

**BRATISLAVSKÁ MEDZINÁRODNÁ ŠKOLA LIBERÁLNYCH
ŠTÚDIÍ**

**SELECTED TOOLS OF MASS MEDIA TO INFLUENCE
VIEWERS**

BAKALÁRSKA PRÁCA

Bratislava 2010

Michal Balážik

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Michal Balážik

Declaration of originality

I declare that my Bachelor Thesis “Selected tools of mass media to influence viewers” is my own work and has not been published in part or in whole elsewhere. All used literature and other sources are attributed and cited in References.

Bratislava 7. May 2010

Signature: _____

Acknowledgement

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Extent: 33 pages (10611 words)

Abstract

The main focus of this thesis was to show and inform reader about the serious influence media has in today's world. Mass media have become part of our lives; they shape our perspective of reality every day. Being it in my cases TV or the press, mass media always find a way to get to their readers. It was not an intention of this thesis to discourage or disabuse anyone not to watch mass media and their coverage. The sole purpose of this thesis was to examine the interconnections between perception of the viewer and the various techniques that media use. Mass media do have a big role in society, the question is if they also have big responsibility. In my thesis I have suggested that do have responsibility In some areas like so called honest journalism and ethics, and on the other hand they do not have the responsibility to try to raise anyone's children.

In any event, mass media are needed in society. It is either for their support of information or the entertainment or the balanced debates that are supposedly brought to the viewers. Let us hope that one-day mass media will get to the state in their search for valid information where they will be provided without any influence.

SELECTED TOOLS OF MASS MEDIA TO INFLUENCE VIEWERS

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Rozsah práce: 33 strán (10611 slov)

Abstrakt

Hlavným zámerom tejto práce bolo informovať a ukázať čitateľovi aký vážny dosah majú media v dnešnom svete. Masmédiá sa stali neodškriepiteľnou súčasťou našich životov; formujú našu perspektívu reality každý deň. V mojom prípade som si zvolil televíziu a tlač, masmédiá si vždy nájdu cestu ako sa dostať k čitateľom/sledujúcim. Nebolo zámerom tejto práce niekomu zamedzovať, alebo znechutovať sledovanie televíznych programov. Jediným zámerom tejto práce bolo preskúmať a možno objasniť niektoré prepojenia medzi vnímaním diváka a rôznymi technikami, ktoré využívajú médiá na uputánie diváka. Masmédiá majú zohrávať nepochybne veľkú rolu v akejkoľvek spoločnosti, otázka, ale je či majú aj veľkú zodpovednosť adekvátnu svojmu vplyvu. V mojej práci som sa snažil ukázať, že v niektorých sférach ako je napríklad ``pocitivá žurnalistika`` a etika majú zodpovednosť a na druhú stranu čo sa týka výchovy dieťaťa prostredníctvom médií túto zodpovednosť nemajú. V každom prípade masmédiá sú pre spoločnosť potrebné. Či už je to pre ich dodávanie informácií, alebo zábavu, alebo vyrovnané debaty, ktoré by mali byť vedené v médiách a poskytované sledujúcim. Dúfajme, že jedného dňa sa masmédiá dostanú do štádia kedy platné a užitočné informácie budú schopné podávať bez akýchkoľvek nátlakov.

Preface

The goal of this thesis was to evaluate the connections between regular daily users of mass media in different categories. The main reasons why I chose this topic as my thesis was that I'm fascinated by how many media do we have and how they surround us and what is more important how they influence us and how they shape us. The power you may call it that mass media possesses motivated me to write my paper on this topic. Mass media are present worldwide yet they have very specific place in every society. Focus of my thesis was on Slovakia, because I was born here and live here and I can see the influences in practice how it happens around me. The other reason why I chose Slovakia was that it is one of the post communist countries therefore it has somehow special place among the democracies.

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Introduction

Mass communication has been on the rise for the past 80 years. Mass media as their main tool is therefore at the center of attention in society. They are not always regulated, because mass media are very important for many interest groups. Politicians, celebrities, news reporters, they all try to compete for the attention of the viewers.

What interests me personally and will be aim of this thesis is how all these factions compete, and more importantly the means they use to attract the attention of the masses. Mass media and, in this case, my thesis, will mention television and newspapers, have been approached and researched from many different aspects. From the position of the individual to the perspective of the whole society. From an economic point of view, to religious and international angles. While mentioning international angle we have to think about globalization. Globalization has had a huge influence on the development of mass media in the past few decades as well. The world is getting smaller, all of the information is easy to obtain and available twenty-four hours a day, almost anywhere in the world.

The size of the mass media structure worldwide is overwhelming. “(They (mass media) make a contribution towards society’s construction of reality. Part of this includes a constant reactualization of the self-description of society and its cognitive world horizons, be this in a form marked by consensus and dissent” (Luhmann, N., 2000, Reality of mass media, pg. 103). Mass media play different role in different regimes of course, but their function is more less the same. Forming the reality and submitting it to willing observers. This thesis will focus on Slovakia, but it is very important to remember the mass media conglomerates all around the world. If one can understand this system, the principle upon which mass media are based, it is much easier to understand the whole complexity of the mass media conglomerates.

The perspective of this thesis will be that of an individual, but an individual who is part of society. People in society depend on each other and influence each other every day. It is our nature to get together and share thoughts, information and experiences.

As Aristotle said: “He who lives outside of society is either God or a beast.”

The point is that it is normal and natural for human beings to live together. This thesis will not necessarily examine relations between human beings but how these

relations are shaped by mass media. It is important to mention that when mass media emerged, they revealed something completely new. Human beings work on the principle that they judge others, their lifestyle, their behavior etc. In essence, they compare it to their own values and way of life and then choose whom they admire and despise. Mass media offer in a way that this all can be done, but instead of judging and sharing with people you know and get in touch with, you are able to interact on this mass media level with people you do not know and can not even talk to. I mean celebrities or any other types of individuals who are shown on screen. That is presented to your view. And all this is done in the privacy of everyone's home, so most of the time an individual is not even responsible for whatever judgment is made. This essay however will not ponder the influence and effects of advertisement. It is a vital part to this topic but it would make this thesis so wide that it would not be possible to get in to the limit.

In this essay I will focus on the fact that mass media, in this case television, is able to produce something that is shown to a great number of people while also touching individuals. Diversity is a great phenomenon in today's mass media agenda.

I will also explore the psychological background of broadcasting and its great influence on specific individuals. This thesis will also introduce the Slovak media market and its most important market figures as well as a brief history of mass media in Slovakia. Towards the second half of my thesis I will present several case studies from Slovak media where I will try to demonstrate how mass media influence viewers in every day life.

I will not only focus on adults but also on children and their options to defend themselves from mass media's influence, because as we know children are very easy to manipulate. I will also examine the relation between children who are manipulated and adults if any. As a main guideline for this comparison, I will use the movie *Consuming Kids*. The reason why I chose this movie in particular is, because in this movie the experts and people directly involved with topic of my thesis talk about what seems to be a problem in my case. It is very interesting to hear from mothers what do they think about the influence of mass media on their children. And it is also very important to hear opinions of doctors who know probably the most about upbringing of a child. I chose this movie not only because it supports what I think, but mainly

because I find the dialogues in the movie objective and very interesting.

I will also try to conclude after each chapter where we stand and what options we have and ultimately I hope that the reader will be able not to stop watching TV or reading newspapers, or be in any way interested in media, but may be able to distinguish between more and less valuable information and also whether this information is useful or just a propaganda to promote or shock the viewer to get from him what everyone wants.

Chapter 1: Ethics and Journalism

“Putting the hard word on politicians outside Parliament house, wrapping up a match with a sportsman, or comparing albums with a musician, journalists are the link between the event and how it is portrayed as news to public”. (Solly, R., & Isbister, H., & Birtles, B., (2007), Journalism, pg.11)

Journalism is the very core of mass media. “Journalism (media studies, mass communication) is a rapidly expanding course of study in colleges and universities.” (Barney, D., R., & Merrill, J.,C., (1975). Ethics and the Press : Readings in Mass Media Morality).

The reason this topic of ethics and mass media is brought up in this thesis is that the study and practice of journalism is to prepare individuals to work with mass media. Better said for the media to be precise. Ethics and Journalism are interconnected, however sometimes they can create cleavages. Cleavages within mass media industry or even within one company. “Newsmakers have always possessed a certain leverage in the give and take with the press. After all, they are the ones we write and talk about; we are only the observers”. (Gillmore, D., Grassroots journalism by the people for the people, pg. 67). However the question whether we can judge ethicality of media is to be considered. Can an individual behave ethically in an unethical world? If we find out that something that was broadcasted was unethical we need to pursue individuals who are responsible for ethicality in particular medium. That is why my thesis will examine individuals working within mass media companies. Mass media, in this case TV shows and newspapers, are made by actual people - individuals who have been trained to communicate with the rest of the world. Individuals are examined in my thesis because it is the question of the ethics of individuals in this big media world.

“Ethics has to do with duty – the duty to oneself and/or to others. It is primarily individual or personal even when it relates to obligations and duties to others”. (Barney, D., R., & Merrill, J.,C., (1975). Ethics and the Press : Readings in Mass Media Morality, pg. 8). When we try to examine whether we can judge or expect ethical behavior from the mass media, we have to answer the question whether we can

expect individuals who represent the mass media to be ethical. ``Journalists `bypass` the social dimension of individuals, address their fantasies and reconstruct a world of illusions around their readers dreams.``(Harcup, T., (2004), Journalism principles & practices, pg. 207).

``The journalist, for example, is not simply writing for the consumption of others; he is writing as *self*-expression, and he puts himself and his very being into his journalism.`` (Barney, D., R., & Merrill, J.,C., (1975). Ethics and the Press : Readings in Mass Media Morality, pg. 8).

Millions of people turn to their TV sets or read daily newspaper every day. It is not only for the sake of entertainment, but also for information that is supposedly provided for its viewers. However, with the constant need for sensation and shocking news, the emphasis on ``honest journalism`` is fading away. Although there are many cases of very good, precise and hard work, many times the information that is provided is exaggerated or part of the story is missing; in some cases there were accusations of the provision of partisan information.

Mass media in Slovakia, but also in other countries, is shifting its emphasis from TV and press to Internet sources and online magazines. ``Newspapers are attempting to regain some lost readership, by providing their information via new technologies. Currently, 150 newspapers offer online services``. (Standard and Poor`s Corporation Industry Surveys, 1994, pg. .M23. (Hakanen, A., E., & Wells, A., 1997 Mass media & Society, pg. 67).

The important thing is that if we realize that this survey was done over 15 years ago, and even back then magazines and newspapers knew they have to move their prints somewhere else to get the attention of the consumers, then how flexible they must be today with such a long time practice. Let`s return to ethics and maybe try some linkage.

The question of ethics is whether the reporters, the actual individuals who work in the broadcasting of the information, are ethically responsible for transmitting incorrect information when working with people who encourage unethical behavior.

When it comes to an unethical working place and its influence, there arise an important question. Is it justifiable to say that if someone else would be in my position then, he would make ethically the same wrong decision? If I need a job to survive, and I am asked to present a slightly incorrect message to the people, is it right to say that if I don't do it somebody else will and the act will be done anyway, but in one case I will not make money?

In terms of correct and incorrect information, Kant would argue that it would maybe make no sense to produce false information, because if everyone would produce such information meaning it could be adopted as a maxim, then it would be useless to have information at all if everyone would be lying. One could then not be able to determine false information from correct information. This is related to the example of the merchant who is always trying to give correct change, because if he does not, people will buy elsewhere, and if all the merchants do not give correct changes, the whole point in being honest would vanish.

There are a huge number of ethical conflicts in today's media. Many of them emerge because the message that is to be transmitted is in conflict with the person who is supposed to do the job. This often happens in tabloids, where reporters are racing against each other to bring hotter and more shocking news to the table. If the reporter is not a competitive person, is it ethical to ask the person to get the story by any means?

Also if a reporter has very strict opinion of something, is it ethical to ask him to write something about the opposing viewpoint? It is well known that supervisors do have the option to insist on getting things done their way. Kant states that we all should treat others as ends not merely as means to getting somewhere or something. If we take Kant's statement to be ethical, then a reporter should be never asked to present any opinion that is not in accordance with his beliefs.

The point that this thesis is trying to pick out is that how can an individual behave ethically in clearly unethical world?

In other words, relations between human beings, between specific individuals are the key factors that determine our behavior in a sense if we will be or will not be ethical

persons.

This world we live in is full of complicated interconnections between individuals.

Individuals we know and also the ones we do not know.

For example: Daughter of your supervisor in prestigious magazine where you just started has been caught driving while drinking alcohol. She hit 2 people on the pavement that are severely injured and one of them is in critical condition. She damaged property worth 20.000 euro.

What kind of story should the writer write? Is the writer really free to write the story as it happened?

The problem I see with ethics and the media and with ethics in general, is that it is never as simple as the examples that try to show us what is or is not ethical. Motives, relations, family, childhood, and countless more, influence our decision making daily, without our permission. So in any case we decide about something we should keep in mind, what the influence was in that particular situation. We can determine whether our judgment call was ethical afterwards when we see the results of our actions.

When we decide about something we have to be 100% sure in our heart and in our brain that we do not want to cause any harm, and that this decision we are making is the only one possible for us.

Lets mention the actual tools that mass media have developed over the years.

Introduction to methods of mass media manipulation

This thesis will focus mainly on media. It will pay particular attention to some techniques that the media use to draw attention to their content. Theoretical concepts that will be presented in this essay are framing, priming, and others. There are several areas where these theories may be placed. This thesis will mention both these areas and theories, but I will be operating with those that are closest to this topic. In this thesis the recipients of media messages will be called consumers. It is the irony of the whole media-consumers relationship that consumers are not aware of the most basic concepts that are used against them. That will be another point this work will try to prove. Media appeal to our subconscious reflexes so that the average viewer cannot

defend himself.

This essay will present several examples, illustrating how does these theories work. There will be mainly scientific experiments that will show how the media and advertisements influence viewers and their decision-making in selecting some good, services or programs.

It is very crucial to mention the decision-making process. Every human being in this world makes a huge number of decisions every day. Some of these decisions are done very accurately with brain, but some of these decisions are done subconscious and it is almost impossible for the person who is deciding to control or influence in any way what the decision is going to be. That is what motivated me to write a paper on this topic. I'm intrigued by the ways in which someone can influence and to some extent control what I decide to do and what I decide to buy. In this case it can happen that someone else decides what I should think about a product and I cannot do anything to change it.

The media, as will be stated later on, are merely a tool to influence people. What this essay will examine more deeply is the psychology behind this tool.

If someone is able to control our decisions in what we buy, it is possible that it will be able to influence people when they vote, or in any other area of life. This is a new dimension as opposed to what was said before. Media and politics are closely connected and the goal of this essay is to show their connection regarding consumers.

This essay will also discuss the possible influences of psychological tricks that are used on critically thinking viewers. Not in a way that these viewers are somehow immune to influence from media, on the contrary. Critically thinking viewers may just as well be influenced as any other. This is a very big issue, because if we know that as human beings we have developed such powerful psychological means of influence then we should do our best to restrict their use. If while someone is watching TV I can change his opinion on some topic then this is potentially very dangerous weapon that needs to be controlled.

Because, and this is I hope is the ultimate conclusion of this paper, that by presenting

the techniques and the psychological aspect of this issue, there will be no doubt that every consumer is touched by this topic. It is almost impossible to track down how many attempts are done in our subconscious each time we watch TV.

There may be some leads on how to stay on guard against these techniques but there is no scientifically proven approach to evade the influence of media. If there is any.

Chapter 2 - Methods of mass media manipulation

Number of actual methods of manipulation of consumers is infinite. Every consumer is different in his life experience, but at the same time they are very similar. It is not possible to count all the sub branches of the methods this topic is examining.

There are following most known methods of mass media manipulation.

a) Framing

Almost any human action where two or more subjects are sharing or exchanging information is touched by this theory. Framing is broadly used in fields such as economics, business and law.

``Framing focuses on mental systems, or cognitive elements, and it assumes various relations between these elements``. (Opp, K., D., (2009), Theories of political protest and social movements, pg.275)

Framing and priming are closely connected, although they work slightly differently. Connected with these are Agenda setting and Gate keeping theories.

``Theory of framing, is based on central thought, that news frames create conclusions, notions and contrasts connected with matters, politics and politicians``. (McQuail, D., (2009), Mass communication theory pg.526)

It is well known fact that politicians and political parties are taking a lot of time and resources to research what is the best tactic or theory to influence voters and get their favor. Especially before elections.

The main pioneers of framing are Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman, who were awarded the Nobel Prize for their research in the field of cognitive psychology.

The best way to show how framing works is through an example.

Example 1 – The Asian Disease

Imagine that the United States is preparing for the outbreak of an unusual Asian disease, which is expected to kill 600 people. Two alternative programs to combat the disease have been proposed. Assume that the exact scientific estimates of the consequences of the programs are

as follows:

If Program A is adopted, 200 people will be saved

If Program B is adopted, there is a one-third probability that 600 people will be saved and a two-thirds probability that no people will be saved

Which of the two programs would you favor?

In this version of the problem, a substantial majority of respondents favor program A, indicating risk aversion. Other respondents, selected at random, receive a question in which the same cover story is followed by a different description of the options:

If Program A is adopted, 400 people will die

If Program B is adopted, there is a one-third probability that nobody will die and a two-thirds probability that 600 people will die

(Kahneman D., Nobel Prize lecture , December 8. 2002)

A clear majority of respondents now favor program B, the risk-seeking option.

Although there is no substantive difference between the versions, they evidently evoke different associations and evaluations. This is easiest to see in the certain option, because outcomes that are certain are over-weighted relative to the outcomes of high or intermediate probability (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979).

This is very good example of how framing works. Essentially, the same information with the same result explained in different language produces different outcomes. Everyone has several numbers of frames, meaning that there are several ways in which information can be interpreted so that the outcome of your decision can be predictable.

A frame is really a space where we put our information in some order. Together they make a picture. So, if anyone knows what parts each particular frame has, he can apply them and influence the outcome of our decisions.

Example 2

In another famous demonstration of an embarrassing framing effect, (Kahneman D., Nobel Prize lecture , December 8. 2002) induced different choices between

surgery and radiation therapy, by describing outcome statistics in terms of survival rates or mortality rates. Because 90% of short-term survival is less threatening than 10% immediate mortality, the survival frame yielded a substantially higher preference for surgery.

What is alarming about these examples is that, these respondents are not even aware that they have been framed. They make their decision and they think it is only their product.

However as we see the outcomes of these examples we can predict the outcomes of the next research.

Also we know how to put the questions in which order and what kind of language to use to get to complete opposite reaction.

If, in example 2, we mentioned the 10% immediate mortality rate, many people would not consider undertaking either of these two.

b) Priming

``Priming refers to a increased sensitivity to certain stimuli due to prior experience. Because priming it believed to occur outside of conscious awareness, it is different from memory that relies on the direct retrieval of information. Direct retrieval utilizes explicit memory, while priming relies on implicit memory. Research has also shown that the affects of priming can impact the decision-making process``. (Jacoby, 1983). (http://psychology.about.com/od/pindex/g/def_priming.htm 7.5.2010)

Priming is based on repeating the stimulus to achieve a predictable result. For example

Give someone a list of 6 words: Car, pen, girl, table, fish, ball

After a while, ask this person to say a random word starting with letter T.

Chances are good that this subject will say table.

``Priming is an improvement in performance in a perceptual or cognitive task, relative to an appropriate baseline, produced by context or prior experience``. (McNamara, T.,

P., (2005), Semantic Priming, pg.3)

This is how priming works. The subject is confronted with a word or story or any information. If this information is regularly reapplied, this subject is expecting it. And changes his behavior accordingly.

``Long term priming is founded on automatic or unconscious influences of memory on task performance``. (Kinoshita, S., & Lupker, S., J., (2003) , Masked Priming, pg.57)

It works precisely the same way in mass media industry. When you want to make a product or a person successful you have to repeatedly show him on the screen of TV. That is why all the actors and other celebrities who became popular sign up advertisement deals, so that they don't fade away from the minds of the consumers. It is obvious that human mind is having no problem with remembering stimuli that are repeated very often. However how can you remember many stimuli that are repeated often? Advertisement, TV shows, printed story they all return after a while and repeat themselves. This is where priming and framing gets together. In fact it works very simply. As was mentioned in part concerning framing every human being has frames. It is the way of looking at world. So when we talk about tabloids every person has frame of a successful actor or singer a rock star maybe. So the tabloids do not have to create new frame, they simply apply their story to this frame and your brain is able to remember this very easily. These frames are reapplied periodically so it does not really matter how old are you when you see these stories after some time you remember the pattern, the frame and then have no problem remembering it.

Do an experiment yourself. Ask three or four different persons to describe you a successful actor. Just imaginary. It is very alarming how these descriptions would be similar. Because the published stories in magazine have become so notoriously known, everyone has one in their had just waiting to pop out.

Chapter 3 - Mass media in Slovakia

``Present life is evolving in imprisonment of media. They inform, describe position of some social subjects and influence with ideologies``. (Bakic-Tomic, L., & Surynek, A., (2008), *Psychologie a sociologie ekonomickeho chovani*, pg.75).

Before I focus on case studies from Slovak media, it is good to mention that despite other countries, Slovakia has somehow special position. Along with the former communist states in Europe the media system that was emerging after year 1989, was not considered as one compact unit. Meaning that every new television that is to be set up is in some way opposing or countering the other ones. The old television now called Jednotka and Dvojka with sports channel Trojka were and somehow up until now considered the state television. Not in the meaning that is the owner, but with communist party having so strong influence on mass media, and of course communist party was the only leading party so this name is from those times. Also this television changed the leading personnel several times, but the notion remained. On the contrary it did not improve the reputation of this television, it slowed down the modernization that is so necessary in mass media industry. ``The transition of state-owned broadcasting into truly independent public service sector was successfully blocked, soon after the electronic media in Slovakia had gained some freedom from federal authority``. (Cass, F., (1997), *Post-communism and the media in Eastern Europe* , pg.68).

Before I mentioned priming and framing. Best examples can be found in tabloids, but also in news services and basically everywhere in broadcasting. Sometimes it is hard to identify these theories in practice. That is why the yellow press is the best one in terms of finding framed or primed information. The most intriguing cases are exclusively connected with scandals. When you want to produce information that is to be seen by as many consumers as you can then you need a scandal. Almost any type will do, but the bigger the better. This will draw the attention of the people even if they would not have anything to eat. I want to mention some of the most influential media that we have in Slovakia.

In Slovakia we have different kinds of media, TV, daily press, Internet and radio, and all of these categories have many subcategories. When it comes to TV, we have private television that has a large major share of the TV market. Markíza with a 31.8% of the market share and TV Joj has 19.5%; number 3 on our market is Jednotka which is a state public service television with 14,8% market share. TA3, which is a news television channel, has 1.9% of the market share. (medialne.sk, ABC SR 19.4.2010).

When it comes to the press, Nový Čas has a circulation of 143,000 prints. Plus jeden deň is second with a circulation of 60,000. Sme has a circulation of 53,000. Even from these statistics it is obvious how popular celebrity life is in Slovakia. It is not only because we have good reporters, but also because tabloids are relatively new to our market. There was always a very big interest in behavior of other usually popular people, but only in last few years it had become such a great business.

In the past twenty years, the mass media in Slovakia has evolved with enormous speed. After gaining independence in 1993, many television channels and periodicals emerged. Nowadays, foreign television channels make up 11% of the market share in Slovakia.

It is interesting to note that while original material is decreasing, foreign TV programs, mainly from the U.S. are growing steadily. Of course, this was not possible before 1989, when no foreign television channels were allowed maybe except Hungarian television and one Austrian channel called ORF which covered only small part of western Slovakia. That is also the explanation for regular viewers' interest in this kind of program. It is new and fresh and for the average Slovak viewers; it provides new entertainment. Reality shows (Mojsejovci, Big Brother, etc.) along with competition shows such as Slovensko hlada superstar, Dievča za milión and others have been on the rise in the past 5 years.

People are now willing to watch other people take a shower or a nap, rather than an original production. There is of course a psychological reason for this, closely related to the phenomena of observing other people, nevertheless with envy.

The above-mentioned reality shows are no longer on the air. However, now we have other shows like Show Dance or recently ended Slovensko hlada Superstar. When this show are broadcasted, all of the newspapers are full of stories about the latest

scandals related the competitors in the show. These people were carefully chosen to provide as much excitement and as many scandals as possible. And of course, they delivered. In the reality show, Mojsejovci, a married couple delivered their judgment of other peoples' behavior from the garage they called home. Of course, in all of these shows, there were prizes for the winners. When you lasted long enough in the show, meaning you provided enough material for producers. You could win a house or a large cash prize. Naturally, by the end of the show, the TV channel that broadcast the show would make several times more money than the prizes and costs for the filming. It is a well-designed business strategy that worked in the USA for quite some time and now works here. Its secret lies in its appeal to the weaknesses of the viewers. Many people are jealous and by exploiting this weakness, TV channels get ``easy viewers``. It is in fact crucial for the TV channels to have the ability to shock people and to get their full attention. That is why also print media that deal with celebrities and their lifestyle are so popular. There is however big difference between the print media and TV. Ever since the emergence of TV, it has become more and more like a hobby. Like some strange ritual where after work, people sit in front of the TV and watch/absorb what is served up. The print media need more attention and focus and also more will. You need to go and buy some of these magazines, you need to decide which one you want, because there are so many of them, and then read it at home. Fortunately, now with the supermarkets we have these magazines right next to the fruit and groceries where they are available almost 24/7. It is still a lot easier to watch TV, to just push the button to change channel and absorb. In some ways, readers who need to satisfy their need for success and maybe think they are not successful, will reach out for these magazines to help their self-esteem. Or maybe they only want to relax and unwind after work. However, the problem is that being so close, and paying so much attention to the lives of others will result in a situation where these consumers are paying more attention to the lives of other people than their own. And of course these celebrities who are presented in magazines are expected to provide shocking material again and again. That is why they are marrying and divorcing and getting tattoos, because all of these gestures draw attention to them. So this symbiosis works both ways; the consumer gets what he pays for and celebrities get rich and famous.

However there is a very big difference between these two groups because, being a

consumer, I can just ignore the celebrities and all the expensive parties they throw and if I want, I can focus on something different. I do not have to buy magazines or watch TV, I do not have to participate in this world and support it in any way. However celebrities do not always have this liberty, to abandon the show business as we can see in shows like Promi noviny (TV JOJ) where every once in a while, someone who faded from screen is returning with new project. Celebrities who we can see on the covers of the magazines or in such shows always have to be prepared to have some flash news for their followers. The more shocking news the better, because people will stay alert and examine them even closer. If you ever saw an interview with any emerging star/celebrity, they all say the same, that it is very difficult because everyone is watching them and they have to answer all of these questions and that they are generally under high pressure. They all say this, but it looks like they do not mind it when they get all the attention and applause. When celebrities are being interviewed, everyone wants to look gorgeous and satisfied and happy! Everyone is making a new project that will be a break through for sure. Shooting a new music video, or buying an expensive new house, or having a baby. In other words, anything that can be sold to the viewer is worth mentioning. I also noticed that in any interview all they say is how busy they are and how hard they have to work to be where they are. Besides the fact that it is pretty nice self promotion, it is strange to me because what kind of life is it when you are a multimillionaire and can not have a free week just to watch some movies and relax. Needless to say that I did not do anything interesting in the past few weeks that would look good on camera.

Chapter 4 - Case studies in the Slovak media

There are many TV programs, which in one way or another, are connected with celebrities and other public figures who appear at charity activities or different social events.

One such program is called Promi noviny. As the title suggests, the aim of this program is to get in touch with the prominent, in other words, special people.

Most of the individuals that appear on this show are actors, singers, entrepreneurs and other influential public figures.

I chose this program for some of my examples because it provides my thesis with excellent examples for demonstrating how framing and priming work.

On February 22, 2010

An interview with Lucia Hablovičová was aired. The whole interview was about how she enjoys working in her garden. This interview started with pictures of luxury jewelry, a sports car, a view of a beach with palms in the summer. All of these pictures are associated with success and wealth.

The journalist who did the interview is asking Lucia, about how she began working in her garden and how it makes her happy, etc.

LH makes it very clear that she is very very busy and doesn't have much free time, although no one really knows what she is doing or where she studied or anything about her values in life. She just mentions that when she has time she works in her garden.

Priming in this case is done first of all by showing all these pictures that imply wealth and success despite the fact that the topic has nothing to do with it. People already expect some great story of success, and of course, many think of Lucia as beautiful; thus in this case, the viewer is programmed to expect something fabulous. Also, the next time she appears on television, she will have a prepared the ground to show some future projects or speak about herself.

When it comes to framing, when she speaks about how busy she is, people imagine she is successful again, and also that she works really hard. What is important when we analyze such interviews is to pay attention to the language and most of all whether what these people are talking about is in any way connected with the topic. What is really promoted is the real question.

In this framing, we saw that it is also important to notice, that in some way, such interviews create jealousy, because the average viewer probably does not have such rich life in terms of work and wealth and this creates space for jealousy, which also brings more viewers to mass media.

In the same issue of *Promi Noviny*, another story was broadcast.

In this case, an interview with Slovak actress Zuzana Fialova was presented. At the start of the interview, it was mentioned that she was putting her life at risk! As we realized later, the risk was that she was trying to learn how to snowboard.

In this interview, the different injuries related to this activity are mentioned. In some sense it is trying to say that she is brave and crazy at the same time when it comes to trying new things.

It is important to say that Zuzana Fialova has the reputation of being a crazy, energetic and very active person.

The priming in this specific case is that snowboarding is considered an adrenaline sport for young people. So that when we have interview like this, we have to get the notion that the person who is trying it is trying to look younger to others.

In this case it is a bit harder to see the framing because, as we can see, the interview sticks to one topic. However, framing was performed here on a larger scale with the reputation of this Slovak actress. If the mind operates in a way that people really think that snowboarding is an adrenaline sport, then they are framed into thinking that she is very brave to try to learn such sport. Truth be told, snowboarding, at least its basics, is not more difficult than any other sport. Thus, we can see how strong well performed framing is because a shocking story can be created even from regular, not-so-interesting information.

Third example deals with a catastrophe.

In another report from February 10, 2010, there was mentioned a concert that was held in Bratislava and many singers and musician from Slovensko hlada superstar and others have participated. All these people in the interviews, everyone talked about compassion and about how people have to help each other. And not to get confused, I am all in favor of empathic behavior and compassion toward others, and the more towards the less fortunate.

In this case however, this concert came after the Haiti catastrophe was shown in the news for several days maybe even weeks. So, the society that was aware of this catastrophe was already primed towards a compassionate view of this topic because many many people died there.

However. people die daily, of famine, of AIDS and other diseases, of war and others. Why is it that these interpreters who tried to frame us that they were compassionate and empathic are not playing in other concerts as well. I am not even going to examine the question how much money was raised and where is the proof that this money really went to help Haitians.

The thing here is that these interpreters played their songs as in any other concert, but they had more publicity, and for musicians and singers who had just successfully finished a contest, in this area it is very important to have the publicity, not to fade from the eyes of the viewers. Haiti already had its market, these people just took advantage of it.

The next part of this thesis however will be focused on children and their vulnerability towards the mass media industry.

Chapter 5 - Consuming kids, the movie, the research

As the title of this chapter suggests, my thesis will cover the topic of the relationship between mass media and children.

My main influence and inspiration for this topic was the movie *Consuming Kids* (Directed by Barbaro, A., & Earp, J., 2008)

This movie covers a large part of mass media which is advertising, but also makes alarming points about the education of children, and the pressure that is constantly being forced on children. Although this movie was researching viewers in the USA, the results of this research are alarming for Slovakia as well. Not only because we integrate into our broadcast many TV shows from U.S., but also because our next new generation is highly influenced by TV programmes and because parents who grew up without so much influence from media are not always prepared or even able to select what is good and beneficial for their children.

If we want to cover this topic from the beginning we have to ask ourselves a question: Why are children so important for mass media and their coverage? In this sense, I mean human beings less than 18 years of age, so not only small children but also teenagers.

There are few obvious answers. Besides the fact that they do have some buying power, so that they can benefit consumption, they are also very fragile and can be influenced easily. Young people, in particular, are always in search of their identity, personality and, in, their inner self.

Different people have various predispositions to view the world in different ways. Thus people behave differently from one another, even when in the same situation.

These differences in perception can be partly explained by the mechanism of priming. It's likely that throughout a child's development some ideas are primed over and over again (that honesty is important/or that greed is important) and so the child becomes

alert to these things throughout his or her life. Basically, these constructs become chronically accessible and influence the way the child views the world.

In this respect mass media play a key role. On one hand, in helping creating the values as mentioned above like, greediness or honesty or others. However there is no scientific evidence that mass media in any way helps or encourages children to build up honorable values. There is no evidence that children watching TV are even educated at all.

Mass media are interested in children, and it was also mentioned in the movie, due to the that children within the family are important in decision-making process. The decision-making process about the purchase of the family car, holiday destinations, where to eat what kind of products to buy; these are all questions that are discussed in many families with the participation of children. So what is in fact happening is that in between the relationships between parents and children, there is also the mass media who sort of monitor the relation and try to get their products, services etc. involved as much as it is possible in this relationship. Mass media in this case are no longer only observers, they actively participate in this process.

What is really important about this is that children, especially children, are vulnerable and not always able to understand the persuasive force of the media. In this movie, it was stated that the average child is hit with almost 3000 advertising messages a day! In Slovakia, this number is much lower, but just to realize how much pressure this creates is horrible. Also, and this counts for Slovakia as well, children, are confronted with several media groups a day not only one.

This confrontation however is not fair. On one hand, we have children and their world and on the other hand ``Competing MBA guys``. (Nick Russell, Youth Marketer, Consuming Kids, the movie)

These trained professionals who have only one goal and that is to sell as many products, merchandise, etc., to as large an audience as possible. These are some of the ``biggest brains`` of our times that are determined to manipulate children and their parents to buy whatever it is they are selling.

Psychologists, anthropologists, sociologists, behavioral scientists, economists and others, all these people are trained in their professions to bring the best results possible for the company they work for. Even from this list it is obvious that children are at a big disadvantage against these professionals. They have a huge amount of statistics and analyses and an incredible number of meetings where they share market strategies, and tips on how to make their business more profitable and more irresistible for consumers.

These strategies are very creative and precise in terms of how to approach viewers. When it comes to children, it is also important whether they are trying to approach girls or boys.

“The girls are being taught they need to be pretty, sexy and what they buy determines the value.” (Diane Levine, Ph.D., Professor of Education, Wheelock College, Consuming Kids, the movie)

Boys on the other hand are hit with a different message, and this was a big topic also in the Slovak media, it is the question of violent movies and video games and the excessive brutality and aggression in these games and of course how they influence boys and their thinking in every day life. “An interesting shift occurs within educational settings when the formality of learning environments is relaxed and students are given “free time” on the Internet. Educational websites disappear, music comes on, and different people in the room become experts. The screens, the sounds, the way students interact with technology, and the interactions between them change as they as they immerse themselves in games, social networks and commercial sites of their own choosing.” (Willett, R., 2008 Youth, Identity, and Digital media. Pg. 49).

I know this from my own experience. When I was younger and we had IT classes in school and the teacher would go to another room, everyone would open some website with music, games, etc. No one would work on the previous assignment, we were given. Even back then we would play some action games, where we were shooting each other.

It is maybe the most crucial thing and definitely one of the most difficult to teach children that they have to be compassionate and tolerant to others. Violent games go the exact opposite direction. “Brutality and aggression in TV contributes to anti

social effects on consumers, watching aggressive, violent TV programs has three basic types of effect. 1. Consumer is more likely to commit violent deed, 2. Consumer is feeling the aggression less and 3. consumer has increased notion that he can become a victim of violence" (McQuail, D., (2009), Mass communication theory pg. 395).

What is going on here is that by these tools, mass media are priming their brains while they cannot really fight back, so that when these kids grow up, they will be able to pick them up and make them do what they want in terms of consumerism. If mass media are able to persuade young girls that what they buy really determines their individuality and their character, it will be much easier for mass media representatives to create public figures who are perfect example for what these girls want in their life, besides the real or the actual values. It is not only that they persuade these kids that they should accept such and such values. The mass media industry is able to make them think that these values are their own, and their own ideas.

For example, if it is fashionable to be skinny and for mass media it is able to make such appearance fashionable, it is very easy to picture and show these young girls skinny models who are successful and to make them want that. It is essential to both priming and framing to be able to determine the frames and what people want despite the differences in people. That is why mass media are showing frames that are easy to picture and follow. If being good mothers and hard working fathers who lead virtuous life with values and who for example struggle economically despite all of this, would be what people wanted to see, it would be terribly hard for mass media to create such pictures or to present such role models. On the other hand, if mass media in the TV shows can picture very simple stories and very simple role models, it is so much easier for them.

It is much easier to talk about simple things in front of a huge audience than about hard, deep things. I mean, if we look at the TV shows that keep portraying these celebrities and their lives and their achievements, it is so obvious that these individuals are very easy to relate to.

In any case, the artificial creation of values or their promotion that we can see from mass media every day, is creating problems and fissures that parents need to cope

with in terms of their children. This next part is related to child-parent relations.

`` Mass media from the very, very beginning they begin to shape the child's world view, to begin to shape the child's brand preferences, to begin to basically tell the child what that child needs in order to have a meaningful life. And that is where we mothers see our job not theirs`` (Aird, E. J.D., Founder & Director, The Motherhood Project, Consuming Kids, the movie).

This project is aimed at all aspects of the lives of woman and mothers. From pregnancy to successfully raising a child. The point that was risen here is that the educational aspects that have not been even scientifically approved from mass media should be really be done by mothers.

It is the task of mother and parents together to raise their child, to do the best they can to teach their child how to lead a good life, how to be able to make good decisions, how to choose between options in life. It is not the task of mass media to do this. Although this is a very good marketing strategy to pretend to be caring, when in fact you have no responsibility for the upbringing of the children.

Mass media give hints of what is good and wrong about raising a child, and they do not give a consistent theory. In any event, if this theory of what is good and bad for children is wrong, there is no way to get back at mass media with any accusations, because they can not be held responsible.

`` There is no evidence that children who watch television are educated in any way or if it enriches their fond of wisdom. It is a huge business that is sold to parent's insecurities. `` (Rich , M. M.D. , M.P.H., Children's Hospital Boston, Consuming Kids, the movie)

It was also mentioned in the movie that mass media are more likely to hurt children's future education in school because when children are watching TV from small age for an extended amount of time, they become used to fast moving objects and figures, etc., and then later on in school they may be bored with a teacher because they can not move as fast or draw as much attention as they can.

What Mr. Rich says is connected to what was written already that any actual scientific research about whether mass media enrich children's wisdom or set of information is missing.

An important part is about the insecurity of parents. This is also part of the priming and framing process that any good parent or even average parent wants the best for their children. Parents do not want their children to lack anything in life, and what they lacked as children they want to give their child as much as possible. Especially at this age we live in, where almost every aspect of human life and not excluding small children is connected with competition. Many times good intentions can turn into bad results.

``A lot of parents believe that if they do not put their children in front of the media, their children will be somewhat behind.`` (Aird, E. J.D., Founder & Director, The Motherhood Project, Consuming Kids, the movie)

Mass media take advantage of this insecurity of parents.

For every child, it is crucial to be involved somehow at least every once in a while in some creative activity. It helps so much with the upbringing of any child. ``The thing that is important about the open ended creative process and creative play is that is that the child learns to think critically, learns to solve problems efficiently, learns about empathy.``

`` Children are deprived of creative play. Children are going to need a screen in front of them.`` (Linn, S., Ed. D., author, Consuming Kids: The hostile takeover of childhood.)

As it was mentioned also in the movie, children are not required to think and play creatively. That means you can easily buy toys that play by themselves and the child is just looking at them. What is even more frightening is that if something doesn't change, and children will continue to be ``plugged in`` to TV, what will they grow up to be? And how will they raise their children? These questions cannot be answered immediately, but in this age we have the power to influence what the answer will be.

Parents have to be the figures that are aware of what their child is watching on TV or what influences him. If they are capable of doing so, of course. And if they are able to judge what is good from TV or not.

Conclusion

Hopefully after reading my thesis, many people will be able to identify, without problems, when they are being framed or primed.

It was not the intention of this thesis to state that people should not watch TV or watch the news in the evening. My effort was to pinpoint the tools that make the mass media in general such a powerful tool. What enables them to attract the attention of such a vast number of people.

It is well known that if you are aware about some threat in your life it is much more easier to avoid it.

In this case I am thinking about parents who let their children watch TV for any amount of time. It is crucial to watch and raise each child properly, and to give them the education they need from parents, from their values they learned in their lives and not allow them to be ``slaves of a screen. ``. It is completely all right to watch or read something about celebrities, but extensive observing of their every move or what they buy is not healthy.

But not only children, also parents need to watch themselves so that they do not get easily caught up in mass media frames. Although it is very interesting to watch other people, it is much more interesting to watch our own lives. Considering the fact that TV fails to create actual values, it is much better and wiser to follow our own lives and determine what our values should be. Watching TV or reading tabloids should be free time activity and it should not in any serious way interact with our social life. It is like a virtual reality where we can see and read about people that we cannot talk to. People have to stay alert because if they are indulging in observing of others too much, their attention is moving away from other things that can be much more important.

RESUMÉ

Hlavnou ambíciou tejto bakalárskej práce bolo čo najpresnejšie ukázať ako ľahko sa dá a takmer bez vedomia diváka ovplyvniť naše rozhodovanie. Samozrejme o veciach na ktorých nám až tak nezáleží sa vieme rozhodnúť kľudne aj bez rozmyslu. Robíme to každý deň a každý jeden z nás a to bez výnimky. Masmédiá nás ale v tejto činnosti podporujú keď nám nenápadne podkladajú rôzne príbehy, zaujímavosti, alebo len zdanlivo obyčajné správy. Využívajú na to šikovné metódy, ktoré som opísal. Framing a Priming. Masmédiá ich majú samozrejme v repertoári omnoho viac. Čo ma, ale fascinovalo na týchto dvoch konkrétnych a dôvod vlastne prečo som si ich aj vybral bol, že tieto teórie nie sú vôbec zložité. Keď si prečíta niekto moju kapitolu o framingu a primingu možno sa aj pousmeje nad tým aké jednoduché v skutočnosti sú. Čo je ale fascinujúce je, že tieto teórie sú overené pretože fungujú s neuveriteľnou presnosťou. Je to teda nerovný boj s médiami. Ak dokážu efektívne využívať vedecké poznatky tohoto druhu tak je len veľmi ťažké sa ubrániť ich vplyvu. Nemyslím tým, že by médiá mali iba negatívny vplyv to rozhodne nie, ale vplyv takéhoto druhu môže byť potenciálne veľmi nebezpečný. Preto dúfam, že po prečítaní mojej eseje budú čitatelia múdrejší a možno aj všímavejší čo sa týka médií. Vnímavejší aj k bulváru aj k zpravodajstvu a hlavne aj k reklamám, ktoré sú všadeprítomné a obklopujú nás každý deň. Čo sa týka mňa osobne tak by sa dalo povedať, že literatúra, ktorú som použil mi takpovediac otvorila oči v mnohých smeroch. Samozrejme aj ja podlieham nátlaku médií a tiež som sa veľakrát pristihol, že sledujem niečo čo ma vôbec nezaujíma a som akoby v spánku s otvorenými očami, ale odkedy sa o túto tému zaujímam tak veľa krát sa mi podarilo odhaliť, že aký rámeček je kde použitý a pravdepodobne za akým účelom. Je samozrejme jasné, že médiá sa týmto teóriám, ktoré sami používajú nevenujú, lebo by zbytočne znižovali svoju sledovanosť a prichádzali by o svoje profity. Každopadne o takýchto veciach by sa hovoriť malo a to bol ďalší dôvod prečo som si túto tému zvolil. Mne osobne sa zdá, že nie je takmer vôbec zastúpená

v médiách a to je škoda pretože názor tej druhej strany teda tej mediálnej absentuje. Ďalšia veľmi významná časť mojej práce sa týkala médií na Slovensku. Treba si v tejto súvislosti ozrejmiť, že Slovensko ako postkomunistická krajina, má zvláštne postavenie čo sa týka médií. Verejnoprávan Jednotka ešte stále u ľudí budí dojem minulého režimu a ešte to zrejme chvíľu potrvá kým sa to zmení. Je zaujímavé všímať si ako v krajinách ako je Slovensko sa rýchlo rozmáhajú nové médiá a nové programy. Tým, že tu vládla cenzúra až do roku 1989 sa zjavne u ľudí vytvorila chuť, ``vyskúšať`` všetky nové programy aké im budú ponúknuté. Samozrejme toto je dobrá šanca pre zahraničné a v našom prípade hlavne americké štúdia. Otvoril sa nový trh, ktorý treba nasýtiť. Čo však chýba a možno sa na to tak trochu zabúda je, že nemáme žiaden nástroj na reguláciu kvality, toho programu ktorý kupujeme z ameriky. V každom prípade aj tu by mohla pomôcť literatúra týkajúca sa zahraničných programov. Napriek tomu, že tieto témy nie sú špeciálne spomínané v médiách, existuje celkom slušné množstvo literatúry na túto tému. Vďaka ktorej sa môže človek oboznámiť s problematikou, zámermy a niekedy aj s riešeniami daných konfliktov.

V poslednej časti som sa v mojej práci venoval deťom a tomu aký vplyv na ne má sledovanie ``telky`` alebo nemá. Vychádzal som z filmu, Consuming Kids, ktorý bol spravený ako dokument, kde sa hovorilo aj o reklamách aj o médiách ako takých. Je to až zarážajúce akému tlaku médiu čelia deti v USA. Na Slovensku je zatiaľ situácia relatívne dobrá, ale už aj u nás je cítiť ten vplyv zo zahraničia.

Veľmi silná bola časť filmu, kde rozprávali matky o tom ako majú pocit, že ich vlastné deti sa im vzdávajú a že nad ich výchovou preberá kontrolu televízia, ktorá ale nemá zodpovednosť za to čo tieto deti naučí ak vôbec niečo. Mňa osobne najviac zarazila časť, kde sa hovorilo o tom ako deti v predškolskom veku a mladí tínedžeri nie sú vôbec vedení ku kreatívnym činnostiam. Toto je niečo na čo treba dať veľký pozor pretože kreatívna činnosť je jedna z najdôležitejších činností u vyrastajúceho dieťaťa. Nielenže zlepšuje tvorivosť a fantáziu, ešte k tomu aj pomáha riešiť konflikty, alebo učiť dieťa riešiť konflikty. Bolo ale veľmi múdro poznamenané v tomto filme, že tieto výchovné programy sú stavané tak, aby u rodičov vyvolali pocit, že ak dieťaťu nedoprajú nejaký z týchto programov tak ho ochudobňujú. A to je samozrejme rámovanie tak ako sme o ňom už hovorili, zapôsobí sa na rodičovský inštinkt, že rodič chce predsa všetko dobré pre svoje deti a ani sám nevie ako a jeho

dieťa má problémy so sústredením v škole a iné ďalšie problémy, ktoré nevie kde majú korene.

Samozrejme všetky tieto konflikty a celá výchova dieťaťa v súvislosti s médiami je diskutabilná, ale v tejto práci išlo o to ukázať ako sa aj dobromyseľnosť rodiča môže takpovediac zvrhnúť na opačnú stranu a ako sa z toho môže stať úplne iný neželaný výsledok.

Každý z nás sa musí vedieť rozhodnúť, čo od masmédií vyžaduje a aké úlohy by mali plniť. Koneckoncov sú to platiči koncesionárskych poplatkov z koho peňazí médiá žijú a teda si myslím, že by práve diváci mali mať posledné slovo čo sa týka programovej náplne. Na záver by som už len rád dodal, že taktiež mnoho veľmi dobrého sa dá z televízie či z novín dozvedieť a sú to dobré média na rozširovanie si vedomostí, každopádne každý človek si musí sám rozhodnúť za seba, že aké informácie vlastne potrebuje k životu a aké si bude teda vyhľadávať.

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