

Mass media in u.s. (sociological perspective)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Mass Media in U. S Sociological Perspective In what ways do the media - especially television - distort peoples perception of social reality in the United States?

Television viewers, particularly the adolescents tend to integrate what is portrayed in social media into their lives without questioning its appropriateness. This is especially so with reality television, which has become a common phenomenon in United States. After a period of watching such programs, most people start considering the unrealistic lifestyles as an adoptable way of life. As they struggle to adopt the distorted lifestyles portrayed in the media, most people end up practicing that which they believe will make them more like a character in the program that they admire. Though little research has been done on the exact way the social media affects the character of viewers or followers, it has been observed that people tend to imitate the person they may admire and might even adopt their lifestyles. This is evident in American Idols where participants try to imitate celebrities (Slywester Web; Burgess Web).

2) What are some of the stereotypes of particular groups in the media?

Stereotypes play a critical role in today's media where groups of individuals are perceived to act in a specific way. Most stereotypes portrayed in American media are based on ethnicity and races. A good example of stereotyping was depicted in a TV show called " Jersey Shore" in which American Latinos were increasingly portrayed as promiscuous and indolent. Stereotypes are often used in American media to cause humor though they are often injurious to the groups represented. However, some propaganda is positive and helps in modifying the character of viewers or readers. Another common stereotype in American media is one that portrays Muslims as

<https://assignbuster.com/mass-media-in-us-sociological-perspective/>

terrorist. The stereotype is because persons of Islamic origin carry out most terrorist attacks. An additional stereotype in American media is one that portrays black Americans as lesser to other races (Burgess Web).

3) Discuss the effects that such stereotypes/distortions may have on the group(s) who are victim of such distortions.

Stereotypes lead to cognitive distortion of perception regarding the stereotyped group. They are mainly based on a character portrayed by one of few individuals in a particular group but tend to be used in reference to members of the entire group. One of the distorted perceptions is the tendency to view the stereotyped group as less diverse. By this, I mean that people start viewing the persons in the group as individuals but rather as a group. Most stereotypes tend to be negative thus conferring undesirable characteristics to all members of a particular group. A good example is in the movie " the Passion of Christ" which exhibits negative stereotypes against Jews as a group irrespective of the fact that not all Jews are evil. Generally, stereotypes lead to altered treatment towards the stereotyped group, which could be positive or negative depending on the nature of the stereotype. However, stereotypes leads to making people in a particular group believe that they are similar leaving no room for individuality. This is erroneous and prejudiced (Slywester Web).

a. Should the government be responsible for regulating Television content, or should the networks be in charge of their own self-regulation?

Since some of the television content, such as stereotypes results in discrimination against the group involved, it would be advisable that the government regulates or forms a body to oversee that the content broadcasted is truthful and helpful. However, the government should come

<https://assignbuster.com/mass-media-in-us-sociological-perspective/>

up with laws to govern the operations of such a body to ensure that the networks have enough freedom to govern some of their operations. This would help in shaping the language and nature of programs broadcasted (Burgess Web; p Slywester Web).

Works Cited

Burgess, Heidi. Stereotypes / Characterization Frames. Oct 2003. Web. 17 Sep 2012 .

Slywester, Robert. How Mass Media Affect Our Perception of Reality -- Part 1. 2001. Web. 17 Sep 2012 .