

## Social Historical Reading Of Communication Theories

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### Abstract

Through this scientific paper, we seek to discuss the importance of endoscopy in the field of communication, which is very important in addressing the complexity of information and communication technology in society, It has become intertwined in many fields of knowledge, both in the human and social sciences and in the applied and natural sciences. On the other hand, we observe a stereotype in communication research in terms of its treatment of the explanatory theories of communication phenomena and a metaphor for theories that grew in the last century under different historical events and social conditions than in our present era. in addition to attempts to build new theories at a rapid and changing technological pace.

We see it as a matter of great magnitude that needs to be discussed to open up new horizons in scientific research beyond stereotypes. So we try to bring this vision forward through the historical socio-tracking of the most prominent communication theories and highlight the importance of geographical and temporal context in the endoscopy process to understand and interpret communication phenomena, Most important is the technological inequality that can exist between societies or even between micro-groups within a single period.

**Keywords :** Communication Theories, Socio-Historical, Context, Temporal Context, Theoretical Stereotype, Communication Phenomenon.

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## I- Introduction :

Communication research overlaps with many fields and scientific disciplines because of the importance of the communication phenomenon in studying social transformations that are complex nature on the one hand, and periodic change associated with developments and circumstances similar to technological development is the main driver in the transition from one era to another in an accelerated chronological context. This makes communication theories also characterized by rapid change in the treatment and study of the communication process in their overall context.

Talking about communication theories is very important in understanding and interpreting various social and human phenomena in their direct or indirect form "The communication phenomenon cannot be talked about independently of its economic or political context or of the nature of the psycho-social composition of the members of a particular society, which also leads us to take into account the importance of anthropological studies and research, for example by understanding and studying local customs, traditions, and culture. They vary from one society to another and from one historical era to another.

In this regard, Wilbur Schramm asserts that "Communication Is Not An Academic Discipline, In The Style Of Physics Or Economics, But One At A Crossroads That Many Pass, But Only A Few Stop With."

These unique characteristics of the communication phenomenon prompt an important question: *Can the theoretical theory be established in communication studies and research?*

Trying to answer this question prompts us to reconsider the process of borrowing theories on the one hand, and not to overstate the research and theories of the media audience, which will lead us to reorient communications research and address the context surrounding communication and media. This topic cannot be dealt with without research into the dimensions and theoretical objectives in the field of communication, meaning what are the objectives of understanding and interpreting the communication process? Or what are the objectives of communication theories? The answer to this question reaffirms the time limits of communication theory and even geographical boundaries, even though they share the time period, which underscores the importance of the socio-historical context in addressing communications and media theories. In this regard, Virginia Nightingale confirms through an article entitled "Media Ethnography and the Disappearance of Communication Theory "

The importance and necessity of multidisciplinary checks and tracking of communications operations and multiple examples in this regard, such as Robert Merton's reliance on Emile Durkheim to explain social cohesion and society in his studies of the media's influence in controlling a small village in America during the 1960s, Mary Douglas, frequently cited in media, communication and cultural studies s ideas in popular cultures (Nightingale, Virginia. 2022).

An example can also be found in the various political events that Algeria experienced in 2019, where the former Algerian regime was interested in dealing with the events by focusing on modern means and techniques of the communication independently of other social and humanitarian intersections. Based on this idea, it has developed a strategy to try to eliminate the events marked by the Popular Mobility "El-Hirrak El –Chaabi ", which led to the failure of the previous regime's attempts to eliminate these events. "Popular mobility", is an example that can be used to illustrate the importance of the socio-historical context in the study of the communication phenomenon.. (Bensoula, Nouredine. 2020)

From the foregoing, we see the importance of approaching theoretical models in the field of communication in their historical and political context to understand them more precisely, This allows them to be appropriately used for different communication objectives according to the time limits, geography, and characteristics indicated to each society and not to overestimate borrowed theories If they fit certain societies, they may not correspond to societies different from them in characteristics, Which would open up scientific debate towards new horizons in communication research. *Is it reasonable to use theoretical contributions over the past century to study the present century's communication phenomena? Does the rapid technological development of this era allow for the establishment of new theories to understand and interpret the communication phenomenon? Given today's technological revolution, can we separate communication theories from information theories?*

## **II- . Objectives of the scientific paper:**

Through the various questions mentioned above, we try to raise the importance of theoretical communication research and complexity at the same time in comparison to the traditional theories that have grown in a less complex environment so that we do not say a simple environment, compared to the complexities of the present era in the light of the terrible

and accelerating technological secretions and development that the world is witnessing, It is a reading that opens up new prospects and directions for scientific research in the field of communication science. Many changes and dimensions are growing during modern means of communication that need study and attention. The communication process is no longer limited to specialists in a given field but also requires multiple hybrid disciplines in the form of scientific alliances to accommodate this complexity. Through this paper, we will try to illustrate this through a socio-historical reading of some of the communication theories and conditions that contributed to their development to illustrate the historical difference and social context in which these theories have grown in comparison with today's era.

### **III- The first generation Of communication Theories :**

Classical sociological and human theories in general are the founders of communication theories, foremost among them functional theory that divided society into different parts, each designed to meet specific needs. The family, the government, the economy, the media, education, and religion are important for understanding this theory and, according to functionality, the institution plays a vital role in society. If you don't offer a job to the community, this institution will disappear and when new needs develop or emerge, new institutions will be created to meet them. (Crossman, Ashely. 2018)

Its origins are Emile Durkheim, who was interested in how society remains relatively stable, a theory that focuses on the overall level of social structure, rather than the partial level of everyday life and among prominent theorists Herbert Spencer, Talcott Parsons, and Robert K. Merton.

According to the Functionalist theories, means of communication are one of the problematic parts of the overall social system, working to achieve a range of functions such as education, entertainment, information and news transfer, development of trends, opinions and ideas, modernization and other multiple functions known as mass communication functions. They represent a set of recurring actions and activities that contribute to balance and the relationship between the media and other systems, which not only affects society but also affects the way individuals use the media and, on the other hand, results affecting society as a whole, According to Merton R.Merton, the media as a social system operates within an external system formed through the set of cultural and social conditions (Bensoula, Noureddine, 2020).

In parallel with functional theories was research on media influences during World War II, where the media played a role in both the United States and Germany to make an impact on people's minds. The German Nazis used the film industry for propaganda and produced many films about their achievements, which had a significant impact on the German mind. Hypodermic Needle Model, drafted by Harold Dwight Lasswell (1902-1978 American sociologist), assumed that members of the public received the communication message in the same way and that it entailed direct and immediate responses according to the stated objectives, meaning that the research was about what the media did to the public. (Armand, M:19) Here we point out that the media and communications arena was made up of print and radio, and the initial experiences were on television (Bensoula, Nouredine, 2020).

We note that the emergence of means of communication and information as a new variable in society and the enhancement of its role and functions have made it possible to guide research towards it and to review its impact as an existing social institution and consider it an important component of the career. and trends have emerged that seek to measure their impact, especially with historic events that have helped, In particular, the First and Second World Wars and their various consequences, which has created an atmosphere conducive to the media and communication to guide individuals, such as low scientific and cultural standards and widespread poverty, In addition to the important element of lack of choices and sources of information, the few sources available during this period were accepted by the public due to the absence of competition and sources disseminating different information. In this regard, Alvin Toffler (American writer and sociologist) says: "The Homogeneous Effects Of Mass Media Were At The Height Of Their Power When There Were Only A Few Channels And A Few Media Outlets And Therefore Few Chances Of Choice For Listeners Or Viewers And, In The Future, The Reverse Situation Prevails, The Shift From Less Choice To More Pluralistic Media Opportunities Carries Not Only Cultural But Political And Commercial Connotations".(Bensoula, Nouredine, 2020)

These factors contributed to the emergence of the strong impact stream of communication methods in the form of theoretical paradigms to try to interpret the paradigm's style communication process of the subcutaneous needle or magic bullet supported by various research and directions similar to the functional stream as mentioned above and paradigm prioritization Agenda - Setting whose principles go back to Walter Lippman (American journalist and writer) through his book in 1922 "Public Opinion". In the view of Walter Lippman, the media can form a public opinion by focusing on certain issues it raises and giving them importance at the expense of others, In the same vein, Bernard Bernard emphasized that discussions on political issues take their indicators from the media's presentation as people

speak in politics in line with the steps drawn by the media. (Bensoula, Noureddine, 2020, p. 30)

In addition to changes in critical theories, it proved that the concepts of the Marxist economy need to be reviewed, and moved from research into who owns the means of production to who owns the means of communication? Despite the multiplicity of trends in the cash stream, the main focus of the research was on means of communication. Some looked at the pattern and economic structure of these means, others went on to look at the ideological dimension that controlled them, and the monetary school concluded that means of communication were means of manipulating the masses and ensuring their dependence. (Mutassim, Baker, 2022)

The this sense, the critical trend has shifted from studying the dominance of capitalist society and material conflict to studying the interest in criticizing the media that are working to reproduce the arts in new forms and considering that such processes have distracted people from researching and purchasing the real sources of global culture (Amal, Fatima. 2018).

#### **IV- The second Generation of information and communication research :**

This phase can be identified during the second half of the twentieth century when it was characterized by the deepening of media practice in society on the one hand and the multiplicity of media on the other. The communication and media structure is made up of the means of written, and audiovisual journalism, as well as signs of modern means such as mobile telephone, They served as new variables in that period that made the audience gain the possibility to choose the content and the means to follow it education ", which reflected the means of communication and information that were competing to reach out to the public, intensify studies to understand their behavior and identify their information needs to provide them with the necessary satisfaction.

The theoretical effort of the communication process at this stage can be divided into two main sections: the first embraces the influence of the media and communication, and the second new direction examines the relationship between these meanings and their audience and the psychological and social variables that govern this relationship.

In the first direction we find, for example, the continuation and supplementation of the theoretical contributions of Americans Walter Lippman and Berelson Bernard during the 1920s, by German political Elisabeth Noelle Neumann 1916-2010 is one of the foremost pioneers of The Spiral Of Silence Theory, based on the basic idea that an individual

tends to form his opinion according to the public opinion prevailing in the society in which he lives media, when the media adopts certain opinions or trends over a period of time, most individuals will move in the direction supported by the media, Public opinion is thus formed in line with ideas supported by the media in search of social compatibility, opposing individuals take a silent stance to avoid the persecution of the group and fear of social isolation, Thus, if they believe in opinions contrary to the media's presentation, they are committed to concealing their personal opinions and are less willing to talk about them with others.

Continuing Functional And Critical Theories Cultivation Theory emerged during the 1970s by American researchers Gerbner (1916-2005) and Larry Gross (American researcher born in 1953) which reaffirmed the role of the media and communication in the culture industry through a research project on the impact of mass media on the cultural structure after high rates of crime and violence in American society during this period (Llamia, Tala, 2020). George Gerbner and Larry Gross explained cultural inculcation as an unintended casual learning from scenes presented by television drama and these facts became the basis for values and mental images of the surrounding world. In other words, the contributions of Cultivation Theory were in response to the situations that American society knew during the 1960s and that contributed to their creation by the media and communication, foremost among them television products that were marketed for violence.

As for the second trend that has explored the relationship between the media and its audience, we find The Theory Of Uses & Gratifications that tried to go beyond theories of indirect or limited influences, as the media influence cannot be strong and direct to the emergence of new obstacles and variables (pluralism in the media, communication, competitiveness, and freedom of choice for the public). In addition, the effect process takes time, as confirmed by Elihou Katz (American social scientist), who was credited with giving the name Uses & Gratifications in 1959. According to this theory, the public is not just a negative element in the communication process. Rather, it is a religion that defines the information content they receive that they believe meets their psycho-social needs, Therefore, members of the public are active participants in the public outreach process and use means of communication that meet their expected objectives and the use of mass media varies according to the diversity of social interaction, individuals' psycho-social needs, and individual differences. People make conscious and voluntary use of the media to get special things advice, for

example, information, assistance, entertainment, entertainment, etc... This theory is also called the "Utility Theory", as she wondered how the public could benefit from mass media to achieve a lot of satisfaction such as learning about oneself and others and learning how to behave in different situations, relax, forget and spend time, using the media for different purposes (functions) (entertainment, education, media...). However, these functions are controlled by the needs and motivations of individuals to alleviate the burden of daily life and to achieve a psychological balance that helps to persist with others, The use of the media depends on different needs and motivations. s behavior ", which is essentially only a set of psychological forces that help to determine the behavior of the public, Disparities in exposure behavior are explained by extreme intensity or limited exposure as a result of the means failing to meet an individual's need or needs.

Pradigm's Uses & Gratifications is the result of a combination of functional current and psychology, and contributed to the appearance of several research and studies during the 1940s similar to Elihu Katz (American sociologist), Jay Blumer (American researcher in mass media) Karl Erik Rosengren, FOULKS, Corvich Gourevitch, Denis MCQUAIL, Karl Erik Rosengren (Professor, University of Lund, Sweden, specializing in information and communication), Wilbur Schramm and other studies sought to uncover individuals' motivations for using the media, Unlike previous studies, which focused on the effects of the communication process and made the sender the controller and receiver the controller and reflected the media's usual view of what the media did to the public.

This research attempted to link consumption expectations, pleasure, pleasure, and impact through quantitative indicators, which are based on the principle of selectivity or choice, taking into account the needs and aspirations of the public. The media, therefore, serve as public services where the public uses them selectively.

In the same context as the use of research and satisfaction of Selective Influence to the public for media and communication social needs as variables that interfere in the selection of materials and media, This has led some to raise the idea of compensatory use of the media. In other words, the latter plays a complementary social role by teaching disadvantaged classes who are unable to attend school,

Active participation in users' socialization and research has found that individuals use the media to meet several psychological needs, Individuals can also use the same media message for different purposes with different

motives, similar to John W. Riley & Mathilda W. Riley's study which showed that children well integrated with their companions use adventure stories broadcast by the media for play purposes, While children who are not well integrated with their mates use it to imagine and daydream and therefore the same media message can be used for various purposes with different motivations and psychological needs (Phillipe, Breton).

Columbia University researchers measured the hypothesis of two-stage communication flow through Lazarsfeld's research and Bernard Berelson and Hazel Gaue, two major studies of the first "People's Choice", where they measured media influence on 600 voters in Erie County, Ohio, during the 1940 election campaign, and the second study, entitled "Personal Influence" by Lazarsfeld and Elihu Katz in 1955, dealing with consumers' behavior and purchasing and consumer decisions, especially in the selection of films. The study was conducted on a sample of 800 individuals. In a city of 60 thousand people, the importance of primary groups was emphasized through this study, and the concept of opinion leaders and the two-stage information transition hypothesis was put forward by the Two-Step Flow Of Communication. According to this hypothesis, media content reaches the public through individuals interested in and most exposed to the media (opinion leaders), where they play a mediating role in disseminating political messages.

## **V- Conclusion And Discussion**

Our presentation of the historical sequence of the most important theoretical contributions to communication research is not only an evocation of these theories. But we aim to clarify the importance of socio-historical context in the process of theorizing this specialization on the one hand, The subject matter of the study is complicated and overlapped on the other hand, and we note from the foregoing that there are disparities and differences in the treatment of the communication phenomenon according to the time and geographical characteristics of each society, It's not just about a time extension, it's about the technological maturity of society's means of communication. The world's nations share a period but are uneven in technological expansion and development. If we assume that we are racing countries that have advanced steps in the media and communication aspect, we will find other countries that are behind in the media and technology and therefore the social secretions and changes resulting from the technological change will vary.

This can be illustrated by the example of Algeria, since the privatization of the television media began in 2012, which allowed the emergence of multimedia. Prior to this period, the television media arena was limited to public channels, unlike most of the geographically converging Arab States, other political and economic characteristics, and even human composition. Therefore, the theoretical projection of the State of Egypt, for example, does not correspond to Algeria at that time. In contrast, we note that many social phenomena and Algerian media content later in 2012 are moving in the Egyptian media direction before 2012. In other words, differences or theoretical convergence to understand and interpret the media and communication process, in general, depend not only on the period of time but also on the technological specificity of society, which in turn contributes to social changes that require study, research, and treatment.

As another example of the revolution created by social media sites in the communication environment and the future prospects of Augmented Reality and a lot of examples that vary from state to state in adopting technological gain or in diffusion, this makes us emphasize the need to break the stereotyping of the field of communication by borrowing theories that have grown in different countries, societies, and circumstances in one way or another. And here we can market the conversation to other forms about the possibility of establishing new theories in the context of accelerated technological change in the sense of communication research no longer seeks theoretical research as much as it seeks to understand and explain the communication phenomenon and its excretions in societies.

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