasty—their interpersonal relations and business affairs.

They propose three reasons for the worldwide success of American television.

i. The universality, or primordiality, of some of the themes and formulae, which makes programs psychologically accessible to people.

ii. The polyvalent or open potential of many of the stories, and thus their value as projective mechanisms and as material for negotiation and play in the families of man.

iii. The sheer availability of American programs in a marketplace where national producers cannot fill more than a fraction of the hours they feel they must provide.

From this standpoint, Liebes and Katz ask how in the world is a program like Dallas so universally understandable, or is it not? Is it understood in the same way in different places? Does it evoke different kinds of involvement and response? They say that mesmerized by the pervasiveness of American television programs, media professionals, including researchers, assume blithely that everybody understands them in the same way. Critical studies of the diffusion of American television programs overseas have labeled this process “cultural imperialism” as if there were no questions but that the hegemonic message the analyst discerns in the text is transferred to the defenseless minds of viewers the world over for the self-serving interests of the economy and ideology of the exporting country. In other words, theorists of cultural imperialism assume that hegemony is prepackaged in Los Angeles, shipped out to the global village, and unwrapped in innocent minds.

To prove that Dallas is an imperialistic imposition, Liebes and Katz say one would have to show:

(a) That there is a message implied in the program that is designed to profit American interests overseas.

(b) That the message is decoded by the receiver in the way it was encoded by the sender.

(c) That it is accepted uncritically by the viewers and allowed to seep into their culture.

Even supposing (a) is true, they say their interest is in what message reaches the viewers. They argue that ideology is not produced through a process of stimulus and response but rather through a process of negotiation between various types of senders and receivers. In the case of Dallas, the challenge is to observe how the melodrama of a fictional family in Texas is viewed, interpreted, and discussed by real families throughout the world, in the light of the drama of their own lives and of those of the fictional and real “others” who they have come to know through symbolic culture and actual community. In other words, they understand their book as an exercise in the study of viewer involvement in the process of consuming television.

Liebes and Katz’s starting point is Dallas in Israel. The same as with Germans, English, Danes, and Algerians, Dallas fascinated the Israelis. They say the ethnic composition of Israel provided an opportunity to examine their assumption that meaning emerges from negotiation, that is, that understanding, interpretation, and involvement vary as a function of the interaction between the symbolic resources of the viewer and the symbolic offerings of the text.

Methodologically, they assembled small groups of families and friends, each group consisting of three married couples of similar age, education, and ethnicity. Forty-four such groups were chosen from among Israeli Arabs, newly arrived Russian Jews, veteran Moroccan settlers, and members of kibbutzim. The Israeli groups were matched with ten groups of second-generation Americans in the Los Angeles area in order to compare the Israeli readings not only among themselves but also with those of viewers who share the culture of the producers. Later, eleven Japanese groups were selected and interviewed in the same way.

**Cultural Differences in the Retelling of an Episode.** The focus discussions opened with a request to the group to retell the episode that had just been broadcasted. They argue that if understanding is a process of negotiation between the text and the viewer, each anchored in a different culture, then retelling ought to reveal the negotiation
process at work. And if the model of negotiation is correct, attention should be paid to what viewers bring to the program, not only to how they use it or what they get from it.

Retelling by Ethnic Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Ethnic Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Linear</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Arabs, Moroccan Jews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Segmented</td>
<td>Character</td>
<td>Americans, kibbutzniks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thematic</td>
<td>Message</td>
<td>Russians</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Liebes and Katz arrive at the conclusion that the two more traditional groups (Arabs and Moroccan Jews) prefer linearity. They tell the story in closed form as if it were an inevitable progression, and the characters they describe are rigidly stereotyped; indeed, they are often referred to by role –family role– rather than by name. The Russians speak of the episode in terms of themes or messages. They ignore the story in favor of exposing the overall principles which they perceive as repeated relentlessly, and which, in their opinion, have a manipulative intent. While the Russians invoke “ideological” theory, Americans and kibbutzniks tell the story “psychoanalytically”. They are not concerned with the linearity of the narrative but with analyzing the problems of characters intrapersonally and interpersonally. Their retellings are open, future-oriented, and take into account the never-ending quality of the soap-opera genre.

Mutual Aid in the Decoding of Dallas. This argument deals with the steps through which television programs achieve legitimacy within the culture of the group. They argue that the first step is the operation of mutual aid in legitimating understandings, interpretations, and evaluations (moral and aesthetic) of what the program means, indeed in giving approval to the very fact of viewing and discussing the program. A second step draws on these agreed meanings to promote other conversations.

The Ethnic Context of Mutual Aid (in percentages)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>American</th>
<th>Moroccan</th>
<th>Arab</th>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>Kibbutz</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretation</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Orientation means a social interaction that helps define what happens on the screen by filling in gaps in the plot or by identifying characters in the thick foliage of the Ewing family tree. Interpretation offers help to fellow group members who need an explanation or who find interest in why something has happened or why a character has behaved in a certain way. Evaluation (moral, aesthetic, ideological) means that certain members in a group may think well of the outcome of an issue raised in the program, while others disagree. Thus, groups sit in judgment of the values of the characters through the marshaling of their own values to evaluate or censure.

Referential Reading. The referential connects the program and real life. Viewers relate to characters as real people and in turn relate these real people to their own real worlds. The critical frames discussions of the program as a fictional construction with aesthetics rules.

Statements in Referential and Critical Frames (in percentages)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Americans</th>
<th>Moroccans</th>
<th>Arabs</th>
<th>Russians</th>
<th>Kibbutz</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Critical</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referential</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Liebes and Katz arrive at the conclusion that most statements in all groups are based on perception of the program as real. Although the Russians are more critical, invoking most meta–textual references, Russians are not so lighthearted about the program; they seem to take it very seriously at both the referential and the critical level.
The Japanese Case. Why did the Japanese reject the Ewings when so many other nations welcomed them so enthusiastically? Liebes and Katz say that the Japanese focus groups point to inconsistencies and incompatibilities that trouble them. For example, Japanese ask: If Bobby and Pam elope, how can they return to the parental ranch immediately after the honeymoon fully expecting to rejoin the extended family? If they are so rich, how is it that they set the table by themselves and why do not they have private tutors for their children? Although it describes family, how is it there is no love or sympathy? In addition, Japanese viewers feel frustrated over the incompatibility between Dallas and the kind of home drama they want and have learned to expect from television. For example, there is resentment that the episode is not complete in itself and does not end on a harmonious way.

Liebes and Katz argue that they have tried to show how Dallas invites very different kinds of viewers to become involved in their several ways. Nevertheless, what is it about a program like Dallas that makes this kind of multidimensional participation possible? They argue that two concepts could help to solve this problem: primordiality and seriality. Dallas is a primordial tale, echoing the most fundamental mythologies, and we are connoisseurs not just of the situation but also of these very people who visit us so regularly. In other words, primordiality evokes in the viewer an echo of the human experience and makes him/her an instant connoisseur of the Dallas variations on the elementary forms of kinship and interpersonal relations. Seriality is an obvious invitation to involvement in the regular visits of familiar characters, in the gossip of anticipation, and in discovering the rules of the game of the producer.

Finally, attending to the references in mass media anthropology, they cite Duree Ahmed 1983 “Television in Pakistan: An Ethnographic Study” (Ph.D. dissertation Columbia University). They also cite anthropologists such as Benedict, Levi-Strauss, Mead, and Turner.


The paper’s idea is very simple, and because of that powerful. They take Richard Fox’s book *Kinship and Marriage* (1967), and apply this knowledge to the American and British soap opera. In anthropological books we usually find kinship diagrams explaining the structure of some indigenous society. This time, the culture is a television serial.

They have as a general objective to discover the social boundaries within which primordial relationships are negotiated or fought over in a particular culture. To accomplish this objective, they ask if the soap operas’ kinship structure could help to understand the relationship between culture, power, genre, and gender. They work first as any anthropologist, drawing charts of the complex kinship structure of family and romance of soap opera characters. Then, they observe how this structure is activated in the narrative and how it is revealed in the everyday lives of the characters.

Liebes and Livingstone argue that the structure of familial and romantic ties does not directly reflect social reality but that it reproduces the culturally acceptable ways raising fundamental issues with which the society is struggling.

Their analysis shows two very different structures of romantic and family ties.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>American</th>
<th>British</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Private life. Conversations occur either at home or in restaurants and nightclubs.</td>
<td>• Public life. Most characters are related through their common membership in the local community: pub, launderette, shops, and cafes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Based on a dyad, which blurs the boundaries of families and works to destroy these families from within.</td>
<td>• Based on a community, which preserves the discrete boundaries of family but constitutes it as a trap against power and mobility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Focusing on middle-class or upper class characters promotes individualism and romance, with the consequence of sacrificing community and mothering, and of denying the cycle of life. All characters are placed in a stretched, one-generational space in which the mothers and daughters are interchangeable (and may compete for the same men) and the elderly</td>
<td>• Located in a somewhat romanticized lower middle or working class context, promotes motherhood, although mothers are not necessarily biological, and may be taken up by surrogate mothers in the community. Motherhood makes for centrality in the community and for sisterhood among women,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and the children are pushed out. The narrative proceeds as a game of changing partners. but husbands are weak or non-existent, and the family is impotent in terms of generating change of female emancipation.

They conclude that, ironically, in Durkheimian terms, the differentiation and the interdependence of “organic solidarity” apply to the British serials, whereas the “mechanical solidarity” of similarity and interchangeability applies to the American.


I do not pretend to be exhausted with the use of anthropology by communication research. As a final example, I will concentrate in one journal, Progress in Communication Research Sciences, searching articles with anthropological content. The reason to choose this journal is the volume’s small numbers, which allowed me to browse it completely, and his theoretical orientation.

Breen and Corcoran say that during the 1970s, an alternative paradigm began taking shape, in contrast to behavioral science, using the concept of culture as a key word. Citing C. Geertz, they argue that culture is understood as a symbolic container, a system of meanings, in which reality is constructed, maintained, and transformed. Citing Carey, Breen and Corcoran say that if a transportation view of communication focused on the extension of messages through space from sender to receiver for purposes of persuasion or attitude change or behavior modification (“having an effect”), a cultural studies perspective centered on processes through which a shared culture is maintained in time through the celebrations of shared beliefs.

They argue this shift has moved media theory away from behaviorist psychology and opened it up to some of the insights of cultural anthropology. They propose that message producers and their audiences now subsume into a “meaning grid” shared attitudes and values, in which fantasy, myth, and ideology play a role. All this research movement –the rapprochement with anthropology, the interest in culture as meaning system, the exploration of public fantasies, the influence of European thinkers, and the analysis of symbolic convergence– represents a profound changed in orientation which is becoming increasingly important in America.


This pair of concepts is widely associated with anthropology, although they come from linguistics. Hall does not develop a theoretical framework for communication research. Instead, the basic argument in Hall’s paper is that the real value of the etic-emic distinction lies in its observational foundations which urge an awareness on the part of all social and behavioral scientists that they are as much observers and interpreters of the human condition as are those humans who are the usual target of our observations.


They say that the impact of mass media on ethnic groups has virtually been ignored by researchers, however (…) the essential mechanism by which mass media can affect ethnic groups over the long run is through affecting the assimilation and/or acculturation process or maintenance of ethnicity. Thus, the differential functioning of mass media, particularly between ethnic media and general media, has yet to be considered in this process. They say that we can only expect at this point that ethnic mass communication would tend to strengthen intragroup links, while general mass communication would strengthen intergroup links while weakening intragroup links.

Therefore, not only the theme (ethnicity) is anthropological, but also the acculturation theory is used to explain the impact of mass media in ethnic groups. During the 1990s, this theme was not developed in anthropological journals.
This paper argues for the close relationship between anthropology, hermeneutics and communication. The authors point to Dell Hymes as the founder of this perspective. They say the “ethnography of communication” is a parallel term for students of culture who view speech as a culturally variable process and as the medium in which human association is constituted. In addition, they say, scholars of hermeneutics and ethnography share the conviction that communicative meanings are deeply implicated in specific historical and cultural situations, and that situated communication is not only reproductive but also productive of common meanings.

6.3 Anthropological Methods that Might Prove Useful

If communication scholars have been using anthropological concepts, it is not surprising they also use anthropological methods. Before the anthropologist B. Malinowski in the 1920s (to put an example), the discipline relied on sources such as travelers’ descriptions, official reports or missionary writings. Since Malinowski, observation is the principal fieldwork activity in our field. It means that the primary source of information is the researcher’s own experience, because the anthropologist goes to the culture and lives there for a while. The observation could be direct, in which the ethnographer is there to register some activity, or participant, in which the anthropologist actively is engaged in the activity under observation. Anthropologists also talk with people, draw kinship diagrams and make quantitative research in the population is large. In the 1980s and 1990s, anthropological methods were not that different from other social sciences. Nevertheless, fieldwork observation is a classical component in ethnographical research.

In what follows I will present some examples to show the methods with a brief summary of the research in which they are involved.


This book is a collection of six essays from his research in the 1980s. Lull says that he came to anthropological methods by reading Harold Garfinkel (1967) *Studies in Ethnomethodology* and Oscar Lewis (1959) *Five Families*.

From 1980 is the paper **The Social Uses of Television**. During his Ph.D. research, he used ethnography (this is perhaps one of the first cases in communication studies) to give evidence in support of a typology derived from a review of the major finding in the Uses and Gratifications literature and from ethnographic data collected at the University of Wisconsin and the University of California.

The next chart displays his conclusions, which communication scholars know well.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Uses of Television (Lull 1980)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Structural</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background noise; companionship; entertainment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punctuation of time and activity; talk patterns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relational</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication facilitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience illustration; common ground; conversational entrance; anxiety reduction; agenda for talk; value clarification.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affiliation/avoidance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical, verbal contact/neglect; family solidarity; family relaxant; conflict reduction; relationship maintenance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision-making; behavior modeling; problem solving; value transmission; legitimization; information dissemination; substitute schooling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence/dominance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role enactment; role reinforcement, substitute role portrayal; intellectual validation; authority exercise; gatekeeping; argument facilitation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From 1982 is the paper *How Families Select Television Programs: A Mass-Observational Study*. For this study, he trained 100 students as participant observers, spending two days with families which were randomly assigned to them and returning a third day to conduct interviews with each family member. Observers spent two consecutive late afternoons and evenings with the families to which they were assigned. They ate dinner with the families and generally took part in all their activities.

Among his findings, he says that fathers had more perceived and actual control of the selection of television programs than any other individual in the family. Mothers were the least influential family member in this regard. About three-fourths of all program selections were made by one person and took place with little or no discussion or negotiation.

Others examples of anthropological methods used by communication scholars are the following. These examples only give support to the idea that anthropological methods have contributed to mass media studies. The list is not meant to be exhaustive.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author/s</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liebes, Tamar and Sonia</td>
<td><em>The Structure of Family and Romantic Ties in the Soap Opera: An Ethnographic Approach</em></td>
<td>Kinship diagrams and analysis applied to American and British soap opera.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livingstone</td>
<td>[Communication Research 21(6), 717-741]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morley, David</td>
<td>The Nationwide Audience: Structure and Decoding. 1980. London: British Film Institute</td>
<td>Use of ethnographic research methods to question assumptions about media power over its audience.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.4 Anthropological Concepts that Might Be Useful

Taking into account both communication and ethnographical research; scholars have been using anthropological concepts but not a theory for mass media developed within anthropology. The concepts appearing with more frequency are acculturation, diffusion and ritual. Anthropologists use mainly the first concept, communication scholars the third, and both the second concept. Anthropology from the 1980s and 1990s has been using hermeneutics terminology, European thought, and obviously classical concepts.

Assimilation

In the anthropological literature, this concept is associated with both acculturation and diffusion.

Richard Thompson (Encyclopedia of Cultural Anthropology 1996) says that assimilation is the process by which individuals of a foreign or minority culture enter the social positions of the standard or dominant culture in which they reside. Although assimilation is a process experienced by individuals, it has been often studied in its sociological aspects with an emphasis on the assimilation rates of immigrant and minority groups.

Thompson says that from the point of view of assimilation, acculturation is defined as the process by which individuals of foreign or minority cultures learn the language, habits, and values of the standard or dominant culture in which they reside. Acculturation is a cultural process, whereas assimilation is a social process.

Thompson summarizes four cross-cultural generalizations of assimilation studies.

a) Dominant cultures exert pressure or force minorities and foreigners to acculturate and assimilate.

b) Acculturation is a necessary condition for assimilation, but it is not sufficient. A dominant society may erect barriers to integration.

c) Acculturation and assimilation are processes of homogenization. They produce changes in the direction of the dominant culture rather than creating a “melting pot” culture blended for numerous and different foreign cultures.

d) There is a close relationship between age and assimilation.

Thompson says that during the 1940s and 1950s the modernist creed of assimilation thought to be a progressive and universal process. During the 1980s and 1990s postmodernist skepticism questioned both as a process and as an ideal.

Acculturation

In 1936, a special committee of the Social Science Research Council wrote a memorandum for the study of acculturation. The document was published in American Anthropologist [Vol. 38, 149-152] by Robert Redfield, Ralph Linton, and Melville Herskovits. It says that “acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups. Under this definition [it continuous], acculturation is to be distinguished from culture-change, of which it is but one aspect, and assimilation, which is at times a phase of acculturation. It is also to be differentiated from diffusion, which, while occurring in all instances of acculturation, is not only a phenomenon which frequently takes place without the occurrence of the type of contact between peoples specified in the definition given above, but it constitutes only one aspect of the process of acculturation”.

According to Thomas Glick (The Dictionary of Anthropology 1997), acculturation is the process of culture change set in motion by the meeting of two autonomous cultural systems, resulting in an increase of similarity of each to the other. It presents the following characteristics.

a) The donor culture may not present the full range of its cultural elements, and the recipient culture’s own value system may act to screen out or modify certain elements.

b) Acculturation may also be sharply socially structured, as in the case of conquest or other situations of social or political inequality, which channel the flow of cultural elements.
c) The range of adjustments that results includes the retention of substantial cultural autonomy or, more typically, the assimilation of a weaker by a stronger contacting group, and (though rarely) cultural fusion, whereby two cultures may exchange enough elements to produce a distinctive successor culture.

d) Inasmuch as acculturation involves the interaction of two or more distinct groups, social interaction among them strongly conditions the outcome. The extreme social pressure attendant upon conquest, for example, may prove effective in breaking down the mechanisms by which the conquered group has maintained its culture. In other cases, a high degree of enclosure may preserve a politically weak culture in spite of seemingly overwhelming odds. Furthermore, the lessening of culture distance (acculturation) may not be accompanied by a symmetrical lessening of social distance (assimilation) if, for whatever reason, one group refuses to validate the other’s acculturation.

Philip Bock (Encyclopedia of Cultural Anthropology 1996) says that acculturation was the name given to investigations of the impact of dominant (colonial) societies on native cultures under conditions of sustained, first-hand contact. Bock says that the typical study sympathetically examined Native Americans and Canadians who had been confined to reservations, their language and traditions suppressed, forced to adopt Anglo-American customs. From a historical point, Bock says that various types and degrees of acculturation were recognized, and some interesting hypothesis (e.g., about early learning and resistance to external pressure) were formulated, but by the 1960s even experienced practitioners of acculturation research came to view it as one-sided. Bock gives as example George and Lovise Spindler, who had described patterns of acculturation among the Menomini, but came to feel that they had portrayed native peoples as passive recipients, whereas they actually played an active, dynamic role in shaping cultural interactions.

Diffusion

Thomas Glick (The Dictionary of Anthropology 1997) says that diffusion is the transmission of elements from one culture to another. Such elements, he says, are transmitted by agents using identifiable media and are subject to different barrier or filter effects. It is one of the processes of acculturation but may lack the close contact between peoples that acculturation presupposes. Within this concept, Glick differentiates two other terms:

a) Diffusionism refers to any learned hypothesis that posits an exogenous origin for most elements of a specific culture or cultural subject.
b) Stimulus diffusion is a concept elaborated by A. L. Kroeber to describe the reinvention of an element transmitted across a social or cultural barrier to bring it into congruence with the values of the recipient culture.

Diffusionism is an anthropological school from the late nineteenth century, centered in the debate over the independent origin of social institutions or the practice of borrowing knowledge through contact. The basic problem was to explain why the family, for example, was founded in every society anthropologists came to study.

Henrika Kuklick (Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology 1996) says that by the World War II era, the question of independent invention versus diffusion had been rendered nonsensical in sociocultural anthropology: either it was irrelevant to explanation of the dynamics of social life or it represented a false dichotomy.

Peter Hugill (Encyclopedia of Cultural Anthropology 1996) says that in the 1980s and 1990s work on the practical side of diffusion has stressed the importance of the adoption environment. In this model, Hugill says, diffusion occurs only to willing receivers rather than to all potential receivers by contagion. Thus, what makes a person or group willing or able to receive an innovation is important. Hugill says that also has been noted the problem of the believable sender, because not all messages will be received (only those that emanate from sources with appropriate status).

Diffusion and Mass Media Studies

Perhaps among the most important works in this area are Katz (1963) and Rogers (1971).

Elihu Katz wrote with M. Levin and H. Hamilton “Traditions of Research on the Diffusion of Innovation” [American Sociological Review 1963 28(2), 237-252]. In this paper, they define the process of diffusion as (1) the acceptance, (2) over time, (3) of some specific item—an idea or practice, (4) by individuals, groups or other adopting
units, linked to (5) specific channels of communication, (6) to a social structure, and (7) to a given system of values, or culture. Among the purposes of this essay, the authors want to unified an area of research which had been developed independently by anthropology, rural sociology, education, public health, marketing researchers, and folklorists.

So far, anthropology had made an important contribution to communication studies by developing the concept of diffusion. Nevertheless, anthropologists abandoned the field and they never developed an approach to mass communication from the point of view of diffusion. According to Katz, maybe anthropologists moved to acculturation studies and sociologists moved to radio studies.

What is the difference between acculturation and diffusion studies? According to Katz, diffusion focus is on the processes of communication of change, while acculturation focus is on the social and cultural consequences of change. In other words, the former concerns itself with adaptive responses to contact and the later with the transmission of items between groups. Therefore, from the point of view of media studies, diffusion is more interesting than acculturation. Another differences are the following:

### Acculturation
- Focus is on the processes of communication of change.
- Emphasis on ongoing situations of intergroup contact.
- Study of patterns of culture traits.
- Study of pairs of interacting societies.

### Diffusion
- Focus in on the social and cultural consequences of change.
- Emphasis on historical situations of intergroup contact.
- Study of single items of culture traits.
- Study of longer chains of connected groups.

Everett Rogers published in 1971 “Communication of Innovations: A cross-cultural approach” [New York: The Free Press]. This book summarizes the research of 1,500 diffusion publications. It is important because it understands diffusion as a special type of communication, concerned with the spread of messages that are new ideas. Rogers says that the main elements in the diffusion of new ideas are the (1) innovation, (2) which is communicated through certain channels, (3) over time, (4) among the members of a social system. Among the generalizations supported by the publications, he argues that the mass media channels, he argues, are more effective in creating knowledge of innovations, whereas interpersonal channels are more effective in forming and changing attitudes toward the new idea.

**Anthropology, Diffusion and the Mass Media**

What about anthropology? Maybe the closest relationship between diffusion and the mass media within anthropology has been the study of the talking–drum.

If we agree with the thesis that the mass media are able to be found in all kind of societies (see Chapter 5), then we can study some of their manifestations. In order to do that, I looked into the HRAF Database, which is an acronym for Human Relations Area Files, a non–profit institution founded in 1949 at Yale University. This database indexes one of the most important collections of ethnographies all over the world. Under the section of communication, it codes (a) gestures and sings, (b) transmission of messages, (c) dissemination of news and information, (d) press, (e) mail, (f) telephone and telegraph, (g) radio and television, (h) public opinion, (i) proxemics, and (j) internet communications. The description of transmission of messages says that this category is used for to index information on the technologically simple transmission of messages. The category includes information on signalling devices (e.g., fire, smoke, blinker, semaphore); signal codes (e.g., drum language, flag codes, Morse code); cryptography; use of carrier birds and animals; messenger and human courier systems; etc. The matches here are 473 publications, which include the Sinhalese (South Asia), Maasai (East Africa), Pawnee (Central North America, Aranda (Australia), Ona (South America), etc.

Among this wide variety of media and cultures, perhaps the best known example is the talking–drum.

The communication scholar Yael Warshel (1999), argues that the talking–drum is a media often neglected comparing to the telegraph. Nevertheless, she says, the talking–drums should be recognized for their early achievements in time and space conquest, their ability to overcome the burden of language, and most important, for
the strategic aspect of communication they enabled/hid. Public communication, for example, she says, without the aid of the drum to communicate across far reaches of space, the Ashanti empire would not have been able to sustain control for as long as it did.

The anthropologist Helen Marie Hogan (1968), studying extensively the components of communicative acts among the Ashanti, describes different media used by the Ashanti for announcing public summonses: gong, hoe, speaking horn, signal drum, talking drum, and even guns. In this example, the goals varies from to assemble all the people, to assemble women, elders, to inform people of chief’s approach, to invite people to palace for meal, or to inform people of important person’s funeral. This is one case, but it is a good example of the role of the mass media in an ethnographic context.

These scholars support the thesis that anthropology can further bring some insights into the study of mass communication. Therefore, there is a lot much to do.

**Anthropology, Acculturation and the Mass Media**

Acculturation (also diffusion and assimilation) has a strong relationship with persuasion research. I think the persuasion school would be interested in the concept because of the question of whether the mass media have a direct influence on individuals. I will develop an argument liking acculturation and persuasion research, but communication scholars will be disappointed with the anthropological answer. The reason is that there is no theory explaining what to do in order to successfully introduce an element from one culture to another. Briefly, I argue that acculturation research is politically oriented, which is a direct interest of campaign studies.

According to the anthropological literature, acculturation, diffusion, and assimilation deal with the broader perspective of cultural change. Anthropology as a discipline has a long history in the subject of cultural change, which during the late nineteenth-century was guided by evolutionism, in the early twentieth-century by colonialism and in the late twentieth-century by modernism. I argue that these perspectives have in common the assumption that the world is divided between *We* (the evolutionist, the Empire, the modernist) and *Others*. The strong form of evolutionism implies that European society is on the upper step of the evolutionary ladder. The weak form implies that all societies are equal but some are in different stages compare to others. Being in a different stage explains the differences between societies. Colonialism implies the distinction between the colony and the state, nation or empire which rules the colony. Modernism implies that some societies are not modern; they are either pre-modern or in development.

What have we learned from acculturation research? There are three different ways to answer this question, following the distinction we/others.

a) **we/others.** Most of the acculturation research is concern with the influence of a stronger society over the weaker. This opposition also can be spelled as Industrial/Agrarian, Western/non-Western, Empire/Colony and so and so forth. Acculturation is a term coined in trying to understand the effects that American society had over the indigenous populations in the twentieth-century. In the same way, British anthropology was interested in the relationship between the British Empire (and Europe) and its African colonies. The political orientation of these studies is clear. Nevertheless, I argue there is no persuasion but domination. We have learned that a stronger society can influence a weaker by imposing its rules. The weaker society accepts to be ruled by the stronger. Some societies did not accept this condition: they were eliminated or reduced. Therefore, the question is now why some societies give power to others and why others refused to do so, at the cost of destruction. This question, however, is different from the original enquiry. From the point of view of persuasion, there is no interest in a society that cannot be persuaded. In the remaining societies, persuasion—in the we/other sense—consists in imposing the rules under which the weaker society has to adjust. The question in this case is for the mechanism of adjustment, which from the practical interest of persuasion is irrelevant: the society is already under the system of domination.

Of course, this is not all what there is in this world. I want to highlight the anthropological thought of power. The sub-discipline of political anthropology has developed a theoretical and empirical discussion about power and the different ways in which cultures structure it. My argument is that what communication research can learn from acculturation research—in the we/others sense—is that domination is the condition of persuasion. In other words, if some society integrates an element from another, this is in the context of political domination.
b) **others/we**. An other-society can also have some influence over the we-society. Maybe not in the short term or in some basic institution, but some elements from the *other* can move into the we-society. For example, some vocabulary could be inserted into the we-society’s language. In the same manner some food, customs, music or art can enter. It is interesting to notice here that there is reception without domination. Therefore, what communication research can learn from acculturation research—in the others/we sense—is that persuasion is possible in the absence of domination. The stronger society is not dominated by the weaker but the former is influenced by the latter. The question is, then, for what makes possible persuasion in this context. Unfortunately, there is no mechanism explaining this situation within anthropology.

c) **others/others & we/we**. Some other-society can interact with one of its own kind. The same is valid for we-societies. Classical anthropology deals with other-societies, and classical sociology with we-societies. Classical anthropology says that diffusion is a constant in human history. So far, no anthropologist has ever found a society without contact with another. Let us suppose, for my argument, that one other-society is not under the power of a second other-society. In this idealistic situation, acculturation has no context of domination at all. Both societies are at the same level. The question is, then, how persuasion is possible. A rational choice explanation would say that the element fulfills an intentional behavior for some of a society’s members. A functional explanation would say that the element contributes to the society’s maintenance. Hermeneutics would say that the culture’s symbolic structure is able to assign meaning to the element. Critical thinking has no answer for this and causal explanation would say that the presence of antecedent conditions adding to some regularity would cause the incorporation of the element into the social system. As far as I know, anthropology does not have a unify proposal to answer this question.

In conclusion, acculturation (also diffusion and assimilation) could be a contribution to communication studies if anthropology develops a theory explaining the successful integration of elements from culture to another. So far, competing theories and empirical research do not allow for a unified field in acculturation research.

**What happened with acculturation and diffusion within anthropology?**

Anthropologists throughout the twentieth century have progressively abandoned the concepts of diffusion and acculturation. My hypothesis is that they have moved on to the study of modernization and modernity. I am not saying that the content of both traditions are the same, but I am describing a possible trend. In order to do that, I asked the anthropological database of Harvard University how many articles appeared with those concepts in the title. I searched the same anthropological journals appeared in Chapter 2. The 1950s include any essay from that decade and before.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>1950s</th>
<th>1960s</th>
<th>1970s</th>
<th>1980s</th>
<th>1990s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diffusion</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acculturation</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modernization</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modernity</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I can infer the following:

1. Diffusion and acculturation are decreasing in use.
2. Diffusion is no longer used in the 1990s.
3. Acculturation is scarcely used in the 1990s.
4. Modernization and Modernity are growing in use.
5. Modernization appears strongly in the 1970s.
6. Modernity appears strongly in the 1990s.
7. Only the concept of modernity appears in the 1990s in the both journals Visual Anthropology and Visual Anthropology Review. In these journals, there is no use of the concept diffusion or acculturation.

This perspective is supported also by the analysis made in Chapter 5, which asked for the growing interest in mass media anthropology. Maybe future research would produce the same revival of interest about diffusion that happened in sociology during the 1960s.
Ritual, Myth and Rite of Passage

Anthropologists such as Auge and Turner, and communication scholars such as Carey, Marvin, Dayan and Katz have been applying the theory of magic and religion to mass communication. This well-established research area has some synthesis. In 1998, Eric Rothenbuhler published *Ritual Communication: From Everyday Conversation to Mediated Ceremony*.

Rothenbuhler defines his work as a book on ritual, on the literature of ritual studies, on the use of the term ritual in the literature of communication studies, on ritual as a communication phenomenon, and on communication as a ritual phenomenon.

His main argument is that if ritual is an aspect of all social action, and if ritual works by communicative devices, then communication is a part of the process of social action. According to him, the concept of ritual has different meanings, such as:

i. Action
ii. Performance
iii. Conscious, Voluntary
iv. Non instrumental or Irrational
v. Not recreational
vi. Collective, Social
vii. Expressive of Social Relations
viii. Subjunctive, Not Indicative
ix. Effective Symbols
x. Condensed Symbols
xi. Expressive or Aesthetic Behavior, Aesthetics Excess
xii. Customary Behavior
xiii. Regularly Recurring Behavior
xiv. Communication without Information
xv. Regarding the Sacred, an Element of the Serious Life

Rothenbuhler gives the following definition. Ritual is the voluntary performance of appropriately patterned behavior to symbolically effect or participate in the serious life.


I can conclude, then, that the anthropology of magic and religion is a contribution to mass communication.

I also argue that the ritual view of communication has been developed as a contribution for mass communication mainly from a functional point of view. The anthropology of magic and religion includes concepts such as ritual, myth, liminality and rite of passage. Communication scholars see in these concepts analytical tools to stress the integrative functions of the mass media. Anthropologists use them to highlight the central aspects of political and media events.

The theory of magic and religion is a well-established research area in anthropology but applied to traditional societies. Communication scholars discovered in the 1970s that this knowledge could be used to understand mass media in industrial society. Anthropologists confirmed this perspective in the 1980s and 1990s. Together, they all agree with the assumption that there is no necessity to modify the concepts because they are taken from indigenous societies. The point, they would say, is the same: there is always a need for a mechanism to keep society going.

Finally, during the 1990s no other anthropological concepts took the same level of importance. Most anthropological studies on mass communication gave proposals to support the field, which increased the analytical diversity and theoretical perspectives waiting, I think, for a unified paradigm.
6.5 Appendix Chapter 6

Call for Anthropological Concepts


One interesting anthropological point that I found in this research is that both authors are American citizens. In addition, Ingle served in both the US Army and US Navy. One assumption could be that they could know about US culture by being US citizens. Ingle could know about war because he was a soldier. The reason is that classical anthropology is an outsider view. This anthropological book (written by non-anthropologists) could be seeing as an outsider view from insiders. I am not saying that they could understand their culture “best”. I am saying that they presuppose that insiders can know their culture. In one word, the assumption is that you can understand your own culture. This assumption is an ongoing debate in American anthropology, especially since the discipline is continuously moving inside the places anthropologists live. The consensus now is that the assumption is right.

According to the authors, most of the American people understand their culture as secular. For the authors, instead, American culture could be understood as religious, as any other culture in this world. Using the classical anthropological theory of magic and religion, they say that the American culture’s totem myth is the flag. Perhaps the folk knowledge would agree with that, or perhaps it would say that it is the Statue of Liberty. Here is the point at which academic and folk knowledge diverges. For the authors, the defining myth is that blood sacrifice preserves the nation. The totem secret (collective group taboo) is the knowledge that society depends on the death of its own members at the hands of the group. Because of my objectives, I will not develop this proposal. I only wanted to highlight the anthropological approach of these communication scholars.

Another important point is the use of the term “primitive” to characterize American people. The argument is the following. The authors say that blood sacrifice is a primitive notion. They define as primitive those processes that construct the social from the body. Since every society constructs itself from the bodies of its members, then every society is primitive. Therefore, the elements to construct a society are the body of its members. This assumption is not widely shared by social scientists today.

The authors are not evolutionists. In fact, I could say that evolutionism is invalid from their perspective. They think that American society is not in an advanced stage related to other nations, or more radically to indigenous cultures. For the authors, the important point is similarity, not evolution. They are stressing the view that all cultures have to construct themselves from the body of its members.

From the previous ideas, Marvin and Ingle agree that mass media is a function of nationalism. Mass media does not have causal relationship over nationalism (mass media did not create the American nation). Nevertheless, mass media are a myth and ritual mechanism. This argument is very interesting from an anthropological point of view, taking the same conceptual scheme that the discipline has been using but into a new context.

Finally, Marvin and Ingle base their arguments heavily on E. Durkheim and R. Girard.


When Schudson asks “how does culture work?” he is referring to the question: “what influence do particular symbols have on what people think and how they act?” Although the inclusion of symbolism is related to hermeneutic analysis, Schudson is not interested in developing a hermeneutic approach. His argument is that sometimes culture “works” and sometimes it does not. In other words, sometimes the media cultivate attitudes, sometimes it does not; sometimes music transforms or transfixes, sometimes, not; sometimes ideas appear to be switchmen, sometimes they seem to make no difference; sometimes a word or a wink or a photograph profoundly changes the way a person sees the world, sometimes, not. Schudson asks: Why? What determines whether cultural objects will light a fire or not? How does culture work?
Schudson is interested in the direct influence of cultural objects. For example, he asks: Does TV lead to a more violent society or to a more fearful society? Does advertising make people materialistic? Do cockfights in Bali provide an emotional training ground for the Balinese? In other words, the question whether “exposure” to certain symbols or messages in various media actually lead people to change the way they think about the world or act in it. Therefore, he asks about the conditions (both of the cultural object and its environment) that are likely to make the culture or cultural object work more or less. Schudson proposes five dimensions of the potency of a cultural object, which he calls retrievability, rhetorical force, resonance, institutional retention, and resolution.

**Retrievability.** If culture is to have influence on a person, it must reach such person. From the individual’s perspective, some elements of experience are more readily drawn upon as bases for action than other elements. From the perspective of someone who would seek to manipulate cultural objects to advantage, the question is how to make some key elements of culture more available to audiences.

**Rhetorical force.** Different cultural objects have different degrees of rhetorical force, an indefinable quality of vividness or drama or attention-grabbing or effectiveness and belief-inducing energy. In the form of a question: what makes one novel more powerful than another, one ritual more moving than another?

**Resonance.** A rhetorical effective object must be relevant to and resonant with the life of the audience. In other words, people not only attend to media selectively but perceive selectively from what they attend to. What is “resonant” is not a matter of how “culture” connects to individual “interests” but a matter of how culture connects to interests that are themselves constituted in a cultural frame. Relevance or resonance is not a private relation between cultural object and individual, not even a social relation between cultural object and audience, but a public and cultural relation among object, tradition, and audience.

**Institutional Retention.** Culture interpenetrates with institutions as well as with interests. It exists not only as a set of meanings people share but as a set of concrete social relations in which meaning is enacted, in which it is, in a sense, tied down. In other words, a good many cultural objects may be widely available, rhetorically effective, and culturally resonant, but fail of institutionalization.

**Resolution.** Some elements in culture are more likely to influence action than others because they are better situated at a point of action or because they are by nature directives for action. An object of “high resolution” normally tells the audience what to do to respond, for example: go out and buy it. If an object is “low” in resolution, it does not mean it fails to exercise cultural power in the long run.

Finally, Schudson argues that a cultural object is more powerful the more it is within reach, the more it is rhetorically effective, the more it resonates with existing opinions and structures, the more thoroughly it is retained in institutions, and the more highly resolved it is toward action. All together helps provide a language for discussing the differences in influence of different aspects of culture to mass society.


He understands communication as a symbolic process whereby reality is produced, maintained, repaired, and transformed. Carey’s main argument is that communication historically has had two meanings: (a) the transmission view characterized by the meaning of imparting, sending, transmitting, and given information to others, and (b) the ritual view characterized by sharing, participation, association, fellowship, and the possession of a common faith.

According to Carey, the transmission view was born from a metaphor of geography or transportation. The center of this idea of communication, he says, is the transmission of signals or messages over distance for the purpose of control. Therefore, communication is a process whereby messages are transmitted and distributed in space for the control of distance and people. Interestingly, this view has a religious origin. For example, Carey says that communication in the nineteenth-century was viewed as a process and a technology that would sometimes —for religious purposes— spread, transmit, and disseminate knowledge, ideas, and information farther and faster with the goal of controlling space and people.
The ritual view is the older of those views (also religious). Carey says that this definition exploits the ancient identities and common roots of the terms “commonness”, “communion”, “community”, and “communication”. According to him, a ritual view of communication is directed toward the maintenance of society in time, not the fact of imparting information but the representation of shared beliefs. The best example is the sacred ceremony that draws people together in fellowship and commonality. He gives some characteristics of this view:

a) It derives from a view of religion that downplays the role of the sermon, the instruction and admonition, in order to highlight the role of the prayer, the chant, and the ceremony.

b) It sees the original or highest manifestation of communication as the construction and maintenance of an ordered, meaningful cultural world that can serve as a control and container for human action.

c) It operates to provide not information but confirmation, not to alter attitudes or change minds but to represent an underlying order of things, not to perform functions but to manifest an ongoing and fragile social process.

d) Like a Balinese cockfight, a Dickens novel, an Elizabethan drama, a student rally, it is a presentation of reality that gives life an overall form, order, and tone.

Carey uses news as a contemporary example. He says that under a ritual view, news is not information but drama. He says that it does not describe the world but portrays an arena of dramatic forces and action; it exists solely in historical time; and it invites our participation based on our assuming, often vicariously, social roles within it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>News Reading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transmission View</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sending or gaining information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ritual View</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A situation in which a particular view of the world is portrayed and confirmed.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Finally, I would like to highlight that even for anthropologists this perspective is new. During the 1970s, symbolic anthropology was just being born. Seeing this paper from the past, the reading stress as an alternative way to understand communication, heavily marked by what it is called now the transmission view. My opinion is that this paper is an invitation, one in which a classical anthropological concept like ritual has a central place.
7. Closing Stages. Proposal for an Anthropology of Mass Communication

The purpose of this chapter is to answer the question: what would an anthropology of mass communication look like? On one hand, we already have the answer. What we have to do is look for it in the research that was conducted since the 1980’s up until today. Then, we will know what it is because there is one. In that sense, the previous chapters answer the question. They summarize the state of the art in this field.

On the other hand, the path taken by anthropologists in their study of the mass media is not an absolute answer of what to do when dealing with this subject matter. I do not want to say that anthropology has taken a detour, but I do mean that the area is open for a proposal because of the open-ended questions that exist such as: What to study? What theory do I have to use? Are our standard methods good enough? Is there an anthropological approach to the mass media? What is our contribution in comparison to other social sciences studying the subject?

It is this proposal that I called Mass Media Anthropology.

7.1 The Subject Matter

I propose that the object of study of mass media anthropology is the system of transmission of culture through mass media.

When someone asks what do anthropologists study about the mass media, a quick answer is television or radio. Looking at the medium anthropologists have been focusing on, we can also add the Press, the WWW, cassettes, and videotapes. More precisely, for us the mass media also means talking-drums. Nevertheless, we do not study objects because they could have some value in itself. We study culture. Again, the question is what do anthropologists look for in the mass media? If we take into account the content, a plethora of objects comes to our eyes. Some researchers study politics and rituals, others household space use. The list continues on: consumerism, gender, genre, identity, imperialism, globalization, health, perception, indigenous media, and so and so on. Of course, they are all culture, in one sense. But the point is that we cannot make sense from here in order to know what is our subject of study.

Mass media anthropology is a field within the discipline dealing with the relationship between the mass media and culture. The specific point of this relationship is how culture is transmitted through the mass media. Therefore, we study a process or system by mean of which society is shaped.

Mass media has been approached in many ways. Mass media anthropology’s perspective says we are interested in how a way of being (woman, ethnic, nationhood, etc.) is transmitted to people by a process of mass communication. Anthropology is the social science studying culture. Therefore, mass media anthropology is the field within anthropology studying the way in which culture shapes us through the mass media.

From an anthropological point of view, mass media nowadays is the mechanism through which culture diffuses. People know their particular way of being by exposition to television, as the principal mass media. This contemporary phenomena is the subject matter of mass media anthropology. I will fully develop this argument later on.

An anthropology of mass communication must follow cross-cultural research in nation-states, minorities, indigenous societies and any other form of social organization which could develop throughout the twenty first century. In societies where mass media is not the vehicle of the transmission of culture (i.e. hunter-gatherer), there is no place for mass media anthropology.

7.2 Methodology

So far, all the anthropological knowledge we have learned is by the application of our standard methods. Also, the discipline already has methods to study the mass media developed by the “Culture at a Distance” School in the 1950s. In addition, communication scholars have widely used anthropological methods. Therefore, there is reason to believe that methodologically-speaking anthropology is well equipped to study the mass media.
Why is that so? It is interesting that a mass phenomena does not require a mass method such us surveys. Anthropologists rely on personal experience to study a global fact. This is not a surprise, considering anthropologists do study culture, which is both public and personal. We access to a mode of being in human society by talking with individuals of a given place. In that sense, there is no need to justify the mass media as an object of study because as any other cultural matter, anthropology is an observational science of society in particular findings (i.e., family viewing).

According to the proposal of a mass media anthropology, we do not have to develop new methods for this area of knowledge. Given the question how to study the mass media within anthropology, the answer would be that we do not study the mass media in itself but as a vehicle for the transmission of culture. In that sense, what we are interesting in is how a given society carries on the process of being a particular kind (ethos) by exposition to television or other media. As such, anthropologists already have a methodological approach to deal with cultural objects of any kind.

7.3 Theory

From an epistemological point of view, researchers have borrowed their main concepts from mass communication and classical anthropology. Nevertheless, they must develop new concepts in order to study the relationship between culture and mass media. The reason is that so far anthropology has tested communication knowledge using mainly concepts developed in that discipline with classical anthropology. Therefore, the question remains open: can an anthropology of mass communication bring us a new and fresh perspective to understand the mass media? A question that this proposal tries to answer.

7.3.1 Anthropological Schools in Mass Communication

All the research in anthropology can be grouped in three main schools. They are cultural imperialism, hermeneutics, and functionalism. They all answer the question about the relationship between people, television, and culture. The following chart is presented in order to compare them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anthropological Schools in Mass Communication</th>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural Imperialism (absorption)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hermeneutics (reflection)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functionalist (glowing)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The cultural imperialism school argues that there is a powerful influence of television in people. The role of culture in this school is to determine behavior. The role of people is to be a passive receiver. Using a metaphor, I label this theory “television as absorption”. According to this theory, American television is the cause of consumerism and the reason why women are changing their roles in traditional societies. It explains national identity as the powerful use of television by nation-states in order to create a given order.
Unfortunately for this theory, there is no empirical support for its thesis. Some anthropologists use this school while writing analysis, but they do not give evidence for them. Others take some elements of this theory in order to highlight the “resistance” that local cultures have to foreign content. In this kind of thought, television is a “contested” place. Again, terms such as resistance, imperialism and contested have proved to be empty of empirical content.

The hermeneutics school argues that television reflects culture to people. There is a double hermeneutics in this process. In one hand, people produce culture. In the other, culture defines people’s behavior. According to this school, the human process of understanding consists of depositing those modes of being which define us into cultural elements. In other words, we learn how to behave, so to speak, by going to the cultural elements which we have already created. It may sound like a contradiction, but it is not. Hermeneutics says the role of television is to allow this movement, because people go to television to watch (for example) a prime-time soap opera but, at the same time, the soap opera is a cultural element that tells them how be a member of society, what are the symbols of the national identity and how to carry on the process of interpretation. From an hermeneutical point of view, television reflects. That is to say, we recognize ourselves not by watching our face in a mirror, but by interpreting us indirectly through a local talk show or an American sitcom (even if we belong to a different culture). In this sense, television is like any other work of art: a novel, theater or some painting in which a given mode of being is summarized for us to learn what we are as members of a specific time and place.

During the 1990’s, this school was widely used by anthropologists. What this theory lacks is an empirical mechanism telling us how those processes actually happen. Compared to the cultural imperialism school, hermeneutics have a major role for the individual and the mass media. Nevertheless, hermeneutical research although appealing in theory, cannot tell us for example the mechanism involved in the right interpretation of local values while watching foreign programming.

The functionalist school argues that television is an integrative element of society. If we want to understand people or culture, we have to look for television and its role in society. This is the classical school in anthropology and, therefore, it is not surprising that the discipline had followed the media effects tradition in mass communication studies. This is the school that combined myth, ritual, and television. According to this, the function of television is to integrate society by building national identity, consumerism as well as the changing role of women is explained as a consequence of modernization. Functionalism was more or less abandoned by anthropologists during the 1980’s and 1990’s, because scholars tried other approaches to understand the mass media. Nevertheless, my proposal fits into the functionalist school in order to justify the field of mass media anthropology and the media effects tradition.

7.4 An Anthropological Theory for the Mass Media

In the following I propose an anthropological explanation to the relationship between culture and the mass media (especially television). I will base this argument on the results that anthropology has founded alongside its research during the 1970’s to the 1990’s.

7.4.1 Culture as Transmission: The Strong Sense

As far as we know, culture is not transmitted genetically, what makes us a human being is culture. The question is how is culture transmitted (for culture, I understand the transmitted mode of being)? During the twentieth century we are facing a new phenomena as anthropologists: culture is transmitted through the mass media, especially television. In other words, anthropological studies support the fact that the mass media are the vehicle of the transmission of culture. Therefore, this is the main effect of a medium like television: the transmission of culture and the shaping of human society. As anthropologists, the mass media is now in the center of our discipline.

This knowledge is supported in world nations, minorities, and indigenous societies. In the few cultures in which there is not mass media, the vehicle of the transmission of culture is language as personal communication. Classical anthropology argues that language is the vehicle of the transmission of culture. What mass media anthropological studies add is that language must not be understood only as face-to-face contact but broadly as mass communication.

For example, anthropologists have always known that kinship is a core structure of society. What is new for us is the way in which the Batak of Indonesia transmit kinship: by cassettes (Rodgers 1986). Tape-cassette dramas are the
new vehicle in which the Batak transmits kinship, moving away from marriage alliance and patrilineal clan descent to a system of family relationships. In India, part of the population are using newspapers advertisements in order to find potential spouses, replacing the traditional way of arranged marriages (Das 1980). From a theoretical point of view, communication scholars show that American and British soap operas can be explained by the anthropology of kinship (Liebes and Livingstone 1994) and they use ethnography to understand family viewing (Lull 1982, 1990).

Anthropologists have also studied myths and rituals. What is new for us is the relationship between them and television: we learn our myths and rituals by watching television, and its societal functions (integration) are now carried out by the mass media (Landers 1974, Turner 1985, Auge 1986, Abeles 1988, Handelman 1990, McLeod 1999). Communication scholars support the same relationship (Carey 1975, Dayan and Katz 1992, Rothenbuhler 1998, Marvin 1999). Anthropologists such as Abeles, Handelman, and McLeod also relate ritual, television, and politics. The same goes for communication scholars such as Dayan and Katz, and Marvin.

Anthropologists have also studied the political organization of cultures. What is new for us is that television has the cross-cultural effect of being a medium for contouring national identity, either in state-owned, commercial, or indigenous television. In other words, culture as politics is transmitted through television.

These examples can be read in a weak or strong sense. The weak sense argues either (a) the mass media are one of the mechanism for the transmission of culture or (b) some cultural elements are currently transmitted through the mass media. The strong sense argues that the mass media is the vehicle of the transmission of culture. In what follows, I will support the strong sense. My argument is not valid in hunter-gatherer societies which do not use the mass media, but it is valid in indigenous societies and any other societies which use it.

The strong sense argues that in the process of the evolution of societies, the mass media (especially television) became the vehicle of the transmission of culture. Societies which use mass media would be quite different if they did not. In this kind of society, this is the way in which culture is transmitted. As anthropologists we know that historically that was not always so. The point is that anthropology also needs an updated theory of its subject matter and it always needs to understand what is happening with culture. The strong thesis lets us understand why television viewing is pervasive, why cultures all over the world adopt television, or why societies do not quit from television after cultural contact. Briefly, because by its medium culture is transmitted.

7.4.2 The Explanation of the Cross-Cultural Effects of Television

My main task is to explain the cross-cultural characteristics and effects that anthropologists have found alongside its research on the mass media. Therefore, let me see if my proposal is able to explain them.

7.4.2.1 Antecedent Conditions

One basic antecedent condition, and a very important one that anthropologists have documented, is that the use of the television-set is not culturally specific. It means that in every culture in which television is presented, people use the television-set in order to watch television. This could be obvious, but it is not. No society worships the television-set. No society builds a ceremonial place for the television-set inside or outside the house. No society modifies its houses for television. Television viewing does not alter family basic patterns of the use of the space, neither indigenous societies nor nation-states (Kent 1985). Some societies watch television privately, but others do it collectively (Adra 1996, Liechty 1994, Pace 1993). In the latter, relatives and close friends are invited to the living room. Neighbors watch through street windows the small television-set. Nevertheless, the house (space) remains the same, and the television-set is only there to be used as a television-set and for nothing more (I include here the use as video).

Also, there is not a cultural design of the television-set. The television-set is not made to be accepted for a given culture. This is not the case of radio. In Zambia (Spitulnik 1998), the radio-set “Saucepan Special” was design by Ever Ready Co. of London to popularize African radio listening during the 1950s. It was constructed over a saucepan and painted blue because that color does not have negative associations in African society (according to the Rhodesian colonial officials of that time).
We are now justified to say this: television viewing is pervasive (everybody watches television). The cost of the television-set is irrelevant. In rural Yemen its value is three months work (Adra 1996), and the same does not stop other societies around the world. Australian Aborigines own their television station (Michaels 1991). In places with no electricity, car batteries are used. Nation-states such as India, China, and Brazil reach almost every part of their territories with their broadcasting. Television is not only available but accepted.

Cross-culturally, no society excludes some of their members from watching television. In fact, anthropological studies say that families spend large amounts of time watching television, that children are heavier viewers than adults are, and that women in traditional societies tend to watch more television. We also know that television viewing is the dominant evening and night activity of people.

Anthropologists, relying mainly upon participant observation, have documented that television drama is the favorite genre. This antecedent is related to other findings, such as that female characters represent moral forces in society, that viewers have stereotypical perceptions of sex roles of TV characters, and that viewers perceive sitcom characters as “fantastic” and dramatic characters as “real”. The latter meaning that no culture is naive. Even if the program is from another culture, every society puts the content in perspective. Some situations can be misunderstood, others can be meaningless, but no culture is a naive receiver. No one.

Every society has been in contact with programs from another culture. We now know that local culture can be transmitted through a program produced elsewhere. Even if the program is produced locally, it can take elements from a foreign culture in order to transmit local culture (Davila 1998). Unlikely as it may be, programs produced by one culture can be fully understood by another culture (therefore, there is no place here for cultural relativism). Nevertheless, no culture can impose their meanings to others by mere broadcasting (therefore, there is no place here for cultural imperialism).

Some readers can be thinking anthropologists have confirmed old beliefs in communication studies. This is the point: we did not know if there were reasons to believe in mass media generalizations until anthropologists conducted cross-cultural research. Anthropologists have accomplished one of the missions: ethnography. The next section considers these antecedent conditions in order to explain the effects.

7.4.2.2 The Effects of Television in World Cultures

If the culture-as-transmission strong thesis is right, then we can understand the effects of television. Let me take into account the antecedent conditions. My first purpose is to explain why the use of the television-set is not culturally specific and why television viewing does not alter family basic patterns of the use of the space.

Anthropological studies say that television is respected in itself cross-culturally. The answer for this, according to my thesis, is because television is the vehicle of the transmission of culture. In this argument, what societies value is culture, and because of this we do not use the medium as something else other than it lets culture be transmitted. As anthropologists we know other social mediums (never biological) have been used for the transmission of culture, the point is that the mass media became its vehicle during the twentieth century. Therefore, if what make us human is culture, societies do not interfere with the process of its acquisition.

How can this argument explain the fact that there is no correlation between television and the use of space? The answer is that television can be explained by another cross-cultural mechanism: the use of time. In other words, time is the cultural mechanism of the mass media.

As human beings, we rely on culture for our survival as species. Culture is transmitted from one generation to the other and this process is carried out through time. We learn our culture not because we move from one space to the other but because culture moves from our ancestors to us through time. Culture is heritage. Culture is memory. Culture is possible because there is time. In the other hand, mass media scholars have widely develop the relationship between television, time, and memory. Therefore, the question is how television and culture are related. I argue precisely that cultures use television as they use time, and this is possible because time is the common structure between the mass media and culture. If this is correct, then we can understand why television is so easily used by world cultures: people use television as they have always used time. There is nothing new to learn. Television already had a structural place in human society. Let me give the argument.
I will use the distinctions made by Barbara Adam in her article “Perceptions of Time” for the “Companion Encyclopedia of Anthropology” (Routledge 1994). She distinguishes four dimensions in the perception of time: clock-time, timing, temporality, and tempo. These distinctions are anthropological but can be used cross-culturally. Adam argues that the clock-time dimension is the newest one, but only that. We do not have to take it as the fundamental dimension of time because it is widely used.

1. Clock-time is the essence of the industrial time: abstracted from its natural source, independent, de-contextualized, rationalized, and divisible.
2. Timing, alongside with time frame, can be understood as when-time: the right moment to do something. The time in which certain activities have to be done.
3. Temporality refers to the fact that one thing comes after another: people and animals are born, live and die. There is no un-ageing, no un-dying, no un-birth.
4. Tempo is the speed of time: time flies when we are having fun. It tends to drag when we are waiting.

Because the function of the mass media is to carry out culture, we need a common structure to allow this transmission. We need a bridge connecting them. Time is the common structure between the mass media and culture, and it allows us to understand cross-cultural characteristics and effects.

Consider timing. Anthropological studies show that television viewing punctuates time. In other words, cultures use television as when-time: the moment in which certain activities have to be made (eat, sleep, gather, etc.). Therefore, television is perceived as timing (a mode in which time is perceived around the world). The argument is as follows. If time is timing, and television is time, then television is timing. The explanation because cross-culturally television is timing is due to the fact that timing is one of the cultural structures of time, and this is possible because television shares this common structure with time. T is T (television is time).

Temporality is also a very important mode of time for our analysis. Television exists in temporality. Our experience of television is exactly that one. Television does not stop, it moves forward in time. We do not see television backwards in time. Even if we watch a program produced decades before, our relationship with it is the same: ahead in time. That structure of television match the cross-cultural perception of time as temporality, giving us another argument to support the thesis that the way in which television behaves is not strange to human society.

Let me consider tempo and time-clock dimensions. Tempo refers to our perception of the speed of time. This dimension is related with the entertainment of television. When we are engage with television, we are in the mode of time as tempo. Because of that, one of the uses of television is to kill time. Time-clock is less relevant cross-culturally but nevertheless important. Television match weekly schedules which are ordered by clock-time, and the week is an important unit of time for many societies.

Therefore, I conclude that the basic relationship between culture and television is the use of time. Since television does not alter the structure of time, world cultures easily adopt it. This is not the only reason for the adoption of television, but is the condition of possibility for all of them. Time is the key element connecting the mass media and culture.

Let us go on. Anthropological studies say television viewing is pervasive. The culture-as-transmission strong thesis argues that people are attracted to television because it is culture that they are receiving from it. Families spend time in front of the television-set not because it is funny, but something so important as culture happens there (being the entertainment one of the aspects of culture). So far, the experience of watching television is mainly with the family (from a cross-cultural point of view).

Kottak (1991) argues that the case of Brazil exemplifies the thesis that television viewing moves to an individual experience. If this is so, we do not know it yet. However, the basic argument remains the same: if television viewing is pervasive, it is because culture is being transmitted through it.

The characteristic that television viewing is the dominant evening and night activity of people, can be related with the previous argument that television matches the social structure rather than destroys it (the thesis that television has already a structural place in society). In this case, television fits the work structure of society. Societies do not
abandon their economic activities for watching television nor other daily activities, therefore television is most 
watched when they are mainly over: the evening and night. This is one of the conditions for television to be 
accepted: not to disturb society but to match its structure.

One cross-cultural effect is that television viewing reduces the diversity and the loci of activities. What powerful 
phenomena could be producing it? According to my argument, because mass media is the vehicle of the 
transmission of culture, the diversity and the loci of activities are reduced for watching television in order to 
experience culture. A bad reading of this explanation is that we are becoming slaves of television. A correct reading 
is that the mass media is our main experience with the transmission of culture. It is this attraction that reduces our 
activities when we gather around the television.

Both antecedent conditions that children are heavier viewers than adults are, and that women in traditional societies 
tend to watch more television, can be explained by one argument. In these kind of societies, the household is the 
main place for women and children. Men are outside most of the time. Besides, children remain heavier viewers in 
all societies, because they acquire culture through the mass media. We now know that, cross-culturally, socialization 
process happens through the mass media.

Nevertheless, anthropological studies say that in traditional societies television drama changes women’s perception 
of gender and working roles. This new phenomena is producing changes in social structures such as the Yucatec 
Maya (Miller 1998), China (Rofel 1994), and India (Mankekar 1993). According to the culture-as-transmission 
strong thesis, this can be explained by the following argument. We know how to behave according to our gender 
roles not because they are genetically determined, but culture is what makes us what we are. Therefore, woman is a 
gender role transmitted from one generation to the other. A woman receives culture by watching television because 
mass media is the vehicle of the transmission of culture. Then, television is the vehicle of the transmission of 
changes in society.

Another cross-cultural effect of television is that it increases a viewer’s awareness of the world beyond his/her own 
society. We have to take into account the antecedent condition that every society is in contact with programs created 
by other cultures. Also, local communities increase awareness to the nation-states which they belong to, such as 
Gurupa in Brazil (Pace 1993) and al-Ahjur in Yemen (Adra 1996).

This effect is related with the most supported findings of anthropological research: television is a medium for 
contouring national identity, either in state-owned, commercial, or indigenous television (Spitulnik 1998, Mankekar 

We do not have to look for special programs about independence day, political advertisements, educational 
programs, nor in the news. Anthropologists have found it in television serials, soap operas, talk shows, and sitcoms. 
Either locally produced or from another culture. Either with characters of the same ethnic group or from another 
kind. Either women or men. Either in a past ambience or in a present one.

We are in the presence of another argument to support the thesis that we learn our national identity, an important 
cultural element of the twentieth century, through television (the mass media). However, we do not know what is the 
mechanism connecting identity and the mass media.

As a modern phenomena, such as the nation-state, anthropologists say that television viewing increases 
consumerism. We learn this element of our culture by exposure to television and because traditional societies also 
watch programs produced by modern societies, this element have diffused from one place to the other. Nevertheless, 
we have to be very careful with this effect. Anthropological studies argues that American television does not 
determine local effects but every culture defines its own. What we do not know is the mechanism in which cultures 
use to accept consumerism, change woman’s roles, and the contouring of national identity. What we know do is that 
mass media is a main vehicle of the transmission of culture.

A bad reading is that American television is the cause of all the effects. A correct reading is that cross-culturally 
societies are using American television as a cultural element.
7.5 Closing Stages

What this chapter tried to do was to propose a framework in order to summarize the cross-cultural effects that anthropology has founded alongside the 1970’s through the 1990’s. It also serves as a guide to future research by giving a common ground for scholars in a theoretical way.

The question about the contribution of anthropology to mass communication still remains open. As far as I am concerned, the present work tried to answer a question posted a long time ago by Elihu Katz, a question that has been ignored – who knows why – for anthropology to look at.
8. Appendix from the Journal Research

8.1 Anthropological Studies of Mass Communication
8.2 Sociological Studies of Mass Communication
8.3 Political Studies of Mass Communication
8.4 Film Studies within Anthropology
### 8.1 Anthropological Studies Bibliography of Mass Communication

Methodology: Using *Abstracts in Anthropology* (Greenwood Periodicals), *JSTOR Database On Line, Anthropological Index Online* (Royal Anthropological Institute), and *Anthropological Literature On Line* (Harvard University Eureka Database) I searched in the abstracts of the following magazines from 1970 to 1999 for the keyword mass media, mass communication, broadcasting, and television. [Text No. 10 and 52 are relevant exceptions].

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Author/Title</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Abstract</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Culture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1 | The sociodrama of presidential politics: Rhetoric, ritual, and power in the era of teledemocracy. McLeod JR | 1999       | *Media and Politics*  
> "In this paper I examine the American presidential campaign cycle as a series of ritualized sociodramas. Examples are used from the campaigns of 1988, 1992, and 1996 to illustrate the role of ritual, rhetoric, symbol, and media in the process of presidential power acquisition. These political processes are analyzed utilizing the concepts of sociodrama and rituals of rebellion extant in the literature of political anthropology. Specific cases such as the bus tours of the Clinton campaign, the Willie Horton commercials of the Bush campaign, and the case of Murphy Brown are examined in detail. The goal of the paper is to render an anthropological perspective on the process of choosing the American President in the era of teledemocracy." |
> "Tarek ‘Allam is currently the most popular interview broadcaster in Egypt. An impromptu appearance last year on his widely-watched program, ‘word of gold’, created instant celebrity for the author in Egypt, the Arab world, and among diaspora Arab communities that receive the Egyptian satellite channel. I suddenly became the image I study, simultaneously viewer and viewed, a participant in popular mass culture. The experience underscored the power of television to shape public culture, prompted deeper reflection on the resiliency of particular televised images, and emphasized the advantage of turning our gaze from the established texts of dramatic serials to the numerous ‘on-the-street’ interview programs aired on Egyptian television.” |
> "This paper explores the uses of television in social relations in a specific urban, Middle Eastern context. In contemporary Syria locally-produced historical dramas form part of wider processes of culture construction and social distinction. Televisual representations of the Old Damascus serve not to foster nationalist sympathies but to promote sub-national identities. By interpreting and debating the histories presented in serial dramas, Syrians dispute the past and critique the present.” |
> "Author Catherine Besteman's article 'Representing Violence and "Othering" Somalia' provides no hard evidence to support its claim that US media coverage of the Somali state's collapse boosted American self-image as they represented Somalis as savages. Her description of these frequently simplistic and poorly informed media reports is also based on anecdotal evidence rather than on any systematic content analysis. Further, Besteman's inaccurate analysis of Somali politics and her misconceptions of segmentary lineage political systems are rebutted.” |
> "Originally devised as a marketing tool for Budweiser beer in Puerto Rico, El Kiosko Budweiser is currently one of the most popular television shows. An analysis of the production and reception of this show provides the basis for a discussion of its..." |
continued popularity and an evaluation of the processes by which mass media products become vehicles for the assertion and definition of contemporary identities. In this article I also question the nature of 'national' television in the current transnational context though a discussion of the distinct role played by locally produced commercial programming in the promotion of local artists and shows, and in the imagining of Puerto Rico as a distinct national community.”

**Television Effects in Rural Maya**

“The development of the Yucatán region has brought a wide range of new issues and pressures to indigenous Maya communities. Many of these are transmitted through the discourse of televised media, which is becoming increasingly popular among the rural Maya. Televised programming depicts an array of values, social roles, and behavior patterns that are in direct contrast to Yucatec Mayan culture. As exposure to the media and its urban orientation becomes more accessible, and contact between national and local cultures through the televised media increases, members of the Yucatec Mayan communities of Yalcoba are rapidly renegotiating their senses of self and community. The tensions and contradictions that result from the political economy of television viewing are highly evident in how people talk about their consumption of televised media, as well as emerging contracts regarding language, social role performance, and household economy.”

**Television Effects in Rural Brazil**

“This article reports the results of an ethnographic study on the impact of television viewing in the Brazilian Amazon. In the fall of 1996 the researcher spent three months doing field work in the community of Sao Joao de Pirabas. The narrative account that follows tries to answer these questions: What has been the role of television in the way that rural Brazilian communities construct their own interpretation of reality? And what kinds of cultural changes (if any) can be attributed to systematic and pervasive television viewing?”

**Indigenous Media**

“The appropriation of Western visual media technology by indigenous peoples around the world, particularly in Australia, North America, and the Amazon Basin, has drawn the attention of anthropologists impressed with how such people have utilized visual self-representation as a mode of empowerment, political assertion, and cultural revival in the face of Western cultural and economic imperialism. In this paper I maintain, however that there are different relationships between signs, concepts, and sociality in different cultures and that visual media have embedded within them their own Western ontology of these semiotic relations. Anthropologists have by and large not sufficiently problematized their own participation in this modern ontology of representation, and they assume that it is the same framework as that operating in the representational practices of the indigenous peoples on which they focus their attention. I situate a critique of Western visual representation within the progress of marxist theory in the 20th century. I go on to suggest that a dialectical approach to this phenomenon preserves the anthropological perspective on non-Western ritual, art, and representation that was bequeathed to us by Victor Turner and is still an essential component of the 'anthropological lens.'”

**Black Imagery**

“Authorized media agents subject African American men to media surveillance. Black male media imagery of the 1980s facilitates their containment in the 1990s. Our national seeing ‘eye’ compels whites to evaluate African American men in terms of imagery that makes them either negative and unembraceable or positive and embraceable. Black male imagery that African American consider positive may be deemed unembraceable by white media agents. The black male imagery they produce contains African American men’s subjectivity in white public space, defending white privilege
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<th>Paper</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<th>Keywords</th>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Anthropology and Its Contributions to Studies of Mass Media</td>
<td>Dickey, Sara</td>
<td><em>International Social Science Journal</em></td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>153 (413-427)</td>
<td>Review Essay “In this article I consider the reasons for our past reticence about the media; the force that media representation carry in the construction of contemporary imagination, identities, and power relations; the insights anthropologists have begun to offer into these processes; and further directions we could profitably pursue.”</td>
<td>General, General</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Man, media and health</td>
<td>Kannan, R.</td>
<td><em>Man in India</em></td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>77(1), 15 -27</td>
<td>Media and Health “Maintenance of good health is a specific concern in human society throughout the ages. People try to keep themselves away from the diseases as well as make definite attempts to cure the ailments through the adoption of various medicinal devices. Various health care message are received by these people through different media. In this present work an attempt has been made to highlight the roles of different modern media in communicating health messages to the people. The study was undertaken in the city of Madurai where a number of households were investigated through the application of different methods. Various advertisements, writings, lectures and integrated visual programs that are put forward through the different types of media exert tremendous influence in public mind the patterns and perspectives of which have been examined here.”</td>
<td>Press, Radio, TV, India</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Representing Violence and “Othering” Somalia</td>
<td>Besteman, Catherine</td>
<td><em>Cultural Anthropology</em></td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>11(1), 120-133</td>
<td>Press and Misrepresentation “Journalists and politicians, aided by academics, constructed a common explanation of Somalia’s destruction that drew on familiar evolutionary typologies, racist assumptions, anthropological models, and a popular craving for simplicity that would boost the American self-image. Here, I review this explanation and present an alternative understanding to the prevailing portrait of Somali culture and history that was presented to and consumed by the U.S. public during the early 1990s.”</td>
<td>Press, TV, Somalia (Africa)</td>
</tr>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Bottomless Cup, Plug-in Drug: A Telethnography of Coffee</td>
<td>Sherry, J. F. Jr.</td>
<td><em>Visual Anthropology</em></td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>7, 351-370</td>
<td>Viewers Perception “In this paper, I use an anthropological perspective to explore the dimensions of ‘coffeeworld’ as it is depicted on prime time network television programming. I do not examine coffee commercials, but rather the programming context that conditions in part viewers’ perceptions of coffee, which ostensibly delivers a receptive audience to prospective marketers. I explore the cultural significance of coffee in the form of themes emerging from a close viewing of top-rated programs.”</td>
<td>TV, USA</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Embedded aesthetics: creating a discursive space for indigenous media</td>
<td>Ginsburg, Faye</td>
<td><em>Cultural Anthropology</em></td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>9(3), 365-382</td>
<td>Indigenous Media “This essay is an extension of a larger effort initiated by Aboriginal cultural activists to develop a ‘discursive practice’—both for Aboriginal makers and for others who make and study media— that respects and understands this work in terms relevant to contemporary indigenous people living in a variety of settings. Specifically, it examines how Aboriginal media makers understand their own work.”</td>
<td>Video, TV, Australia</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Culture/Media: a (mild) polemic</td>
<td>Ginsburg, Faye</td>
<td><em>Anthropology Today</em></td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>10(2), 5-15</td>
<td>Indigenous Media “The media being produced by indigenous, diaspora, and other media makers challenge a long outdated paradigm of ethnographic film built on notions of culture as a stable and bounded object, documentary representation as restricted to realist illusion, and media technologies as inescapable agents of western imperialism.”</td>
<td>Video, TV, Australia</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Yearnings: Televisual Love and Melodramatic Politics in Contemporary China</td>
<td>Rofel, L.</td>
<td><em>American Ethnologist</em></td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>21(4), 700-722</td>
<td>Television and Identity “To trace the complex ‘passion for meaning’ (Barthes) that animated the consumption and interpretation of Yearnings, a television melodrama that aired in China just a year and a half after the Tiananmen demonstrations, requires moving beyond a dichotomy between ‘the political’ and ‘the popular’. This article argues that Yearnings became a nationwide controversy because it allegorizes post-Tiananmen dilemmas of national identity in relation to socialism and in relation to the diverse class and gender positioning of the characters as well as the TV, China</td>
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viewers. Textualist and reader-response analyses of popular culture need to be broadened by an ethnographic approach that asks socio-discursive questions about the operations of popular culture as a site for the constitution of national subjects, one that offers complicated possibilities for oppositional practices."

**Anthropologists and Media**

"This paper surveys ethnographic film as it has been presented over the years on British television, particularly in the Disappearing World series. A detailed criticism leads to the conclusion that anthropologists should not place too much faith in the kind of films that are presented for the general public on television. The involvement of anthropologists in these productions has often amounted to a less-than-happy marriage."

**TV and Ideology**

"This paper focuses on Japanese commercial television and the social construction of youth, education, and meritocracy in Japan. In contrast to the grandiose claims often made (but never fulfilled) in studies of television’s ‘impact’ or ‘effects’ on society, I do not believe that Japanese TV somehow ‘implants’ a dominant ideology of education into the population; families and schools, after all, far more directly shape ideas and ideologies of education. My goals are more modest: to describe how popular television programs entertain audiences by combining images of youthful spirit with scenes from school, and to suggest a number of connections between TV, the contemporary Japanese educational system, and ideologies of meritocracy in Japan."

**Cultural Imperialism**

"This paper offers a cultural inquiry into the role of French television in Alsace as an ideological apparatus of the French state, one which has helped establish a dominant cultural hegemony from Paris throughout the region."

**Morality and Nationalism**

"An anthropological approach to television must transcend the limitations of traditional media scholarship by paying closer attention to the cultural and political context of the medium in different times and places. This paper explores the ways television has affected the small Caribbean country of Belize during the last ten years. It focuses attention on the way people talk about television in public and private, on the place of television in moral discourse. It suggests that by providing and objectified ‘other’, foreign television may promote new forms of nationalism."

**Identity**

"Recent anthropological research highlights the significance of mass media in the construction of identities. This article focuses on the way in which men and women, located in specific sociocultural context, interpret entertainment serials show on Indian television. It then proceeds to explore the place of the viewers’ active engagement with television in terms of their constitutions as national and gendered subjects."

**Television Effects in Brazil**

"The research presented here investigates changes occurring in Gurupa during the first eight years of televiewing. It focuses upon two broad areas of change: social interaction patterns (displacement effect); and world view perceptions (content effect). The first consists of behavioral changes that occur as people alter their life styles to accommodate televiewing as well as duplicate televiewing habits in other areas of their lives. Examples include changes in rules for public access to television, visitation patterns, viewing etiquette, and timing of social activities. The second consists of changes in shared knowledge, attitudes, expectations, and beliefs. These include knowledge of the world, perceptions of..."
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<td>31</td>
<td>Posing, Posturing and Photographic Presences: A Rite of Passage in a Japanese Commuter Village. Eyal</td>
<td>Ritual and Representation</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Video, Photo</td>
<td>Japan</td>
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<td>36</td>
<td>Modern Political Ritual: Ethnography of an Inauguration and a Pilgrimage by President Mitterrand. Marc</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Modern Political Ritual</td>
<td>This paper examines from an anthropological perspective two rituals performed by the French president, Francois</td>
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<td>Page</td>
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<td>41</td>
<td>Teleculture heroes; or, a night at the embassy. Auge, Marc. Current Anthropology 1986 27(2), 184-188.</td>
<td>1986</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Cross Cultural Perception of TV</td>
<td>1986</td>
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<td>Page</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Year</td>
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<td>45</td>
<td>Anthropology, communications, and health: the mass media and health practices program in Honduras.</td>
<td>Kendall, Carl</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Media and Health</td>
<td>Radio</td>
</tr>
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<td>46</td>
<td>Communication and cultural development: a multidimensional analysis.</td>
<td>Bennett, George A.</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Development and Mass Media</td>
<td>TV, Film, Press, Radio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Matrimonial advertisements: an examination of its social significance in mate selection in modern India.</td>
<td>Das, Mitra</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Kinship and Press</td>
<td>Press</td>
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<td>51</td>
<td>A Brief History of Media Anthropology.</td>
<td>Eiselein, E. B. and Martin Topper</td>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Media Anthropology in 1970s: History</td>
<td>General</td>
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8.2 Sociological Studies Bibliography of Mass Communication

Methodology: Using *Sociological Abstracts* through Penn Library Ovid Database Online (www.library.upenn.edu), I asked which articles matched the keyword mass media, mass communication, broadcasting, and television. The years considered were 1970 to 1999.

8. American Journal of Sociology  
9. American Sociological Review  
10. Annual Review of Sociology  
11. British Journal of Sociology  
12. Sociological Inquiry  
13. Sociological Quarterly  
14. Sociological Review

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<th>N</th>
<th>Author/Title</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Abstract</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Culture</th>
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"Data obtained via a qualitative analysis of 111 popular women's magazine articles & magazine writers' guidebooks published 1970-1997 are drawn on to examine the content, creation, & impact of popular discourse on domestic violence. Results demonstrate that the majority of articles continue to portray the public issue of domestic violence as a private problem, specifically, the victim's problem. The dominant individual perspective that places responsibility on the victim normalizes the idea that victims should be held responsible for solving the problem. In addition, the writing & editorial practices of these magazines contribute to the dominance of assigning responsibility for domestic violence to individuals." | Magazine | USA |
"US televised media coverage in 1991 of the Gulf War & the war on abortion is analyzed to trace the meanings & possibilities for identity & activism mobilized by both. While the two wars seem unrelated, the techniques through which the news coverage of both marginalized social protest & women's place in the national imaginary are shown to be similar. In the news, protesters & women were positioned outside the sphere of normal politics & reasonable opinion. In this way, the news created a mythic community of "people like us" in opposition to women & activists. Through this marginalization of protest, broadcast news contained the threat of activism to the national imaginary of the US in both conflicts." | TV | USA |
"In a computer search of 18 British national newspapers, 1993-1995, 420 mentions of bigamy were identified, with 110 items (or 26%) referring to 26 current criminal cases; 7 cases attracted 70% of the coverage. Using A. Phoenix's (1996) distinction between threats to the nation-state from inside & outside, analysis indicates that two issues of wider sociopolitical importance - familism & immigration - were central to judges' comments reported in the press & produced an important counterpoise to the titillating features of these cases. It is argued that newspaper reporting of bigamy constructs bigamists as being a threat to GB from inside to the institution of marriage, while the threat from outside is from minority ethnic men marrying female bigamists to gain residential status in GB. The latter challenge brings the most significant condemnation." | Press | UK |
"A four-pronged methodology, eg, textual analyses of the films, film reviews, & interviews with actress Rosie Perez as well as possible spectatorship positions to her films, is used to examine the construction of Latinas in Hollywood film, especially in regard to traditional ethnic stereotypes. The consideration of active audience & Latinas/Latinos is also explored. The combined methodology, which examines both representation & interpretations - ie, the production of meaning both at the sending & reception of popular culture - allows for a complicated reading of what Rosie Perez might..." | Film | Latino American |
<table>
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<th>5</th>
<th>Dislocating Moral Order and Social Identity in Cinematic Space: The Inverted Detective Figure in Tightrope and Cruising. Ibarra, Peter R. <em>Sociological Quarterly</em>, 1998, 39, 3, summer, 409-433.</th>
<th>1998</th>
<th>Film</th>
<th>USA</th>
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<td>TV News and Ideology</td>
<td>“Explores how three historical stereotypes - Mammy, Jezebel, &amp; Sapphire - are re-created in current-day TV broadcasts, arguing that these re-creations influence modern depictions of black women in important ways. Focus is on three underexplored components of the stereotyping process: (1) the symbolic properties of stereotypical images; (2) the separation of time &amp; space achieved on TV; &amp; (3) the use of rigid interpretive frames as means of sustaining stereotypes in this media age.”</td>
<td>TV Russia, USA</td>
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<td>News Media and Fear</td>
<td>“Analysis of a 20% sample of 1995 Vremya (Russian national TV) newscasts reveals few traces of the Cold War discourse for almost 40 years. The ability of Vremya to reconstruct its images of Russia &amp; the US reaffirms the contention of Murray Edelman, (1988), Stuart Hall (1982), &amp; others that media news accounts evoke a spectacle that is an ideological product, not a set of facts. The spectacle of politics is a fetish, a creation that then dominates the thought &amp; action of its creators.”</td>
<td>Press, TV USA</td>
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<td>Power/Knowledge and Discredited Identities: Media Representations of Herpes. Roberts, Robert E L. <em>Sociological Quarterly</em>, 1997, 38, 2, spring, 265-284</td>
<td>Magazine and Symbolic Stigma</td>
<td>“It is contended that popular press accounts of genital herpes (herpes simplex virus-II) produce symbolic stigma. Content analysis of 141 magazine articles (1968-1995) on herpes explores the discursive practices that constitute herpetic as a discredited identity. These stigmatizing practices are criticized as (1) inscriptions of dominant administrative, moral, &amp; scientific ideologies; &amp; (2) constituting a conceptual control regime that eventually spreads in unanticipated ways beyond the original confines of the genital herpes epidemic.”</td>
<td>Magazine USA</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tradition and Technology in Local Newscasts: The Social Psychology of Form. Gronbeck, Bruce E. <em>Sociological Quarterly</em>, 1997, 38, 2, spring, 361-374</td>
<td>TV and Social Construction of Form and Meaning</td>
<td>“Two evening newscasts in Mar 1993 of a local TV station in IA were content analyzed with the goal of deriving social psychological constructions of form &amp; meaning. The complex technology of international TV images is contrasted with images of local journalists reporting regional weather patterns &amp; criminal incidents. Technological form, in which individuals are separated from life experiences, is suggested to compete with conventionalized form, in which individuals are enveloped into a shared community. In this context, technology may compete with more localized, oral forms of communication &amp; social connection.”</td>
<td>TV USA</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Globalization, National Cultures and Cultural Citizenship. Stevenson, Nick. <em>Sociological Quarterly</em>, 1997, 38, 1, winter, 41-66</td>
<td>Media and Globalization</td>
<td>“Explores mass communication media, globalization processes, &amp; cultural citizenship, arguing that, in the British &amp; European contexts, national cultures remain powerful constructions, &amp; calling for a three-layered perspective on cultural citizenship comprising the emergence of cultural cosmopolitanism, application of rights &amp; duties to the TV &amp; film industries, &amp; the concept of civil society. The aim is to thread together a concern for globalizing processes &amp; outline a theory of cultural citizenship with respect to the development of systems of communication.”</td>
<td>TV, Film Europe</td>
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<td>Title</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>A Theory of Writing and Experimental Writing in the Age of Telecommunications: A Response to Steven Seidman.</td>
<td>Clough, Patricia</td>
<td>1996</td>
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**TV Ads and Gender**

“Analysis of gender portrayals in 75 British TV advertisements of chocolate products reveals that women are generally portrayed as detachable from their local environments, & men are depicted as foolish & incompetent. Based on comparison with a wider corpus of broadcasting ads (N = approximately 640), it is argued that these patterns are characteristic of TV ads more generally, & that they are related to general cultural presuppositions concerning men & women.”

**Media Use of Moral Concepts**

“Traces the development & usage of the term “moral panic” from its 1972 coining to the present. Stanley Cohen's (1980) interest-group usage & Erich Goode & Nachmen Ben-Yehuda's (1994) elite-engineered & grassroots usages are described. The media adopted the term in the 1980s, paralleling its use by academics. It is suggested that adoption of the term may have hindered the media's ability to use moral language & treat moral issues seriously. Although the term is widely used, & the concept it embodies is accepted, there is no theory of moral panic to explain the relationship between the media & public opinion, indicating that sociologists need to more carefully critique the use & implications of the term.”

**TV Soap Operas and Youth Identity**

“Examines the roles of TV soap operas & language in identity formation among 45 black & Asian British teenage girls, drawing on discussions audiotaped while they watched TV soap operas at home by 77 peer-researchers, ages 14-15. It is argued that the girls’ discussion of the soap opera represents a reflexive project of the self. Further, the girls have formed multiple & hybrid identities constructed through the intersubjective resource of language & the increasing resources provided by globalization. These multiple identities were racially related, in that the girls identified with both their minority races & British culture. It is concluded that language is the path by which people create boundary markers & eventually, identity.”

**Print Media Representation**

“Explores print media representations of clothing-related violence through analysis of 62 articles published in newspapers & news magazines, 1990-1994. Using the social constructionist definition of social problems, condition categories used by both primary & secondary claimsmakers are examined through rhetorical idioms & forms of talk representing motives, settings, & solutions. Typifications of the problem by primary claimsmakers were related to the vested interest of those making the claims, & the framing of media claims varied by type of news stories. There was some overlap in the rhetorics of primary & secondary claimsmakers, but the differences show a need to examine social problems from the perspectives of various claimsmakers.”

**Mass Media and Interpersonal Communication**

“The polar, historical mass media-interpersonal communication relationship is abandoned in favor of a communication dialectic that recognizes the synthesis of ideal types into composite forms of interaction. Embedded technology demonstrates the dialectic by exploring how electronic media fixed in a physical location can combine with the interpersonal communication taking place there to enhance group interaction. The resulting hybrid defies the assumption that mass media simply displace interpersonal interaction, pointing instead to a dialectic relationship in which ideal types continually challenge & transform one another.”

**Postmodernism and Mass Media**

“A comment on Steven Seidman's "Political Unconscious of the Human Sciences" extends the discussion of the postmodern critique & sociological writing to the realm of General”
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<th>Reference</th>
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<th>Abstract/Description</th>
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<td>Ticineto. Sociological Quarterly, 1996, 37, 4, fall, 721-733.</td>
<td>late-20th century mass media communication technologies. The commodification of knowledge inherent in the development of telecommunications not only challenges sociology's understanding of itself as an objective science, but also concepts that have been central to sociology's interpretive practices. The development of telecommunications makes the intrinsic relationship of knowledge &amp; power explicit &amp; enables the rewriting of the human sciences from the perspective of a theory of writing that exhausts the traditional notions of history &amp; community, particularly in regard to self-reflexivity &amp; the unconscious. The multiple, diffuse subjectivity of telecommunications forces a change in analytical focus from the constitution of the subject in an unconscious identification with the narrative to consideration of the timing in use. The new sociological writings are not only tied to the postmodern critique of the human sciences, but also to the network imagination of telecommunications.”</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Robinson, Cherylon. Powell, Lawrence Alfred. Sociological Quarterly, 1996, 37, 2, spring, 279-305</td>
<td>Postmodernism and Mass Media “Investigates the rhetoric &amp; imagery deployed by participants in the televised confirmation hearings of US Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas (1991), using framing &amp; symbolic analyses on data from newspaper accounts, videotaped recordings, &amp; government transcripts of the proceedings. Particular attention is paid to the construction of the “real” Clarence Thomas &amp; Anita Hill by the two opposing political sides in their efforts to sway public opinion. Included in such constructions are countervailing images of race &amp; sex that are connected to stereotypes of African Americans &amp; women. It is argued that the Hill-Thomas hearings are a paradigmatic case of the modern political spectacle in which symbolic images of motive are mobilized as surface impressions by groups seeking to gain political power.”</td>
<td>Press, Video African American</td>
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<td>Manning, P K. Sociological Quarterly, 1996, 37, 2, spring, 261-278.</td>
<td>Dramaturgy, Politics and the Axial Media Event. “Argues that a revised dramaturgical framework is appropriate for the analysis of relationships among media, politics, &amp; interpersonal relations in modern society. The extant dramaturgical literature is described as unsatisfactory because it fails to take into account recent trends in electronically mediated social relations. Six rules of electronically mediated reality are derived from frame analysis &amp; deconstruction work on TV programming, ie, the veridicality, sampling, ordering/sequencing, framing, coherence, &amp; salience rules. These rules connect the activities of electronically mediated culture with the cognitive processing privileged by this culture. The resulting dramaturgical framework is illustrated in a brief application to the video of the Rodney King beating in Los Angeles, CA.”</td>
<td>Video USA</td>
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<td>Grover, Chris. Soothill, Keith. Sociological Review, 1996, 44, 3, Aug, 398-415.</td>
<td>A Murderous 'Underclass'? The Press Reporting of Sexually Motivated Murder. “The underclass is widely held by commentators of the Right to be responsible for a host of social problems, including violent crime. Here, analysis of reports of sexually motivated murder in nine British newspapers in 1992 shows how unemployed &amp; other marginalized men are portrayed as the main perpetrators of sexual violence. This hampers understanding of sexual violence, for it suggests that only men of low socioeconomic backgrounds are potential threats to women &amp; children. It is also suggested that the symbolic environment in which the press reports sexual murder provides a context wherein a more authoritarian benefit regime &amp; greater control of poor communities can be spuriously justified.”</td>
<td>Press UK</td>
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<td>Felson, Richard B. Annual Review of Sociology, 1996, 22, 103-128.</td>
<td>Mass Media Effects on Violent Behavior. “A critical review of the literature on the effect of exposure to media violence on aggressive behavior. It is argued that this literature suffers from several deficiencies: (1) laboratory experiments have not been able to distinguish between effects on nonaggressive antisocial behavior as</td>
<td>TV USA</td>
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<td>Press Effects on Social Problems</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>Art World Culture and Institutional Choices: The Case of Experimental Film.</td>
<td>Bayma, Todd. Sociological Quarterly, 1995, 36, 1, winter, 79-95</td>
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Compared to aggressive social behavior; (2) results have been as consistent with sponsor effects as with media effects; (3) there has been little success in distinguishing media messages concerning violence from messages learned from other sources; & (4) the emphasis on the media's proviolence socialization effects has not explained why violent criminals also commit nonviolent crimes. It is concluded that while TV violence may have a small effect on some viewers, repeated studies of the media's effects on violent behavior have not produced evidence of a significant influence on aggressiveness.”

Television and National Identity
“Examines the new Irish-language TV channel, Teilifis na Gaeilge, & assesses the politicoideological & economic environments as factors influencing the formulation of the policies in which Irish-language TV is & has been placed. It is argued that the goals of restoring & preserving Irish, which are related to nation-building, are ideologically unacceptable in the current environment. In addition, the economic arena of competition, in which network RTE (Radio Telefis Eiseann Ireland) TV operates, hinders it from providing a public service for the Irish-speaking minority. It is argued that the new channel must be separate from RTE & founded on a minority rights policy.”

TV, Sports and Gender
“Sheds light on some of the mechanisms through which audience preference is socially constructed for male (M) over female (F) sports via comparative analysis of televised coverage of the "Final Four" of the F & M 1993 National Collegiate Athletic Assoc (NCAA) basketball tournaments. The temporal framing of the F & M tournaments by the sports/media complex is examined, & the visual & verbal televised presentation of the games is described. It is argued that the sports/media complex actively constructs audiences that are likely to see the Ms' games as a dramatic, historic event, while they see the Fs' games as a movement or just another game. This serves to situate viewers of M sports at a nexus of power & pleasure, while containing the potential challenge that F athleticism poses to hegemonic masculinity. The potentially contradictory outcomes of recent hints of increased televised coverage of F basketball are discussed in light of socialist feminist theory.”

Postmodernism and Mass Media
“Participant interviews (N = 14), field observations, & primary written sources are used to examine how the material & cultural characteristics of experimental film influence which art world practices have, & have not, been institutionalized within the academy. The art world is materially characterized by small size, unprofitability, & lack of prestige in larger culture markets, & culturally characterized by the importance it attaches to innovation, expression, & active engagement with art, values associated with its avant-garde identity. Its institutions thus emphasize innovation & interactive participation, & deemphasize the roles of gatekeepers & critics as arbiters of legitimacy & meaning. Rather than promoting standardization & integration uniformly across art world functions of production, distribution, & evaluation, material & cultural factors interact to differentially support various institutional functions.”
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<td>paid to the consequences of the great expansion of the media &amp; to the many more participants involved in public debate (including, eg. commercial promotions departments &amp; pressure groups). It is argued that &quot;folk devils&quot; are less marginalized than they once were; they not only find themselves vociferously &amp; articulately supported in the same mass media that castigates them, but their interests are also defended by their own niche &amp; micromedia. Finally, it is suggested that what were more stable points of social control have undergone some degree of shift, if not transformation.&quot;</td>
<td>British Journal of Sociology, 1995, 46, 1, Mar, 1-19.</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>46</td>
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<td>1-19</td>
<td>Video</td>
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<td>32</td>
<td>The Stories Told in Science Fiction and Social Science: Reading The Thing and Other Remakes from Two Eras.</td>
<td>Katovich, Michael A., Kinkade, Patrick T.</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Sociological Quarterly, 1993, 34, 4, Nov, 619-637.</td>
<td>Film, USA</td>
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<td>Consequences of a 1991 Police Investigation in Arizona</td>
<td>Spring, 53-69</td>
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<td>36</td>
<td>Toward a Sociology of Cult Films: Reading Rocky Horror</td>
<td>Kinkade, Patrick T. Katovich, Michael A. Sociological Quarterly, 1992, 33, 2, summer, 191-209.</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Film, USA</td>
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<td>37</td>
<td>Reading the Alcoholic Film: Analysis of The Country Girl</td>
<td>Basic, Margaret M. Sociological Quarterly, 1992, 33, 2, summer, 211-227.</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Film, USA</td>
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<td>38</td>
<td>Media Images and the Social</td>
<td>Media Discourse and Reality</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>TV, USA</td>
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<td>Construction of Reality. Gamson, William A. Croteau, David. Hoynes, William. Sasson, Theodore. Annual Review of Sociology, 1992, 18, 373-393.</td>
<td>“Rather than providing readers with some coherent sense of the broader social forces that affect the conditions of everyday life, media discourse in the US operates in ways that promote apathy, cynicism, &amp; quiescence. Further, media trends point toward more &amp; more messages, fewer &amp; bigger producers, &amp; even less substance. On the positive side, media messages provide a many -voiced, open text that can &amp; often is read oppositionally. TV imagery often forces the powers that be to compete &amp; defend what they would prefer to have taken for granted. The undetermined nature of media discourse allows challenges to the status quo to present competing constructions of reality &amp; to find support for them from readers whose daily lives may lead them to construct meaning in ways that go beyond media imagery.”</td>
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<td>Some Reflections on Discourses on Football Hooliganism. Redhead, Steve. Sociological Review, 1991, 39, 3, Aug, 479-486.</td>
<td>Media Effects on Football Violence “Focusing on Gary Armstrong's &amp; Rosemary Harris's ethnographic study of football hooliganism in GB, it is argued that the media's production of technological images of, &amp; discourses on, football hooliganism has created a powerful image of football as a signification of violence, making it difficult to research the phenomenon without the researcher becoming an integral part of the discourse; examples of approaches that might overcome this methodological difficulty are discussed. Armstrong &amp; Harris are lauded for providing a rich &amp; entertaining ethnography, but criticized for a lack of explanatory power. It is concluded that a better understanding of football hooliganism can be advanced by applying Jean Baudrillard's notion of hyperreality-the anticipation of reality by images.”</td>
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<td>The Media Politics of Crime and Criminal Justice. Schlesinger, Philip. Tumber, Howard. Murdock, Graham. British Journal of Sociology, 1991, 42, 3, Sept, 397-420.</td>
<td>Crime Representation in TV “In an examination of the treatment of crime &amp; criminal justice in GB's national news media, it is argued that media-centric approaches to the study of relations between news sources &amp; the media should be eschewed in favor of approaches that are more sensitive to conflicts within &amp; between social institutions. This argument is illustrated by examining case studies of the media strategies pursued by sources in the criminal justice field &amp; by a research project conducted 1986-1988 consisting of interviews with a range of news sources in this field (N not specified). Observations are offered regarding the relations between patterns of media consumption &amp; fear of crime in sections of the TV audience, &amp; it is concluded that more comparative analyses should be conducted of existing work in media sociology, political science, &amp; criminology.”</td>
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<td>&quot;Road Warriors&quot; on &quot;Hair-Trigger Highways&quot;: Cultural Resources and the Media's Construction of the 1987 Freeway Shootings Problem. Best, Joel. Sociological Inquiry, 1991, 61, 3, summer, 327-345.</td>
<td>Media Agents as Claimsmakers “Although media portrayals of social problems generally reconstruct the claims of activists &amp; other primary claimsmakers, in the case of the 1987 Los Angeles, Calif, freeway violence problem, media agents themselves acted as primary claimsmakers. The press drew on cultural resources in constructing this problem, applying a conventional template for social problems stories, &amp; using familiar imagery to depict freeway shootings. The social organization of claimsmaking, as well as contingencies in the histories of individual campaigns, affect the choice of cultural resources used to construct social problems.”</td>
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<td>Reputation Building and the Film Art World: The Case of Alfred Hitchcock. Kapsis, Robert E. Sociological Quarterly, 1989, 30, 1, Mar, 15-35.</td>
<td>Film and Reputation “The change in Alfred Hitchcock's reputation from popular entertainer to distinguished auteur over the last twenty-five years is usually attributed to the efforts of some admiring European film figures. A reevaluation of Hitchcock's work, beginning in the 1960s, emphasizes Hitchcock's own part in orchestrating the transformation. Other factors that might speed up, slow down, or undermine altogether the reputational process are examined. The probable effects of Hitchcock's changing reputation on subsequent developments in the suspense thriller genre are also explored.”</td>
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<td>Reading Tender Mercies: Two</td>
<td>Film and Alcoholic Representation</td>
<td>Film USA</td>
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<td>Interpretations, Denzin, Norman K. Sociological Quarterly, 1989, 30, 1, Mar, 37-57.</td>
<td>“Two readings—one realistic, the other subversive—of Tender Mercies, a contemporary (1983) “alcoholism” film, are offered, speaking to the problem of how a society represents itself to its members through its cultural depictions of everyday life, &amp; arguing that sociologists have been slow to utilize such cultural representations of society. It is contended that a patriarchal bias structures the film in question, which is illustrated by a subversive reading of its text. It is concluded that films like Tender Mercies reproduce key cultural ideologies concerning men, women, family, &amp; alcoholism. The experience of viewing a film cannot be reduced to causes &amp; effects, but must rather be studied in terms of the fields of experience a film makes available to the viewer. A methodology for conducting studies of cultural texts is outlined.”</td>
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<td>Preaching to the Converted: Conversion Language and the Constitution of the TV Evangelical Community. Wright, Chris. Sociological Review, 1989, 37, 4, Nov, 733-760.</td>
<td>TV and Evangelism When 90 hours of broadcasting on an independent Christian TV station in Ohio reveals a paradox in the presentation of conversion in TV evangelism: although the necessity of being converted is a common theme, it is clear that the evangelists are aware that their audience is already converted. An attempt is made to resolve the paradox by showing how TV evangelists use conversion language as rhetoric to legitimate their role &amp; the rationality of the organization that they represent. It is further shown how this legitimation is itself made possible through another use of conversion language that creates a sense of moral community embracing evangelists, organization, &amp; audience as co-partners in the shared project of conversion. It is demonstrated how the presentation of TV evangelism as the central ritual of a moral community generates a further conversion rhetoric that depicts the community as both exclusive of &amp; yet open to nonmembers—a contradiction that is resolved through the establishment of distinctive roles within the community related to the activity of winning converts.”</td>
<td>TV USA</td>
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<td>The Production of Punctuality: Social Interaction, Temporal Organization, and Social Structure. Clayman, Steven E. American Journal of Sociology, 1989, 95, 3, Nov, 659-691.</td>
<td>News Interviews and Institutional Structures Using transcriptions of live TV news interviews (N = 50), how an interactional encounter is brought to a close at a prespecified time is described, to explore linkage between the organization of interaction &amp; institutional forms generally regarded as social structural in character. The closing process is first examined in casual conversation, which has a variable duration. News interview closings are then examined &amp; shown to adhere to a systematically modified format that provides for closing at a prearranged time. It is suggested that sociotemporal &amp; institutional structures are reproduced through the situated adaptation of generic interactional mechanisms, &amp; that this formulation preserves the integrity of both interaction &amp; social structure while providing for their interconnection.”</td>
<td>TV USA</td>
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<td>Social Control and the Diffusion of Modern Telecommunications Technologies: A Cross-National Study. Buchner, Bradley Jay. American Sociological Review, 1988, 53, 3, June, 446-453</td>
<td>Marxism and TV Published data routinely show a notable disparity in the relative growth of telephone &amp; TV technologies in Marxist &amp; non-Marxist industrial nations: Marxist nations favor growth of TV systems &amp; non-Marxist nations generally favor telephone systems. Secondary data on eight Marxist industrial nations indicate that regime practices were a much stronger predictor than relative economic development in explaining this disparity.”</td>
<td>TV, Phone USA</td>
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<td>The Mass Media and the Social Construction of the Missing Children Problem. Fritz, Noah J. Altheide, David L. Sociological Quarterly, 1987, 28, 4, Dec, 473-492.</td>
<td>Media Effects on Missing Children *The origins of claims &amp; counterclaims about the nature &amp; extent of missing children are discussed, &amp; an empirical analysis is conducted of the impact of various sources of media information about the missing children issue in order to demonstrate the process by which a social problem is constructed. A self-report questionnaire was administered to adults aged 17-64 at a church forum &amp; in 2 Coll classrooms in a large southwestern metropolis (total N = 96) before &amp; after they viewed a 2-part documentary on the complexities</td>
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<td>Same Time, Next Year: Aggregate Analysis of the Mass Media and Violent Behavior. Baron, James and Peter Reiss. American Sociological Review</td>
<td>1985</td>
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<td>Press, TV</td>
<td>USA</td>
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<td>of the missing children issue. The data suggest that mass-mediated imagery &amp; formats forge an interactive informational context for social problems by sustaining what is viewed in one's living room with imagery in bulk mail, milk cartons, &amp; posters. It is further suggested that mass media depictions of this problem carry over into consonant images of child abuse. This conceptualization is capable of encompassing other accounts of social problems within claims-making activity.”</td>
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La Jolla) offer two tests for the proposed artifact explanations. While Baron & Reiss find a correlation between media stories in one year & deaths at appropriate dates of the following year, a similar test for deaths in the preceding year shows no correlation. Further, if deaths rise after stories because of heteroscedasticity, elimination of heteroscedasticity should eliminate the rise, but this does not occur. The artifact explanation thus appears very implausible. In Reply to Phillips and Bollen, James N. Baron & Peter C. Reiss (1) find that Phillips & Bollen ignore the key conceptual & methodological points raised; (2) show that, properly understood, the artifact hypothesis actually predicts their findings; & (3) reemphasize the need for research designs that examine the link between the mass media & violent behavior directly.”

### Sociology and Mass Communication

“Mass communication has always been an object of interdisciplinary study, but it is currently gaining a greater degree of autonomy; the paradigm that is emerging has probably been more influenced by sociology than by any other discipline. In a review of literature published during the last five years, chosen according to the significance or representativeness of the main themes, media theory is a major theme; this field has proved very sensitive to wider debates within the social sciences, especially those provoked by the advocacy of more critical theory & research & by attacks on positivism. The cultural studies approach has gained ground, & there has been more interchange between humanistic & scientific approaches. The question of media power has remained at the center of the debate. The critical-cultural developments mentioned have made some contribution to a reconceptualization of the problem & to the adoption of new research strategies that pay more attention to long-term, institutional effects of media. The range of social issues associated with the study of mass communication has widened, with especial attention given to questions of women in society, international communication, & the social consequences of new information technology.”

### TV and Symbols

“Recent research has focused on the role of TV in enhancing the shared symbolic environment, specifically the argument that the diffusion of TV increased the proportion of the US population recognizing public figures & more abstract cultural symbols. This hypothesis was tested by James R. Beniger with time series of the labeling used in the editorial cartoons found in 5 US metropolitan newspapers. Here, the hypothesis is tested using magazine covers (from Life & Look, 1948-1970, total N = 1,635). The findings offer additional support for the influence of TV in increasing shared images. The growth of TV corresponds to an increase in the use of symbols on magazine covers, a decrease in the labeling of those symbols, & a decrease in labels used solely to identify public figures. These changes occurred most dramatically during the 1950s, a period in which TV was rapidly spreading throughout US society.”

### Media Effects on Environmentalism

“Although many environmental groups date from the beginning of the twentieth century, mass media popularization of environmental issues is a fairly recent trend, dating from the late 1960s. Some aspects of the media's role in presenting environmental issues are discussed, with a focus on British groups & their use of the media to publicize issues & goals. Data from a 1979/80 survey of 77 national groups & the coverage they were accorded in the media are provided. Examples from recent group efforts, eg, the attempt to lower the lead content of gasoline, illustrate the course of a widely politicized issue. Although the importance of the media in publicizing issues is undisputed, media campaigns can work against
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<td>“David P. Phillips used data from a time-series analysis of US fatalities in 1977 to show that fictional suicide stories on daytime TV &quot;soap operas&quot; trigger subsequent real-life suicides &amp; single-motor-vehicle fatalities. However, Phillips committed a serious error that invalidates his cause-effect strategy: ie, by using weekly newspaper summaries of soap-opera events, he assumed certain dates for TV-program suicides that were not, in fact, correct for 8 of 13 cases. When Phillips's error is corrected by using daily information in the time-series analysis, no evidence is found linking soap-opera suicides to subsequent real-life fatalities.”</td>
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<td>“The impact of mass media violence on aggression has been studied primarily in the laboratory; the effect of mass media violence in the real world is examined here. Evidence is given indicating that one type of mass media event triggers a brief, sharp increase in US homicides. Immediately after heavyweight championship prizefights, 1973-1978, US homicides increased by 12.46%, the greatest increase occurring after heavily publicized fights. These findings persist even after correction for secular trends, seasonal, &amp; other extraneous variables. Four alternative explanations for the findings are tested; evidence suggests that heavyweight prizefights stimulate fatal, aggressive behavior in some Americans.”</td>
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<td>“The hypothesis that TV increases popular recognition of public figures &amp; more abstract cultural symbols is tested with time series of the labeling used in 1,154 editorial cartoons of 3 leading US metropolitan newspapers. The sample includes at least 100 cartoons published in each of the 9 presidential election years, 1948-1980. Both the proportion of actual persons labeled &amp; the mean number of labeled symbols per cartoon decreased by 50%-67% over the period; both trends were downward with a high degree of statistical significance. Several explanations other than the hypothesized increase in the shared symbolic environment are considered &amp; rejected. Temporal r &amp; other indirect inference suggest that TV is at least a partial cause of the change. TV's influence on shared images is also noted by the cartoonists themselves. The findings suggest that TV may increase the likelihood that cultural symbols can be used to direct a nation's attention, to manipulate PO &amp; to mobilize behavior.”</td>
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<td>“As David Phillips has pointed out, newspaper publicity on suicides is known to trigger additional, imitative suicides. Examination of data on bomb threats against nuclear energy facilities revealed that threat incidence closely follows fluctuations in mass media coverage of nuclear power issues. Bomb threats, like suicides, are clearly influenced by the mass media.”</td>
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<td>“David P. Phillips has shown that suicides increase in the month of highly publicized suicide stories. Several subsequent papers have built on this finding &amp; have suggested that publicized suicide stories trigger increases in covert suicides disguised as motor vehicle or airplane accidents. If the original findings cannot be replicated, then doubt is cast on all these studies. Here it is demonstrated that US daily suicides increase significantly after highly publicized suicide stories appear on TV evening news programs, providing the first evidence that the increase in suicides occurs only after &amp; not before the suicide story. In addition, the first systematic study of the length of time a suicide story affects suicides is presented; the effect probably does not extend beyond ten days. These findings</td>
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<td>Coping with Crowding: Television, Patterns of Activity, and Adaptation to High Density Environments. Gillis, A R. Sociological Quarterly, 1979, 20, 2, spring, 267-277.</td>
<td>1979</td>
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<td>TV Canada</td>
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<td>describe the media’s portrayal of social norms, values, &amp; roles, eg, depiction of blacks, women, &amp; others of minority status. TV depiction of sex &amp; violence is another popular subject of examination. Sociological interpretation of these data will remain problematic, however, until cultural &amp; organizational factors accounting for mass media content, &amp; effects of various types of content, are better understood. Much remains to be studied about the role of mass communication in socialization &amp; social change.</td>
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viewing was measured by tricholomizing Rs' estimates of how many evenings per week they watch TV at least one hour. Perceived veracity of TV was measured by tricholomizing Rs' beliefs that TV is very accurate, somewhat accurate, or not very accurate in showing American life. Although moderately strong & statistically significant positive relationships were found between affluence perceptions & both amount of TV viewing & perceived veracity of TV, these zero order relationships are spurious associations accounted for by class-related variables such as income, occupation, & especially education. Only a very weak relationship is found between affluence perception & amount of TV viewing, controlling for perceived veracity of TV, & it is in the direction opposite that hypothesized. Implications of findings for future research on TV effects are discussed.”

**News Media Use of Time**

“The production of news is an important part of contemporary cultural & social life. The initial view here is that one key set of concepts used by newsmen--those relating to time--have been neglected by sociological analyses. Fieldwork conducted over a period of four years (from 1972 to 1975) in the newsrooms of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) locates BBC newsmen as members of a time-conscious Western culture. The structure of competition which defines news as a perishable commodity demands a production structure geared to the value of ‘immediacy’ & to the temporal horizons of a daily cycle. An acute consciousness of the passage of time invades the very details of the broadcasting newsmen’s work. The newsmen’s language displays fine conceptual distinctions regarding time which show the significance of the temporal dimension of his work. Such concepts as pace, duration, & sequence are used in the framing of news as a cultural form. For newsmen, mastery of time-pressure is a way of manifesting their professionalism. “News” as presently conceived, tends to abolish an historical awareness.”

**Industrial Conflict Representation in News**

“A summary is presented of the main findings of an analysis of TV News & Current Affairs presentation of industrial conflict during Feb/Mar 1973. The analysis attempts to go beyond the concern of earlier work to uncover particular ‘biased’ messages about industrial relations: an attempt is made to identify, as a system, the generative set of ideological categories through which these events were presented to the public. The ‘superficial/common-sensical’ style of much of the presentation is the crucial level at which these ideological categories may be said to be reproduced through the news media. The reproduction of these ideological categories must, however, be seen as an active & problematic process, which does at times break down, rather than as an inevitable outcome of economic or institutional structures of power.”

**TV and Black Identity**

“The advent of new COMM's techniques & patterns, particularly TV, may have proven to have precisely the contrary effect of that suggested by some of the classical views of increasing massification of society & SR. MM is examined as a force that promotes diff'ration & revolutionary change, & aids in generating new identity. The case of the black revolution is considered. 2 events occurred simultaneously to create this revolution. One was for the former identity of the Negro; bound to a discreet localism based upon patterns of community relationships, to be weakened by the compression of black poverty & then oriented toward a symbolic black community which is not tied to localism. The second was for the COMM's network in which the Negro existed to be extended beyond the boundaries of his area. The MM, particularly TV, has put the
Negro into regular empathetic relationships with other Negroes & transformed him into a black. It is concluded that new media technologies heightened media induced pluralism in contra distinction to the classical arguments.”
8.3 Political Studies Bibliography of Mass Communication

Methodology: Using JSTOR Database Online (www.jstor.com), I asked which articles matched the keyword mass media, mass communication, broadcasting, and television. Because of its database’s structure, the journals selected varied in the final year considered.


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"In terms of economic voting, voters' perceptions of economic indicators can be more important than the statistics themselves. This distinction is particularly important in understanding George Bush's defeat in 1992. Relentlessly negative reporting on economic performance during the election year negatively affected voters' perceptions of the economy. These altered perceptions influenced voting behavior. Ordinary least squares regression is used to demonstrate the media's impact on economic evaluations. Logistic regression is used to demonstrate the importance of economic evaluations in vote choice. Media consumption and attention to the presidential campaign through the mass media negatively shaped voters' retrospective economic assessments. These assessments were significantly related to vote choice. This suggests an explanation for why George Bush lost reelection despite an economy that had rebounded from recession well in advance of election day." | TV, Press | USA     |
"The impact of media sources including televised political commercials, television news, and newspapers on candidate issue position knowledge and issue-based candidate evaluations is explored. From previous research, we expect that citizens who recall political TV commercials and are more attentive to newspaper political coverage will have greater knowledge of candidates' stances on issues than those watching political news on TV. Citizens recalling political ads and those reading the newspaper are also expected to be more likely to evaluate the candidates using substantive issues. Regression analysis of the 1992 American National Election Study data. Citizens recalling political advertising have the most accurate knowledge of the candidates' issue positions and are the most likely to use domestic and foreign issues to evaluate the presidential candidates. Consumption of negative advertising is also associated with greater issue knowledge and use of issues in evaluations late in the campaign." | TV, Press | USA     |
"This research investigates the advertising and news environment during the 1992 California U.S. Senate campaigns. I examine how people used campaign media--ads and news--in evaluating candidates. Content analysis explores the messages in television ads and news coverage. How citizens assess candidate's recognition, favorability, electability, and the vote is addressed | TV     | USA     |
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Through local public opinion surveys in the nominating and general election stages. The results reveal that the impact of ads varies considerably with several elements of the political context: the stage and competitiveness of the campaign, strategic interactions among the candidates, and coverage by the news media. One cannot fully understand ads unless the context of electoral judgments is included in the analysis.

4 Media Effects on Voting

"We investigate the degree to which exposure to the mass media results in an increased likelihood to vote for the incumbent (or the winner in open-seat races). We also present experimental evidence demonstrating the influence of electoral expectations in individual-level voting decisions."

Mass Media and Personal Experience

"This study considers competing theories concerning the role of mass media in hindering or facilitating the translation of personal experiences into political preferences. Using national survey and media content data that allow evaluations of both media coverage and individual patterns of media use, this study evaluates the influence of mass media on the direct impact of personal experiences on presidential performance as Ronald Reagan completed his second term in office, and on the indirect impact of personal experiences by means of their impact on collective-level issue judgments. Exposure to unemployment news appears to strengthen the impact of personal experiences on presidential performance ratings. Heavy unemployment coverage also increases the extent to which perceptions of national unemployment conditions are generalized from personal experience. Overall, results suggest that mass media may counter the tendency to morselize personal experiences and help legitimize the translation of private interests into political attitudes."

Media Effect Measurement

"Analyses of the persuasive effects of media exposure outside the laboratory have generally produced negative results. I attribute such nonfindings in part to carelessness regarding the inferential consequences of measurement error and in part to limitations of research design. In an analysis of opinion change during the 1980 presidential campaign, adjusting for measurement error produces several strong media exposure effects, especially for network television news. Adjusting for measurement error also makes preexisting opinions look much more stable, suggesting that the new information absorbed via media exposure must be about three times as distinctive as has generally been supposed in order to account for observed patterns of opinion change."

Mass Media as Impersonal Impact

"This study combines contemporary research on the effects of mass communication with findings on sociotropic voting to build a general model that explains the origins and effects of economic perceptions. This model is then tested in the context of retrospective personal and social concerns about unemployment. Survey evidence suggests that retrospective assessments of unemployment result primarily from mediated information rather than from direct experiences."
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<td>Mass media are found to have an &quot;impersonal impact,&quot; influencing social, but not personal perceptions of the issue, while personal experiences with unemployment influence exclusively personal-level judgments. Mass media also influence the weighting of pocketbook as opposed to sociotropic concerns by means of a &quot;sociotropic priming effect.&quot; Rather than priming all considerations that surround economic issues, high levels of media exposure to economic news prime the importance of collective perceptions to political evaluations and decrease the importance of personal concerns.”</td>
<td>Vol. 54, No. 2</td>
<td>May, 1992</td>
<td>The Journal of Politics</td>
<td>USA</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>This study examines the possibility that the news media, by covering male and female candidates differently, may influence the success of female candidates. A content analysis of newspaper coverage of U.S. Senate campaigns shows that male and female Senate candidates are covered differently in the news. An experiment was conducted to explore the consequences of these differences in coverage, as well as the significance of the candidates’ gender, for evaluations of Senate candidates. The experimental results suggest that gender differences in coverage tend to advantage male candidates. For instance, candidates who are covered like male candidates in the news are considered more viable than candidates who are covered like female candidates. Sex stereotypes, on the other hand, can advantage female candidates. Female candidates are viewed as more compassionate and more honest than identical male candidates. The findings from this study support the hypothesis that the mass media may influence a woman’s chances of success at the polls. Male and female candidates are covered differently in the news and these differences often produce negative assessments of women candidates.”</td>
<td>Vol. 36, No. 2</td>
<td>May, 1992</td>
<td>American Journal of Political Science</td>
<td>USA</td>
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<td>&quot;A new index of conversion is used to examine the nature of change in presidential elections since 1864. A change in the nature of change is evident around the 1950s and 1960s; net electoral change before then appears to have been primarily a result of differential abstention, while electoral change afterward has been primarily a result of conversion. It is hypothesized that this shift was due to the advent of television, investigative reporting, face-to-face debates, and other factors that eased the flow of information and made candidates more tangibly accessible to voters. Since most of these did not have the same effect on congressional races, it is possible to test the hypothesis by comparing processes of change in presidential and congressional races in the 1956-60 and 1972-76 National Election Studies (NES) panel surveys. As further tests of the hypothesis, well-informed voters are compared with less-informed voters, and congressional and Minnesota legislative races since 1960 are compared with presidential races over the same period. Implications are drawn for theories of electoral change.”</td>
<td>Vol. 43, No. 3</td>
<td>Apr., 1991</td>
<td>World Politics</td>
<td>General</td>
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"We use a cognitive schema-based approach to model an African-American racial belief system, showing the content of racial belief systems in a national sample to be associated with the individual's degree of socioeconomic status, religiosity, and exposure to black media. We find that African-Americans with a higher socioeconomic status are less supportive of black political autonomy and that they feel themselves more distant from black masses and black elites than do those of lower socioeconomic status. Religiosity, while unrelated to black autonomy, strengthens closeness of black masses and black elites. Black television—and, to a much lesser degree, black print media—had a consistent impact on the racial belief system. We conclude by discussing the complexity of the African-American racial belief system and potential directions for future work."


"This article reports the results of a panel study examining the impact of the 1987 television miniseries "Amerika" on political attitudes and stereotypes. Viewing the docudrama, which ostensibly depicted life in the Midwest ten years after a Soviet takeover of the United States, was associated with significant changes in attitudes concerning Soviet-American relations. These attitudinal changes were consistently in the direction of greater conservatism (for example, viewers became less tolerant of communism, and voiced more support for enhanced U.S. military strength). The moderating impact of perceived realism, education, and ideology, as well as the independent impact of indirect exposure to the series (that is, informal peer discussion and attention to associated media coverage), were also examined. The implications of the results for research on the political impact of entertainment programming are discussed."


"Studies of the postreform House have often commented on the large increase in personal staffs but have less frequently analyzed the effects of the expanded work force in Congress. In particular, little is known about the evolution of roles and positions within congressional offices that may have altered the way in which Congress operates. This paper studies one important staff position, that of press secretary, by analyzing responses to a questionnaire administered to a sample of 124 press secretaries to Democratic House members in December 1984. The typical expectation has been that press secretaries would be useful for members seeking national visibility and hoping to master
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<th>138</th>
<th>The electronic media. However, given the primacy of reelection as a goal for members and the difficulties of getting television coverage, these hypotheses may well be problematic. The results from the questionnaire suggest that press secretaries are largely oriented toward the local media and toward print. The perceived value of television is set largely in the district context and is most influenced by the availability of the medium, determined by the competitiveness of the local media market. The perceived value of the national media is largely a function of the goal of making the member a national spokesperson on an issue which can then be set on the political agenda. The centrality of the variable measuring the goal of issue spokespersonship suggests that publicity in the media is not sought for its own sake or merely to advance the career of the House member to higher office. Publicity is also sought to accomplish policy goals within and outside of the institution of Congress.”</th>
<th>Media Effect and Justice</th>
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<td>14</td>
<td>“I show the intimate connection between the actions of the justices and support for the Supreme Court during one of the most critical periods of U.S. political history, the four months of 1937 during which Franklin D. Roosevelt sought legislation to ‘pack’ the high bench with friendly personnel. Over the period from 3 February through 10 June 1937, the Gallup Poll queried national samples on 18 separate occasions about FDR’s plan. These observations constitute the core of my analyses. I demonstrate the crucial influence of judicial behavior and the mass media in shaping public opinion toward the Supreme Court. This research illuminates the dynamics of public support for the justices, contributes to a clearer understanding of an important historical episode, shows the considerable impact of the mass media on public attitudes toward the Court, and adds more evidence on the role of political events in the making of public opinion.”</td>
<td>Press USA</td>
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<td>“Causal beliefs are important ingredients of public opinion. Citizens are able to identify the causes of complex national issues and do so spontaneously. Evidence is presented that individuals’ explanations of political issues are significantly influenced by the manner in which television news presentations ‘frame’ these issues. These results are politically consequential, for individuals’ explanations of national issues independently affect their assessments of presidential performance.”</td>
<td>TV USA</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>“Democratic theory must pay attention to what influences public opinion. In this study the content of network television news is shown to account for a high proportion of aggregate changes (from one survey to another) in U.S. citizens’ policy preferences. Different news sources have different effects. News commentators (perhaps reflecting elite or national consensus or media biases) have a very strong positive impact, as do experts. Popular presidents tend to have positive effects, while unpopular presidents do not. In contrast, special interest groups tend to have a negative impact.”</td>
<td>TV USA</td>
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| Resource | Title | Volume | Issue | Pages | Summary
|----------|-------|--------|-------|-------|--------------------------------------------------
| 2 | The Media, the War in Vietnam, and Political Support: A Critique of the Thesis of an Oppositional Media | 46 | 1 | 2-24 | “The issue of the relation of the media to political authority has been approached by political scientists mainly in terms of the effects of news content on individual attitudes toward government. This article addresses the institutional side of the question. It offers a critique, based on a case study of television coverage of Vietnam, of the thesis that the media shifted during the 1960s and 1970s toward an oppositional relation to political authority. It concludes that while there was a substantial increase in critical news content during the Vietnam War, changes in the professional norms and practices of journalism, including the norms of "objective journalism" and journalists’ relation to official sources, were much less dramatic. A model for explaining changes in the level of critical coverage is offered, emphasizing media response to the degree of consensus or dissensus among political elites.”

| 18 | Media Do Make a Difference: The Differential Impact of Mass Media in the 1976 Presidential Race | 27 | 3 | 407-430 | “Studies of the effects of mass media have regularly produced the conclusion that media’s impact is limited and perhaps negligible. Most recent research concedes the absence of blanket media effects, but argues that when particular kinds of conditions exist, media can have localized impact on identifiable groups. The clearest indication of this shift occurs in studies of agenda setting. In contrast, this study demonstrates broad-based media effects by jointly measuring the kind and intensity of media use, focusing on those perceptions most susceptible to media influence, and applying MANOVA analysis. Results show that different media exposure produces consistent and systematic differences in public opinion that persist even after factors such as education, class, and interest in public affairs are taken into account.”

| 19 | TV Effects on Presidential Campaigns | 45 | 3 | 732-744 | “This article traces the growth of public opinion polling on television in the past three presidential elections. This growth is a consequence of the media’s interpretive role and the proliferation of primaries in the nominating procedures of the parties. As a consequence, the media have enhanced their role in presidential campaigns.”

| 20 | Experimental Demonstrations of the “Not-So-Minimal” Consequences of Television News Programs | 76 | 4 | 848-858 | “Two experiments sustain Lippmann’s suspicion, advanced a half century ago, that media provide compelling descriptions of a public world that people cannot directly experience. More precisely, the experiments show that television news programs profoundly affect which problems viewers take to be important. The experiments also demonstrate that those problems prominently positioned in the evening news are accorded greater weight in viewers’ evaluations of presidential performance. We note the political implications of these results, suggest their
psychological foundations, and argue for a revival of experimentation in the study of political communication."
8.4 Anthropological Studies Bibliography of Film

Methodology: Using *Anthropological Literature* (Eureka Database On Line of Tozzer Library Harvard University) and *Anthropological Index* On Line (Royal Anthropological Institute), I asked the databases which articles matched the keyword film and cinema, from 1970 to 1999.

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<td>12</td>
<td>Whose fantasy? Sut Jhally's</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Rock videos. Moral and ethical</td>
<td>Film</td>
<td>General</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>&quot;This isn't filmmaking, it's war&quot;: a gendered gaze on the Tom Cruise phenomenon / Veronika Rall. <em>Visual Anthropology Review</em> v. 9, no. 1, 1993. pp. 92-104.</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Feminist film criticism.</td>
<td>Film</td>
<td>USA</td>
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<td>No.</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>Trobrianders on camera and off: the film that did not get made</td>
<td>Weiner Annette B.</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Papua New Guinea, Trobriand Islanders, Foreign influences.</td>
<td>Film</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>Collaborating with anthropology through television</td>
<td>Woodhead Leslie</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Case studies, Methodology, Television film.</td>
<td>Film</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>Film discussion groups in China: state discourse or a plebian public sphere?</td>
<td>Mei-Hui Yang Mayfair</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>China. Social life and customs. 1949.</td>
<td>Film</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>When the lights do down in Cairo: cinema as secular ritual.</td>
<td>Armbrust Walter</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Cairo (Egypt). Social change</td>
<td>Film</td>
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<td>32</td>
<td>Body-less faces: mutilating modernity and abstracting women in an “Islamic cinema”.</td>
<td>Hamid Dabashi</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Iran. Drama. Social aspects.</td>
<td>Film</td>
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<td>33</td>
<td>Egyptian cinema and television: dancing and the female image.</td>
<td>Franken Marjorie A.</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Belly dance. Egypt. Social aspects</td>
<td>Film, TV</td>
</tr>
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<td>37</td>
<td>British ethnographic film: recent developments.</td>
<td>Henley Paul</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>Film</td>
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<td>38</td>
<td>'Disappearing world' goes to China: a production study of anthropological films.</td>
<td>Jenkins Alan</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Film Production in China.</td>
<td>Film</td>
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<td>39</td>
<td>Interpreting ethnographic film: an exchange about 'Celso and Cora'.</td>
<td>Kildea Gary, Willson Margaret</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Diverse anthropological interpretations of films.</td>
<td>Film</td>
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<td>40</td>
<td>Anthropology, film and the Arctic peoples: the first Forman lecture.</td>
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<td>1989</td>
<td>Comments on ‘Disappearing World’ ethnographic film</td>
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