

Media

Chapter 6

Iraq

- Was responsible for 911 T/F
- Had weapons of mass destruction T/F
- Is a conflict supported by the rest of the world T/F
- Currently has a dictator T/F

Communication

- The process of transmitting information from one individual or group to another
- Mass media
 1. Print media- words and pictures
 2. Broadcast media- sounds and images

Linkage- connect people, government, special interests, etc.

Mass Communication

- Newspapers

Have been less dominate since the 1960
(Radio and TV competition)

- Radio

Let listener discover the personality of the
reporter for the 1st time. Today often
caters to extreme views more. (RUSH)

Talk radio

Mass Communication

- TV

1940- 23 TV stations operating in the US
Today 98% of all houses have TV biggest
mass media audience of all.

Group Media

Communications technologies used
primarily within groups of people with
common interests

Magazines

- More specialized than newspaper.
- Small circulation and select readership
- 1. Attentive Policy Elites- leaders who follow news in specific policy areas.
- 2. 2 step communication- first elites gather the information and then they mobilize followers
(Tiger's Noose)

FAX

- Fax quickly became the standard communications equipment in politics.
- Campaign managers use them to organize their efforts
- Congress members (& staff) receive them in opposition and favor of particular legislation

Internet

- 1993- 50 websites in existence
By 1998 virtually all government agencies and political agencies had their own website
Congress now post findings on the internet
- Starr's Report
 - 911 commission

Internet

- Blogs- daily posting of thoughts on policy issues
 - Dan Rather/CBS
 - Apple 2006 case (bloggers Internet ers are protected as free press) Higher court has yet to hear case

Private Ownership of Media

Private ownership of media is taken for granted. It is also a fundamental freedom in the US.

Many nations including Western Europe have almost if not all government owned mass media

Money

Media is in business to make money

1. They do this by selling advertising
 2. They sell by appealing to large groups
 3. This effect the politics in all functions the media serves:
 - Reporting the new
 - Interpreting the news
 - Influencing citizens opinions
 - Setting the agenda
 - Socializing citizens
- (China and Google)

Consequences of Ownership

Private ownership ensures that news is selected for audience appeal

Also makes the news more dependent on advertising and profits

Less than half of America watches any kind of news on a given day

Consequences of Ownership

Entertainment in the media far overshadows news content

1. News worthiness- the degree to which a story is important enough to be covered.
2. Ratings game- adjusting delivery or content of news coverage to increase viewers (market driven journalism)
3. Infotainment- mixing journalism with theater employed by some news programs

Concentration of Ownership

- This is a decided trend in America (Turner)
- Increases the risk that owners could control the news to promote their own political interests. (socialism?) (Wag the Dog)
- Coverage of Iraq? (turn to opening now)

Government Regulation of the Media

Government regulations affect 3 aspects of their operation

1. Technical Consideration
2. Ownership
3. Content

Technical Regulations

- a. 1927- Federal Radio Act- says airwaves belong to public and radio must get license to use them
-This was done at the request of radio stations not forced on them
- b. 1934- Federal Communications Act- more sweeping, regulates broadcast and telephone created the FCC

Technical Regulations

FCC is made up of 5 members

- No more than 3 from one party
 - Serve 5-year terms
 - Can be removed only through impeachment or conviction
 - FCC is charged with regulating interstate and international communications by
1. Radio
 2. Television
 3. Telephone
 4. Cable
 5. Satellite

Ownership Regulations

Telecommunications Act of 1996- scrapped limitations on media ownership

1. There are no limits on the amount of TV stations one company can own as long as they don't go beyond 35% of the national market
2. There are no limits on radio ownership
 - A result of this act has been an increase in the concentration of media ownership (AOL-Time Warner) (AT&T)
 - Supermerger

Ownership Regulations

The industry argues that diversity among news sources is great enough to provide citizens with a wide range of political ideas

Regulation of Content

- a. In 1996 the federal court overturned an attempt to limit transmission of "indecent" material on the Internet on 1st amendment principles
- b. The court usually backs the media in these issues except for strategic info. (Geraldo)

Regulation of Content

- c. Broadcast Media is different because they use “public” airwaves; they often have been subject to additional regulation
- d. Courts struck down the Equal Opportunities and Reasonable access rule (neither of these were imposed on print media to begin with 14th amendment, 1st amendment)

Again high demand is supposed to keep everything fair

Covering National Politics

- a. About 75 full-time journalists are in the White House Press Corps
- The medias relationship with the press is done mainly through the White House Press Secretary (Scott McClellan)
- The Press relies mainly on information released to them daily by the President’s Staff
- b. Often officials “leak” stories to the press for many reasons (get public response, rally support etc.)
 - c. Politicians will often go “on background”

Covering National Politics

- c. Reporters never report things “off the record” for fear of being cut out of the loop
- d. Presidents often have photo ops for the press to observe them doing “presidential things”

Congress members all have their own press releases
(535) & C-SPAN

Presenting the news

- a. Media executives, news editors and prominent reporters act as **gatekeepers** in directing the news.
- They decide which events to report and how to handle the elements in those stories

Presenting the news

- b. Time constraints impose especially harsh limitations on television news
- The average story is 1 minute
 - Few stories run longer than 2 minutes (except tornado coverage)
 - The typical script for an entire news broadcast would fill about 2 columns of one newspaper page

Presenting the news

- c. People identify with personalities and only the president is a personality
- The court and congress are just institutions to most people
 - The president gets about 7 minutes of attention on the news
 - The Congress gets 1 minute
 - The Courts get about $\frac{1}{2}$

Presenting the news

- d. During Elections We get “race horse journalism”- where we try to constantly see who is ahead. This leads to polls and opinions and leaves little time for platforms and issues
 - Media event- a situation too “newsworthy” to pass up

Where the public gets its news

- a. Most from TV (see graph page 181)
- b. More with higher education and more cognitive skills get their news from print and radio
- c. Different socioeconomic groups pay attention to the news at different levels

What People Remember and Know

- a. NOT MUCH
 - TV Hypothesis
 - Many claim that greater reliance on TV is to blame for citizen’s low level of knowledge on public affairs- people are more adept at visually identifying a candidate than relating to their beliefs on the issues
 - Figure 6.5 The daily show

What People Remember and Know

- b. The FCC gets some of the blame
- Because they regulate the news, TV networks are concerned about being fair and equal in covering the candidates, and this concern may result in they're failing to critique candidate's positions

What People Remember and Know

- People with high cognitive skill learn equally from all 3 types of media
- People with lower cognitive skills "learn" most from TV and least from newspapers

The Political Effects of Media

1. 9 out of 10 Americans believe that media strongly influence public opinion
 2. Many argue that the media creates public opinion simply by covering a story
- Election 2000
- Did coverage make people think W had won?
 - Did it affect voter turnout?
 - Gore was perceived as the challenger?

Setting the Political Agenda

The media the strongest influence in setting the agenda for an uninformed electorate

- a. Political agenda- the list of issues that people identify as needing government attention

Kennedy and Clinton – infidelity handled completely different by the media

- b. TV coverage is more likely to pay attention to bad economic news (?)

Bush Sr. and Clinton

Setting the Political Agenda

- c. Politicians use the media to influence public and PEER opinion

- d. Mass media has become a communications network for attentive elite

Media Socialization

Media gives people “their” reality

- a. Young people acquire political values through **infotainment**

-Years of television messages conveying distrust of law enforcement and violence shape youngsters

- b. Many argue that the media “forces” people to accept “the way things are” (order) Leave it to Beaver)

- c. Political/ civic traditions- patriotic but take no knowledge

Is reporting Biased?

- a. On one hand news reporters are criticized for tilting their stories in a liberal direction
Promoting social equality and undercutting social order
- b. On the other hand media owners are suspected of preserving inequalities and reinforcing the existing order by serving a relentless round of entertainment that numbs the public's capacity for critical analysis
If you don't understand or don't care you won't fight it or even won't to change the status quo

Contributions to Democracy

- a. Most political communication from government to citizens must be passed through the media
Media spread the word but also act as "watchdogs" for the people
- b. News media and the government are in many ways adversaries- each mistrusts the other and thinks they want to "skew" public opinion

Contributions to Democracy

- c. The media today has better tools to do the job reporting mass opinion has never been easier with technology
 1. Media use their polling information to report news but also in gauging support for policy issues. (War, budget, etc.)
 2. They generate more accurate knowledge but at the same time may have an influence on the public or the policy makers.
