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ABSTRACT

of the dissertation for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology

**The Role of Citizen-Media Relationships in the Democratization of
Society:
Sociological Analysis**

**Specialty: 6312.01 - Theory, Methodology and History of
Sociology**

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GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE WORK

The relevance and degree of development of the topic. The dialogue between the government and the public, as well as between different groups and socio-political actors is one of the important conditions in the formation of democratic values in society. As a liaison between the government, public and various groups, the media is one of the main means of dialogue and continuity of communication. On the other hand, one of the basic principles of democracy, the active participation of citizens in socio-political processes, the conduct of elections and transparency in state activity, requires the operation of free and independent media. Furthermore, it is no secret that in today's world with the leading role of information and information technology, the media is the basis of many socio-political processes and changes.

The growing role of the media in society began mainly with the transition from direct communication to indirect communication system. In addition to influencing social, political, cultural and economic processes, this transition has given a great impetus to the system of socio-individual relations (emotional and behavioral), as well as changes in people's imagination and way of thinking (cognitive and epistemological). Still and all, the mass media has gradually become an integral part of human life. In the context of such an important connection between society and the media, interdependence and opportunities for influence, the study of the problem of citizen-media relations has become a necessity as a dynamic process. The study of the media role and citizen-media relations, especially in societies in transition, is one of the most important and urgent problems of society.

The influence of the media in studying the citizen-media relationships problem is theoretically accepted and analyzed at two levels - the actual influence and potential influence. Simultaneously, citizens' attitudes and opportunities to influence the media are perceived as an important factor, especially in the era of virtual networks. By all

accounts, there is a significant relationship between the influence of the power of media impact and citizen-media relations, and sometimes even the idea of the former dependence on the latter one is promoted.

The idea of the media participation in the democratization of society is a theory based on the experience of developed liberal-democratic countries. According to this theory, the media should become a point of beginning and continuation of the dialogue between citizens and the government. Whereas dialogue is the basis and core of democracy. Dialogue is possible by rejecting physical and psychological violence and repression, upholding the rule of law, implementation of sharing political power (authority), relying on economic transparency, and respecting citizens' choices. Being of the most important elements for dialogue, the media must serve to ensure the sustainability of the dialogue by becoming the venue for the dialogue.

Identifying the determining factors of the media role and influence in society is of great scientific and practical importance for the effective analysis and teaching of citizen-media relations. In this dissertation, the factors determining the influence of the media are described with reference to various literature and concepts, and then considering the increasing use of the Internet nowadays, the new factors determining the influence of the media have been analyzed (PAS trio).

Extensive discussions on the study of communication and mass communication problems, media activity, opportunities for influence, audience characteristics, and the role of the media in the development of society can often be found in the history of Western social thought. Gustave Le Bon's "The Psychology of the Masses" and Gabriel Tard's "The Laws of Imitation" emphasize the media influence on public opinion and the change in people's perceptions. In his book "Community and Society", Ferdinand Tonnies stating about the differentiation of community and society highlights the role of communication systems and forms of communication in the formation of society. In Max Weber's

view, the mass media is considered one of the main factors of social power and authority. Analyzing the role and importance of the media in society in the context of class struggle, Karl Marx shows the acquisition of all the opportunities and authority by proletarian class as a condition for the existence of a free and effective press. Georg Simmel points up the importance of study the media in the analysis of human behavior. Charles Horton Cooley, George Herbert Mead and Robert Ezra Park indicate the leading role of communication in their work. According to Cooley, the role of communication in the "looking-glass self" main mechanism formation is irreplaceable. George Herbert Mead believed that communication is one of the main factors of socialization. Robert Ezra Park also touched on the great impact of the media in America on serious social changes.

The modern media work was first modeled by Harold Lasswell (1948). Lasswell's model answers five key questions: who (the sender\communicator), said what (the message), in which channel (the medium), to whom (the audience), and with what effect (effects)? Based on this analysis of communication, five research areas have emerged: management-control analysis, content analysis, media analysis, audience analysis, and impact analysis. The dissertation work directly includes three of the mentioned areas of analysis.

Based on the media-audience relations analysis, two main schools were formed. John Fiske, in his "Introduction to Communication Studies" (1990), described the characteristics and main problems of these two schools (the "the procedural school" and "the semiotic school"). The vast majority of research on media and society has focused on the impact of the media on the audience. Elizabeth Perse, who categorizes the ideas and concepts on media influence as the four influence models, in her

book “Media Effects and Society” (2001), discusses “direct, conditional, cumulative, and cognitive-transactional models of media influence”¹. Paul Felix Lazarsfeld and Merton, two of the first scholars that study the forms of media influence, opposing the theory of direct media influence and emphasizing the role of opinion leaders, developed a two-stage model of influence (1948). Joseph Klapper, one of the founders of the model of media conditional influence, in his book “The Effects of Mass Communication” insists that "the media cannot be considered a necessary and sufficient condition to influence people's activities." The influence of the media is realized through other factors with a mediating role². Kurt Lewin, the founder of the Field Theory, focuses on the role of the communicator in media-citizen relations and the power of the media.

There are also scientists who analyze media and communication technologies as a leading factor of society development. Marshall McLuhan³, Harold Innis, Daniel Lerner et al can be considered as supporters of this approach. In “The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East” (1958), Lerner indicating a four-stage model of development demonstrated the impact and importance of the media on development. According to Marshall McLuhan, the development of communication technologies consists of three stages, and each of them has led to the emergence of specific living conditions and forms. In “The Gutenberg Galaxy” (1962), he called these three stages as “the verbal galaxy”, the "the Gutenberg galaxy", and "the Marconi galaxy” and believes that, generally, social development takes place through communication, and history is not a formation, but a

¹ Elizabeth M. Perse. Media Effects and Society. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2001.

² Joseph T. Klapper. The effects of mass communication. New York: Book klub, 1960.

³ Marshal MakLuhan. Undrestanding Media: The extensions of man. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965.

replacement of communication periods. In many scientific literatures, this division is also referred to as "the acoustic oral communication phase", "the visual print communication phase", and "the acoustic electronic communication phase".

Herbert Marcuse, one of the representatives of the Frankfurt school and one of the main figures of "political economic theory", wrote in "One-Dimensional Man" that "in the current situation, the mass media formally resolve class conflicts by weakening conflicts of interest." In general, representatives of the Frankfurt school (Habermas, Horkheimer, Adorno, etc.) analyze the media-society relations in the context of the Marxist tradition, highlighting only the negative aspects of the media in capitalist society. Melvin L. De Fleur and Sandra Ball Rokeach put forward the "theory of audience dependence" in the "The mass communication theories". It is noted that the influence of the media manifests on a cognitive, emotional and behavioral level. Behavioral effect is more common in mass societies. Emotional and cognitive effects are manifested in non-mass or public societies (active community, etc.).

One of the sociologists with extensive research and rich creativity in the analysis of media-citizen relations is Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, the founder of the "spiral of silence theory". It is impossible not to mention Denis McQuail as the owner of the latest and most extensive research and scientific works in this field. McQuail's various articles and monographs are a collection of important scholarly works that shed light on the analysis of media-citizen issues. His works "Communication Models for the Study of Mass Communications" (1981), "Audience Analysis" (2008), "McQuail's Mass Communication Theory" (2003) were used in the dissertation. Anthony Giddens, in his general "Sociology" and other works, analyzes the role of the media and especially television in the formation and change of human imagination and social orientations, and explains media-society relations from a sociological point of view. Extensive sociological analysis of citizen-

media relations is one of the least studied areas in Azerbaijani sociology. Although some issues related to this topic, such as the history of media development and its impact on society, have been analyzed in connection with "journalism", this problem has not been studied in the context of modern global socio-cultural processes. Some problems related to the topic were studied in Akif Ashirli's "History of the Azerbaijani press (1875-1920)", Arif Rahimoglu's "Fundamentals of political propaganda", Rafiq Khan-Sayad oglu and Janali Mirzaliyev's "Introduction to Journalism", J. Mammadli's "Modern Journalism", Gulu Maharramov's "On the Radio Waves", Elchin Alibeyli's "Fundamentals of Television", Fazil Vahidov and Zaur Babayev's "Journalism and Sociology". Furthermore, the sociological analysis of the communication problem was considered in "Sociology" translated by Izzet Rustamov; "Social Philosophy" co-authored by Gizilgul Abbasova and Zeynaddin Hajiyev; "History of Sociology in Western Europe and the USA" , that was translated under the editorship of Izzet Rustamov; the "Sociology" textbook by Rafail Hasanov and Kazim Azimov; "Actual Problems of Social Psychology" by Bayramov and Alizade; "Theoretical Problems of Sociology" by Efendiyev and Shirinov. Hikmet Hajizadeh's "A Long Way to Democracy", the Azerbaijani translation of Robert Dahl's "On Democracy" and other similar works also present the results of extensive research on the political life and the democratic process⁴.

Bagher Sarukhani's "Sociology of Communication", a collection of articles "Media and Partnership" edited by Shahrud Amirentekhabi,

⁴ Abbasova Q., Hacıyev Z. Sosial fəlsəfə. Bakı: Ayna Mətbuat Evi, 2001; Aşırılı A. Azərbaycan mətbuatı tarixi (1875-1920). Bakı: Elnə və Təhsil, 2009; Babayev Z., Vahidov F. Jurnalistika və sosiologiya (dərs vəsaiti). Bakı: Nurlan, 2008; Əlibəyli E. Televiziya nəzəriyyəsinin əsasları. Bakı: Elm, 2011; Məhərrəmov Q. Radio dalğalarında. Bakı: Azərnəşr, 1999; Məmmədli C. Müasir jurnalistika. Bakı: DBU, 2003; Mirzəliyev C., Xan-Sayad oğlu R. Jurnalistikaya giriş. Bakı: MBM, 2009; Rəhimoğlu A. Siyasi Təbliğatın əsasları. Bakı: Əbilov-Zeynalov və oğulları, 1999; Vəliyev H. Dünya informasiya agentlikləri. Bakı: Bakı Universiteti, 2003.

Kazim Motamednijad's "Mass Media" and other works of Iranian authors provide discussion on potential of media influence as well as media and audience analysis⁵. Taking into consideration the widespread use of Persian-language literature in the dissertation, the thinking and activity of Iranian researchers on the subject, certainly, should not be overlooked. However, the main point is that since the vast majority of existing literature consists of translations of Western scholars works, it is difficult to fully determine the position of Iranian authors referencing that literature. On the other hand, researchers in Iranian scientific institutions have focused on analyzing "soft power" and the West's influence in the country based on "soft power" in the context of West-Iran confrontation.

However, the author of works such as "Iran in Four Communication Galaxies" and "Audience Readings" Mehdi Mohseniyan Rad, and some other authors have worked in a more different direction, explored the causes of reducing public confidence in the national media and ways to expand the influence of the national media, preferring to study media-audience relations from a pathological perspective. Mehdi Mohseniyan Rad indicates that the problem of "audience illusion" is the root of the weakening of the country's media reputation⁶.

These translations into Persian provide a great opportunity to define the positions of Western scholars and to analyze the latest trends and concepts in the West⁷.

⁵قیافر ساروخانی. جامعه شناسی ارتباطات. تهران: نشر اطلاعات، 1387؛ کاظم معتمد نژاد. وسایل ارتباط جمعی. تهران: انتشارات دانشگاه علامه طباطبایی، 1386؛ مهدی محسنیان راد. ارتباط شناسی. تهران: انتشارات سروش، 1387؛ نظام بهرامی کمیل. نظریه رسانه ها (جامعه شناسی ارتباطات). تهران: انتشارات کویر، 1388؛ حمید مولانا. گذر از نوگرایی: ارتباطات و دگرگونی جامعه. تهران: دفتر مطالعات و توسعه رسانه، 1387.

⁶مهدی محسنیان راد. آسیب شناسی مخاطب پنداری، در حوزه رسانه ها، جهانی شدند و عصر پس از دهکده جهانی. فصلنامه تحقیقات فرهنگی، سال اول، شماره 3، پاییز 1387.

⁷استیفن لیتل جان. نظریه های ارتباطات. ترجمه: مرتضی نوربخش و اکبر میرحسینی. تهران: نشر جنگل، 1384؛ جان تامپسون. رسانه و مدرنیته: نظریه اجتماعی رسانه ها. ترجمه: مسعود اوحدی. تهران: انتشارات سروش، 1389؛ جان فیسک. درآمدی بر مطالعات ارتباطی. ترجمه: مهدی غبرایی. تهران: دفتر مطالعات و توسعه رسانه، 1388؛ دنیس مک کوایل و سون ویندال. مدل‌های ارتباط جمعی. مترجم: گودرز میرزایی. تهران:

Object and Subject of the research. The object of the study is the problem of citizen-media relations, and the subject is a sociological study of the role of the media and citizen-media relations in the democratization of society (especially in Azerbaijan, which is in the process of transition to a democratic system of government) from the sociological perspective.

The purpose and objectives of the research. The main objective of the dissertation is to analyze the citizen-media relations in the information age, to identify the factors influencing the citizen-media relations in the context of globalization and global information systems, to determine the participation of the media in the democratic process and the prospects for media-citizen relations, especially in post-Soviet countries (specifically in Azerbaijan), which are in the process of transition to democratic governance. The following tasks have been set to achieve this goal:

- definition of the concept of communication, the process of transition from direct communication to indirect communication and theoretical analysis of indirect communication models;

- development and proposal of specific communication model, taking into account the new communication technologies, the features of indirect communication and social factors influencing it;

- description of the mass media development history and analysis of the impact of media development on the development of society;

- analysis of the active participation of the media in the democratization process and its effective role in ensuring civic activism;

- measuring the impact of media literacy on citizen-media relations, studying the attitude of the population to the media;

دفتر پژوهش‌های رادیو، 1388؛ دنیس مک کوایل. درآمدی بر نظریه ارتباطات جمعی. ترجمه: پرویز اجالی. تهران: دفتر مطالعات و توسعه رسانه‌ها، 1385؛ دنیس مک کوایل. مخاطب‌شناسی. ترجمه: مهدی منتظر قائم. تهران: دفتر مطالعات و توسعه رسانه‌ها، 1387؛ فرانک وبستر. نظریه‌های جامعه‌اطلاعاتی. ترجمه: اسمائیل قدیمی. تهران: نشر قصیده سرا، 1389؛

- analysis of the media development in Azerbaijan and the prospects of citizen-media relations.

Research methods. There are different methodological approaches in the analysis of the process of mass communication and citizen-media relations: structural-functionalism, cognitive-behavioral, interactionism, interpretivism and critical-Marxist approach⁸.

Analyzing the role of citizen-media relations in the democratization of society, the author is based on interactionism as one of the main methodological approaches in modern social sciences. In the interactionist approach, social life is seen as an interactive process, and the emergence, protection and change of behavior norms, meaning and language are considered to be the products of social life and interaction.

As for the method guided by the practical section of the research, quantitative methods were used to measure the attitude of the citizen to the elections as one of the media and democracy indicators in the country. Quantitative analysis was also conducted by using an experimental method to measure the impact of media literacy on citizens' attitudes towards the media. Both surveys used questionnaires compiled by the author as a means of data collection and SPSS program was used as a tool for information processing and analysis.

The main provisions of the defense.

1. The rapid development of communication technologies in modern times, the emergence of widespread access to the Internet through personal computers and smart phones, has allowed every Internet user to act as both a communicator and a recipient in the field of information exchange and a citizen can act as a communicator and create info-relationships with others together with being a consumer of information on social networks. In this situation, the line between

⁸ Qeyd edilən metodoloji yanaşmalardan struktur-funksionalizm və kritik-marksisit yanaşma faktualizm paradıqmasına, koqnitiv-bihevioral yanaşma bihevioralizm paradıqmasına, interaksionizm və interpretivizm isə defisionizm paradıqmasına aiddir.

information and misinformation has disappeared. From this point of view, the importance of media literacy is emphasized, and the importance of citizens having such skills is highlighted. It is assumed that media literacy also affects citizens' attitudes towards media and media products.

2. As one of the media influence models the “cognitive-transactional” model can be considered a more suitable model for the analysis of citizen-media relations. This model is based on the "scheme theory". According to this theory, the person who receives the information purifies the information by passing it through the cognitive filters in the brain. In other words, when a person encounters various information and signals, he does not act as a passive receiver, but tries to analyze and understand those information and signals from the perspective of his social and mental experiences (interpretation process occurs).

3. As the Internet is not only a source of information, but also a place for new communication, discussion and debate, it has become more competitive with traditional media, and citizens are increasingly using the Internet as a source of information, entertainment and communication. On the other hand, the traditional media, suffering more or less from the "audience illusion syndrome", is unable to play its previous role in socio-political life.

4. Accessibility, Plurality and Selectivity trio are important in modern conditions as the main factors influencing citizen-media relations. From our standpoint, the analysis of citizen-media relations in modern times should be carried out against the background of an accurate analysis of these three factors (APS trio).

5. Two main issues should be considered in the analysis of the media's influence: the real and expected influence of the media and the process of demystification of the media. Concomitantly, it is important to consider the issue of influence and liquidity of the attitude in the analysis of the citizen's attitude to the media.

The scientific novelty of the research was determined in connection with the urgency of the problem, the purpose and objectives of the research. The scientific novelty of the dissertation is expressed in the following:

- Analysis of functional models related to the process of indirect communication and showing the relationship between the main elements;

- Objective and subjective factors influencing the process of indirect communication are studied in a complex way. The proposed communication model analyzes other factors, including the social environment factor;

- The role of the media in enhancing and regulating socio-political activities is explained. It also analyzes the participation of the media, that is considered the fourth power in democracy, in the process of democratization and the stimulation of civic activism;

- The characteristics of civil-media relations in Azerbaijan are explained, the real situation is determined by concrete sociological research and the historical view of civil-media relations is described;

- The factors influencing the citizen-media relations are explained, the media literacy impact factor is measured by the experimental method, the real situation of the attitude to the media is studied by means of a sociological survey;

The theoretical and practical significance of the research. The materials and provisions of the research can be applied in higher education institutions, especially in the field of humanities in general sociology, sociology of mass communications, social philosophy, political science, etc in the teaching of lecture courses, development of curricula, in methodical recourses, in the writing of textbooks and teaching aids, in the preparation of specialty courses and abstracts; It can be used as scientific literature in scientific works by bachelors, masters, doctoral students and researchers conducting research on this topic.

The dissertation can also be used as a source on the study of media activities and influence strategies in the world and in the country, the work of state and government agencies, socio-political development, regulation of media-citizen relations and the preparation of legislation on relevant socio-political reforms, and the NGO activities.

Approbation of research work. The research was conducted at the Department of Sociology of Baku State University. The content and main provisions of the dissertation are reflected in the author's theses included in the materials of international scientific conferences and scientific articles. The total volume of the dissertation, including the volume of the structural units of the dissertation: The dissertation consists of an introduction, three chapters, conclusion, list of references and appendix. The introductory part of the dissertation consists of 16 pages, the first chapter 45 pages, the second chapter 50 pages, the third chapter 41 pages, the final (result) part 4 pages, the literature part 10 pages, the appendix part 7 pages. The dissertation consists of 165 pages and 282542 characters.

THE MAIN CONTENT OF THE DISSERTATION

The introduction substantiates the relevance of the topic, examines the degree of development of the problem, defines the goals and objectives of the research, theoretical and methodological bases, gives the main provisions, discloses scientific innovations, scientific-theoretical and practical significance, approbation and structure of the dissertation.

Chapter I of the dissertation “**History of formation of mass media and impact on society development; theoretical and methodological analysis**”. In the first half of this chapter "The historical development characteristics of the mass media " was studied.

One of the most important conditions of social life is interpersonal communication and information exchange. Naturally, the exchange of information and ideas occurs through the communicative process and

communication technologies. In this regard, it is important to analyze the nature of the communicative process and the historical development of the means of communication, as well as to explain the role of communication and information exchange in society. The analysis and forecited explanation mainly requires answering three questions: 1) Communication and its essence, 2) Communicative process and mass communication models, 3) The process of historical development of mass communication technologies and their impact on the communicative sphere.

The word communication, first used by the Romans and corresponding to the verb "communicare," is of the Latin word "communication", meaning "link", "connection", "to inform", "to bode"⁹. As Robert T. Craig noted, "Communication is a type of interaction that involves the exchange of information between people, the mutual relation between individuals through a system of signs"¹⁰. In his Rhetoric, Aristotle states that communication consists of three main elements (speaker, text and listener) and believes that the main purpose of the act of communication is to influence the "listener", to convince him and to gain prestige. Edwin Emery believes that "communication is a mechanism of transmission information, ideas and behavioral patterns from one person to another". In book "The Mathematical Theory of Communication", co-authored by Claude E. Shannon and Warren Weaver, is reported that "communication is any process that allows one thought to influence another." Charles Horton Cooley explained communication as follows: interpersonal communication and information exchange takes place and develops in the context of the communication mechanism. Here Cooley points to four main factors: a) communication is the basis of interpersonal communication and

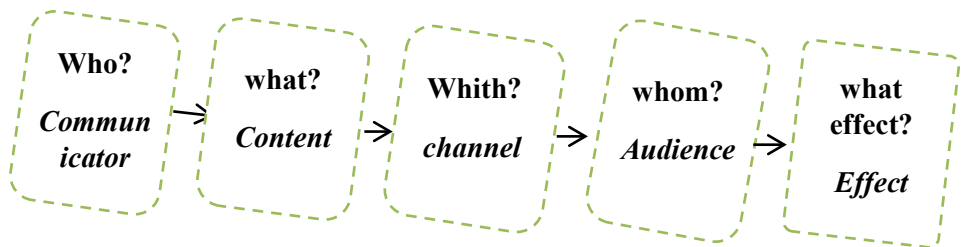
⁹ Cəfərov. S.Ə., Qarayev. A.H., Cəfərova. K.Ə. Avropa mənşəli sözlərin qısa lüğəti. Bakı: Maarif, 1981.

¹⁰ Politologiya izahlı lüğət. Redaktor: Ramiz Mehdiyev. Bakı: Şərq-Qərb, 2007.

connection, b) exchange and connection takes place through communication, c) the exchange of semiotics and symbols, d) means of transmission.

Communication is not always realized for the purpose of influence. To be precise, there can be three forms of communication depending on the purpose: 1) action: activity directed to another for the purpose of influence, 2) reaction: response to another's action or attitude, 3) interaction: activity aimed at mutual relation, communication and exchange. Depending on the purpose of communication, the communicator-recipient relationship can take two forms: a) interactive relationship and b) imperative relationship.

Communicative process and mass communication models: an accurate analysis of the communicative process and mass



communication models makes it possible to study this process in a more systematic and clear way. One of the most comprehensive works in this field is Denis McQuail and Swen Windahl's "Communication Models for the Study of Mass Communications" (1981). The first mass communication model, considered the basic model for the modern period, was proposed in 1948 by Harold Lasswell. Elements of Harold Lasswell's linear communication model answer five questions: "who, said what, in which channel, to whom, with what effect?"¹¹.

¹¹دنيس مك كوايل و سون ويندال. مدل‌های ارتباط جمعی. تهران: دفتر پژوهش‌های رادیو، 1388؛

The answers required by each of these questions have become a unique field of study in media research. Thus, for researchers interested in the question "who?", the communicator and the factors that initiate communication are the main research topic, and this area of research is called "control analysis". Researchers interested in the question "said what?", content and transmitted information is the main research topic, and this field of research is called "content analysis". For researchers interested in the question "in which channel?", the main means of mass communication is considered to be radio, television, press, etc., and this research area is called Media Analysis. For researchers who are interested in the question "to whom?" those who are influenced by the audience and the media are considered the subject of research, and this area of research is called "audience analysis". For researchers interested in the question of "with what effect?", the main research topic is the impact and forms of media, and this area of research is called "effects analysis"¹².

Another linear model of communication is the "mathematical model" proposed in 1949 by Warren Weaver and Claude Shannon. This model "describes the process of exchanging information between two people based on probability factors, which in a given situation may be somewhat successful or unsuccessful". Melvin DeFlor developed a model with a feedback element by adding a key factor that was lacking in the Weaver-Shannon's and the Lasswell's models and causing a lot of

¹²ژان کازنو. جامعه شناسی وسایل ارتباط جمعی. ترجمه: باقر ساروخانی و منوچهر محسنی. تهران: انتشارات اطلاعات، 1387؛ 116. نظام بهرامی کمیل. نظریه رسانه ها (جامعه شناسی ارتباطات). تهران: انتشارات کویر، 1388.

21st Century Communication A Reference Handbook (V 1&2). Editor: William F. Eadie. Los Angeles; Sage Publications. 2009; Marcel Danesi. Understanding Media Semiotics. London: Arnold, 2002.

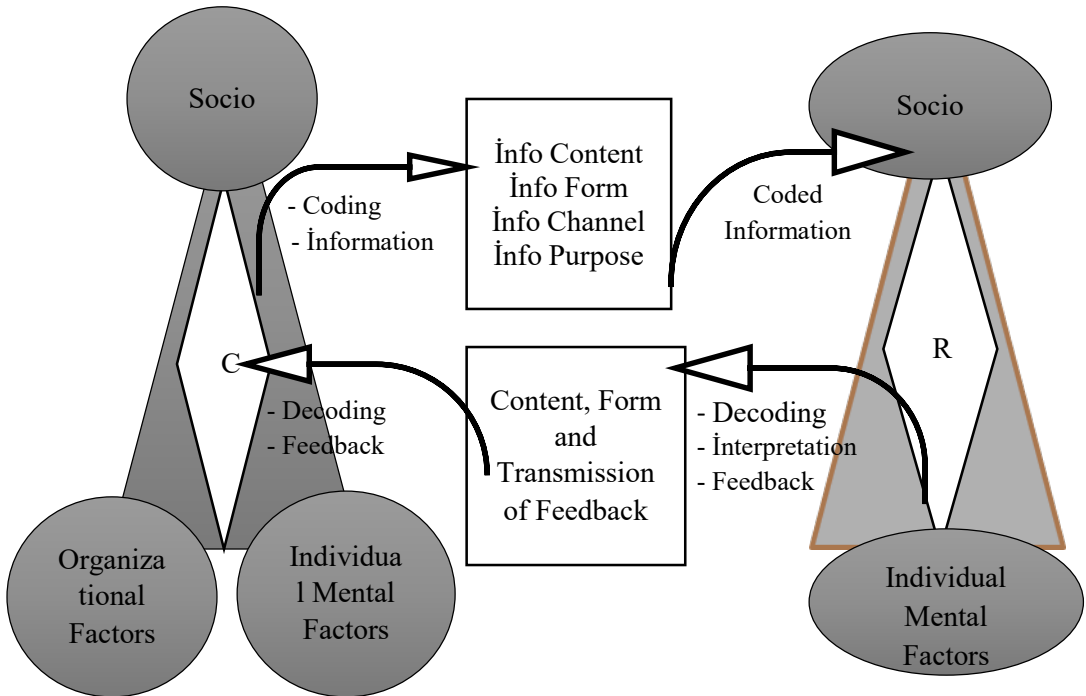
criticism. Melvin DeFlor shows the way how the feedback act occurs and suggests a more complex form of communication for this purpose.

One of the most important models in the field of communication research is the ABX model proposed by Theodore Newcomb. In the scientific literature, the ABX model is also called as the "equilibrium-compatibility" model. This model is considered a suitable system for showing the structure and characteristics of the communicative relationship between two parties (sender and receiver of information) covered by different opinions, thoughts, approaches, and propaganda. The model consists of three elements: the sender of the information "A", the receiver of the information "B", and the matter of concern "X". More precisely, the ABX model is a model consistent with the theory of "selective acceptance". (Unlike "mass acceptance" theories, in "selective acceptance" theories, the audience is active and selects and accepts information and communication products that are relevant to their interests and thoughts). In the concept of M. Riley and J. Riley, in the process of communication, the recipient is not excluded from the influence of both the primary and the reference group. To be exact, the socio-cultural environment affects the communication process, and communication affects the socio-cultural environment. All this makes the sociological analysis of the communication process an important factor.

Traditional communication models and the mass media operation scheme are almost not enough to analyze the activities of modern media and especially the Internet and social media. In this period (especially in social media) there is no boundary between the concepts of communicator-recipient. All together, in each of the presented communication models, some of the factors influencing the communicative process were given more importance and analyzed. Considering this fact, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of the various models mentioned above and in accordance with the topic of the

dissertation, we offer a new communication model (interactive model), which from our standpoint can be useful in the analysis of modern communication processes. (Figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1: The interactive model we propose.



In the proposed model, "C" is the communicator, "R" is the audience. The activity of the communicator is conditioned by various factors (organizational conditions and limitations, individual-mental experiences and limitations, society and, more precisely, socio-cultural factors). These factors determine the purpose and activity of the communicator, affect the channel (media) he chooses and what information (content and form) he encodes and transmits. At the same time, the activity of the audience is conditioned by individual-mental

experience and limitations, as well as social factors. This determines the content and form of the information, which channel (media) to choose, how to decode the content and how to interpret it, how to react to the content and create feedback. We believe that the presented interactive model of communication can also serve to democratize society, motivate audience activity and participation in socio-political processes, and the effectiveness of citizens' reaction to media products.

As for the history of the communication technologies development Marshall McLuhan describes the three-stage history of these technologies in his book "The Gutenberg Galaxy": "the verbal galaxy", "the Gutenberg galaxy" and "the Marconi galaxy" and believes that social development in general flows through communication. and history is not a formation, but a change of the communication phases. This division, reflecting in many scientific literatures, is also referred to as the "acoustic oral communication phase", "the visual print communication phase", and "the acoustic electronic communication phase". In the last quarter of the XX century, the "digital era" began with the use of Web-based communication technologies. By this time, the use of the Internet and computer technology had not only weakened the trend towards classical media, but also changed the way they were used. Taking into account this fact, we consider it expedient to add a fourth to the three "galaxies" - "digital galaxy".

The second half of Chapter I, "**The Place and Role of the Media in the Social Development of Society**", analyzes Daniel Lerner's four-stage development model (urbanization, education, media use, political and economic participation) and the importance and role of the media in that model. Then, Donald McCrone's model of communication and political development based on Lerner's development model is discussed. This model also shows the relationship between media use and democracy and political development, and education as an important condition of media use acts as a key factor.

Concepts about the media impact on the society development can be divided into three groups:

a) Causality: this approach, based on Max Weber's causal analysis of the relationship between social change and economic change, was adopted by most early development theorists in the 1950-1960¹³.

b) Utilitarian approach: a practical approach, the main purpose of which is to determine the relationship between communication technologies and development policies. More precisely, it assesses the level of service and impact of a particular means of mass communication or a particular communication strategy on development and social change.

c) Structuralist approach: by studying the infrastructures of the global communication system, it is studied whether those infrastructures cause or hinder development.

Different theories and concepts about the influence of the media on the cultural sphere can be combined into 3 groups: "the triple theory" (mass triangle), "technological determinism", "political economic theory". The dissertation provides a critical analysis of the main provisions of these theories and currents.

Chapter II of the dissertation is entitled "**The role and importance of the media in the formation of democratic values**". In the first half of the second chapter, "**Study of the media, basic schools and currents as a means of enhancing socio-political activity**" is considered. The reason for the combined analysis of social and political activity here is that "in modern society there is a tendency to politicize in all spheres of public life, and this tendency is accelerating" and that is why it is almost impossible to separate social and political activity from sharp boundaries and to study it alone.

¹³حمید مولانا. گذر از نوگرایی: ارتباطات و دگرگونی جامعه. تهران: دفتر مطالعات و توسعه رسانه،

One of the main factors of socio-political participation is the media. The role of the media in the participation process cannot be unequivocally assessed. A historical analysis of the world political landscape shows that agents of political life, and especially the media, have not always served the democratization of political life and the effectiveness of political participation. At times, the media has acted simply as a means of control (the concept of "subcutaneous needle" and "magic bullet"), self-censorship (the concept of "spiral of silence"), distraction (the concept of "setting the agenda") and political manipulation in general. The role of the media in supporting the democratization process can be summarized as follows: bringing important issues to the discussion, liaising between the organizers and the public and interest groups, informing the public about the norms of participation, and ensuring the continuity and continuity of participation.

According to Michael Gurevitch and Jay Blumler, the media must play some functions for democratization, the establishment of democratic values and the strengthening of civic activism¹⁴:

1. Control over the socio-political environment to identify problems in the welfare of citizens.
2. To determine the agenda (in accordance with reality) to solve problems.
3. Create a political platform to defend different views and interest groups.
4. Organization of dialogue between different views (perspectives).
5. Require reports from government officials.
6. Create incentives to participate in elections and obtain information.

¹⁴ Democracy and the mass media; a collection of essays. Editor: Judith Lichtenberg. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

7. To protect the independence and accuracy of the media.
8. To instill in members of the audience a sense of dignity and respect, to motivate them to change the political environment”.

This chapter also analyzes various currents and schools in the study of the media. Two important schools, procedural and semiotic, are analyzed here, with reference to John Fiske's "Introduction to Communication Studies". In the procedural school, communication is considered a means of influencing the citizens' thinking and behavior. It is stated that "the communication process fails if the impact is less or different from the expected and planned level. In such an instance, the various stages of the process are re-analyzed and the reasons of communication failure are studied". In a procedural school, the line of communication is analyzed as a process. The explanation of media-citizen relations in the procedural school is based on the stimulus-response model, or rather behaviorism.

In the semiotic school, communication is analyzed as a process of production and exchange of "meaning", which occurs in the context of the connection between the consumer context of the text (content) and the production context through the media. "Learning how to interact with text (content) and the audience to produce meaning is one of the main challenges of the semiotic school. In this school, the unexpected result of the communication process is not considered as a failure, but rather as a problem of "language" incompatibility between the communicator and the recipient. In this school, the analysis of communication is based on the study of "text" and "culture," and the main research method is semiotics.

Virginia Fry and Donald Fry, representatives of the Semiotic school, point out three aspects of communication and exchanged text from semiotic perspective: "First of all, the information transmitted by the media can lead to different meanings, and this allows the same text to be thought of in different ways. Assuredly, the content (information)

builder in media consciously prepare the text with the intention of conveying certain messages. However, the audience (consumer) may understand the information in a quite another sense and diverse content. Second, the information transmitted by the media makes sense in the context of the relation of the content with the audience in the communication process. In other words, meaning is produced in respect of reader's connection with the text. Third, the meaning and significance of each transmitted message is influenced by external factors. That is, although the signs used in the text play a key role in the meaning formation, external occurrences have a serious impact on individual's understanding and interpreting the content”¹⁵.

The second half of the second chapter examines **“The development characteristics of citizen-media relations and media literacy in the light of democratization”**.

As for the important role of civic-media relations in modern development and democratization, the media can be considered now as a leading element and, more precisely, a key element of political life, and it is not feasible to create the necessary conditions for citizen participation in political life without the media participation. Meanwhile, democracy is not just a form of public administration method. It is also the establishment of government-citizen relations regarding the system of rights, lifestyle, political equality, moral autonomy, the law supremacy, the citizen will and, most importantly, the principle of dialogue. Free elections, the activities of elected officials, local self-government officials and the free media play a leading role in the establishment of this dialogue. However, in any case, there are attempts to manipulate public opinion and civic attitudes through the media, and

¹⁵استیفن لیتل جان. نظریه های ارتباطات. ترجمه: مرتضی نوربخش و اکبر میرحسینی. تهران: نشر جنگل،

a high level of "media literacy" is considered necessary to weaken these efforts.

The relevance for media literacy was first mentioned in 1965 by Marshall McLuhan. Conforming to him, it is important for people living in the "global village" to acquire new types of knowledge and skills, i.e., media literacy. "Media literacy is the aggregate skills needed to differentiate between real and unreal between media products and information. These abilities and skills serve to prevent media from negative"¹⁶.

Media literacy is the ability to critically approach information from a variety of sources, to analyze that information and data, to participate in the production and transmission of information, and to evaluate all types of information (print, visual, digital, etc.). Currently, there is a relevant opinion that not only freedom of speech and free media, but also the activity of citizens (consumers of media content), critical thinking, selectivity potential, opportunities and interest in participating in the creation of media content, increase of communication skills at the social level, and other factors hold primary function in the society democratization. The media literacy development and citizen awareness are also seen as an alternative to "legitimate censorship". Proponents of free speech acknowledge that some information and ideas in the media are harmful to society as a whole (especially for children and adolescents), and believe that the advancement of media literacy is one of the best ways to protect society from damaging information and ideologies.

The results of an experimental survey conducted to measure the impact of media literacy on attitudes toward media products confirmed

¹⁶ Elizabeth M. Perse. *Media Effects and Society*. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2001.

the main hypothesis of the study (there is a positive relationship between media literacy and attitudes towards media and media products).

Chapter III of the dissertation entitled **"Problems of citizen-media relations in the light of democratization in Azerbaijan"** consists of two paragraphs. The first paragraph examines **"Stages of democratization and the formation of civil society in Azerbaijan"**.

Democracy trends and the dynamics of the democratization process in Azerbaijan should be analyzed from two perspectives: from a historical and real situation assessment perspectives. It is possible to present three-staged description of democratization tendencies and attempts in modern Azerbaijan: the stage of formation and development, the stage of stagnation, the stage of redevelopment.

The first stage covers the period from 1918 to 1920 (years of board Azerbaijan Democratic Republic), the second stage begins with the occupation of the country by the Soviet army in 1920 and covers the period before the collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in 1991, the third stage started in 1991 and is still going on. Certainly, until 1920, many intellectuals carried out enlightenment activities to educate the population and, as a result, to create conditions for their active participation in socio-political processes for the protection of their rights and interests. However, the activities of serious democratic organizations and parties, and in particular the reference to democratic values, began with the activities of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic and its leaders. Azerbaijan Democratic Republic laid the foundation of independence and democracy during its short period of activity, and after 70 years, our independence was restored and immortalized in 1991.

As one of the first results of the collapse of the USSR and the restoration of independence, the constitution corresponding to the system of democratic values was adopted with the great support of the people. According to a report released by the Ministry of Justice in 2021, currently 56 parties and 3332 NGOs are officially registered in the

country. Nevertheless, newspapers, magazines, television and Internet channels, websites and electronic news portals with different political ideologies and orientations operate in the country. Generally, reforms to institutionalize the party system began with the adoption of the “Law on Political Parties” on June 2, 1992. A number of additional amendments were made to this law in 1996, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007”¹⁷.

The second paragraph of the Chapter III **"Current state of citizen-media relations in Azerbaijan and prospects for the media institution development"** is analyzed. We presume, that it would be more accurate to analyze the formation and development of citizen-media relations in Azerbaijan in the light of the national media development. From this point of view, civil-media relations went through four main stages: the first stage covered the period from 1875 to 1918, the second stage from 1918 to 1920, and the third stage from 1920 to 1991. The fourth and final stage has been going on since 1991. The fourth stage differs from the previous ones in one feature: at this stage, the use of Internet and Web-based communication technologies has led to significant changes in the communication process and communication system.

The first stage contains the primary attempts at communication between the media and the citizen. At this stage, the small audience was experiencing almost the first means of indirect communication. The second stage of media-citizen relationships coincided with a period of intense political processes in the country and the establishment of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic. The studies of the press researchers of this period show that from the establishment of the first example of our national press, "Akinchi" newspaper, to May 1918, only 40 newspapers

¹⁷ Allahyarova T., Məmmədov F. Azərbaycanca siyasi partiyalar: seçkidən seçkiyə. Bakı: Azərbaycan Respublikası Prezidenti yanında Strateji Araşdırmalar Mərkəzi (SAM), 2010.

were published, while during the 23-month rule of ADR the number of newspapers was about 200.

The third stage of media-citizen relations differed from the first two stages in several respects: a) the emergence of new media, i.e. radio and television, the launch of Azerbaijani radio and television, b) the media was forced to promote the interests of the USSR, not independence and democracy within the laws of the ideological political system, c) stagnation in the promotion of independence and democracy as a result of the killing, deportation or arrest of numerous intellectual and patriotic forces as a result of repression and persecution.

The fourth stage of media-citizen relations began with the restoration of Azerbaijan's re-independence. At this stage, imperative control, limited sources of information, harassment and censorship were abolished, creating conditions for the development of media-citizen relations on an interactive level. Comments and opinions of citizens on the media activities in the country were studied through a questionnaire compiled by the author, and the results are summarized within the tables and diagrams in dissertation work.

The process of democratization continues in Azerbaijan, and the main goals are to eliminate the various contradictions of the past, to ensure the adaptation of the system to new values and democratic principles, and to ensure solidarity in solving problems of transition. The media must become one of the leading subjects of socio-political life, fulfilling its function arising from the requirements of the current situation.

It is not difficult to observe that in Azerbaijan, as in many developed and developing countries of the world, newspapers, magazines and radio have lost their prestige and importance in the light of television and the Internet. According to the survey results, for the question "Which media do you use the most for accurate news and information?" 5.5 per cent of respondents mentioned newspapers, 41.5

per cent - television and 53 per cent - the Internet. The answers of respondents to the question about the characteristics of the media they used the most, makes clear that the choice of Internet users is influenced by freedom of speech, feedback possibility and agility (operativeness). The choice of TV users is influenced first by affordability (according to the user's time and budget) and then by flexibility. All this shows that television and especially the Internet have a clearer and stronger perspective in the field of information and communication.

In the **Result**, the work is summed up, the author's conclusions on the topic are brought to attention. Based on the general nature of the research and the results obtained, the following suggestions are made: attention to the factor of "media literacy" in the modern info environment should be increased, and training concepts in this field should be developed. Flexibility, reliability and multi-capabilities, as well as providing feedback to the citizen, have a significant impact on the growth of the modern media reputation, and this issue should always be taken into account by the national media. Frequently, traditional media (especially TV channels) have sacrificed seriousness and credibility to the temporary rating, tending to look more like "yellow press", which may eventually lead to the fact that, the citizen will be more inclined to foreign channels than national ones, and will be more likely to believe the rumors spread on social networks.. All this should be in the center of attention in order to regulate the future activities of the media and members of the media. In general, the three factors that determine a citizen's attitude to the media - pluralism, accessibility and selectivity - must be considered by those who develop media policy.

The main content of the dissertation is reflected in the following published scientific works of the author.

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The dissertation is available in the library of the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences.

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