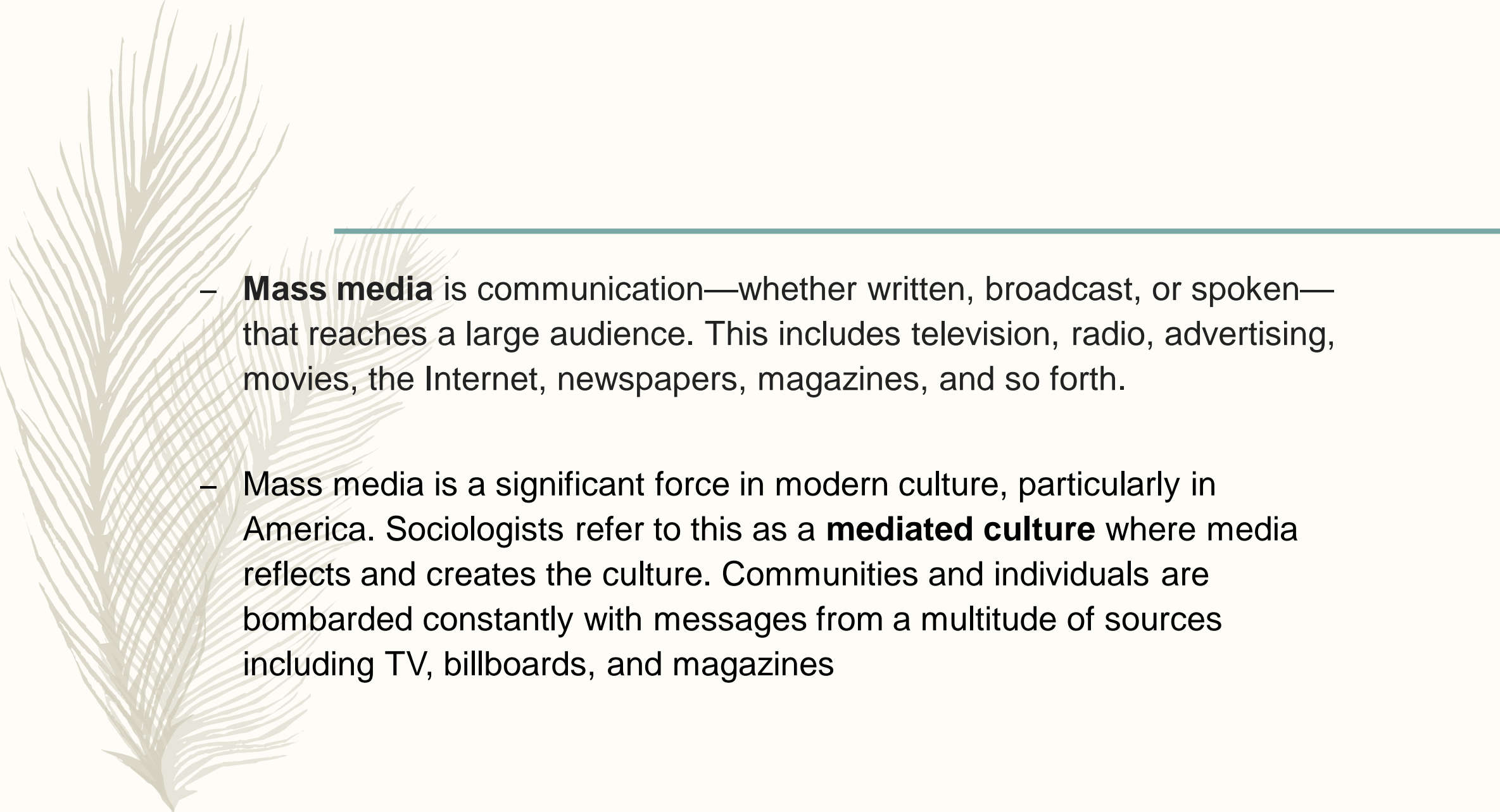


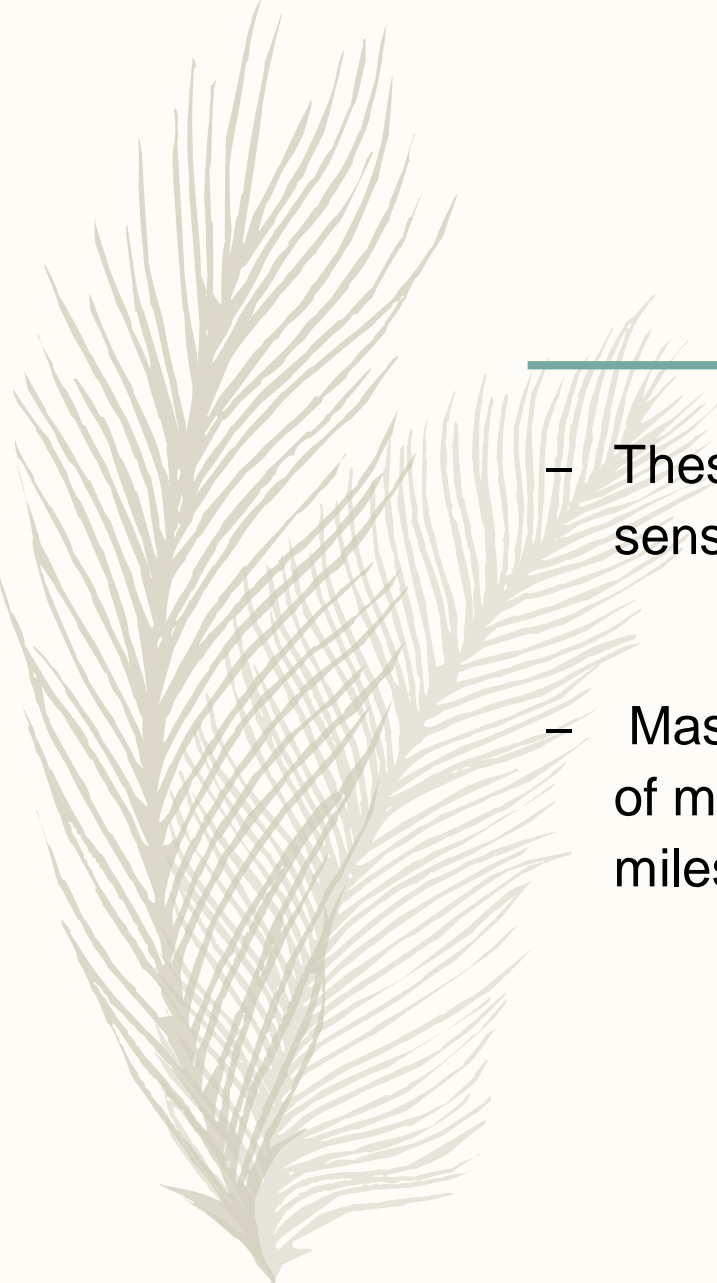


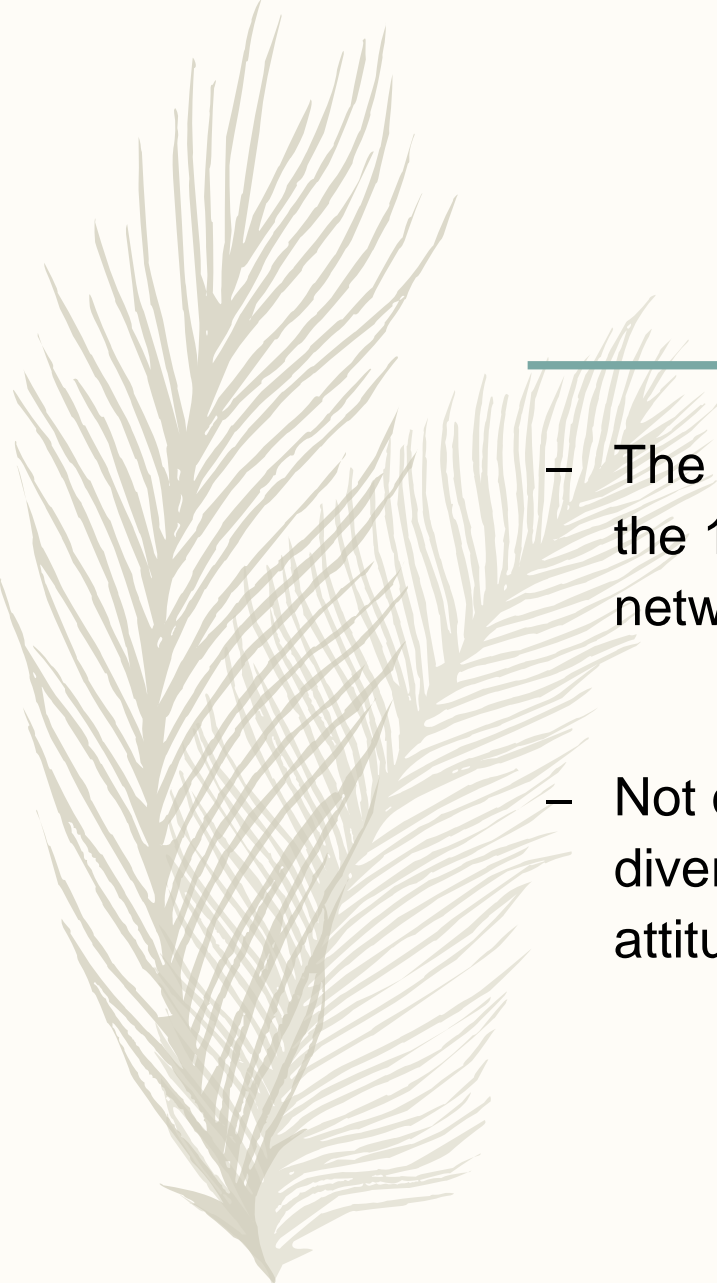
The Influence of Mass Media


مادة إعلامية س1 ف1

Second Lecture 19/12/2020

- 
- **Mass media** is communication—whether written, broadcast, or spoken—that reaches a large audience. This includes television, radio, advertising, movies, the Internet, newspapers, magazines, and so forth.
 - Mass media is a significant force in modern culture, particularly in America. Sociologists refer to this as a **mediated culture** where media reflects and creates the culture. Communities and individuals are bombarded constantly with messages from a multitude of sources including TV, billboards, and magazines

- 
-
- These messages promote not only products, but moods, attitudes, and a sense of what is and is not important.
 - Mass media makes possible the concept of celebrity: without the ability of movies, magazines, and news media to reach across thousands of miles, people could not become famous.

- 
-
- The current level of media flowing has not always existed. As recently as the 1960s and 1970s, television, for example, consisted of primarily three networks, public broadcasting, and a few local independent stations.
 - Not only has availability increased, but programming is increasingly diverse with shows aimed to please all ages, incomes, backgrounds, and attitudes.

- 
-
- This widespread availability and exposure makes television the primary focus of most mass-media discussions. More recently, the Internet has increased its role heavily. Although TV and the Internet have dominated the mass media, movies and magazines also play a powerful role in culture, as do other forms of media.

The Role of Media



- What role does mass media play? media executives and sociologists have all debated this controversial question. While opinions vary as to the extent and type of influence the mass media wields, all sides agree that mass media is a permanent part of modern culture.
- Three main sociological perspectives on the role of media exist: the limited-effects theory, the class-dominant theory, and the culturalist theory



Limited-effects Theory

The **limited-effects theory** argues that because people generally choose what to watch or read based on what they already believe, media exerts an insignificant influence.

This theory originated and was tested in the 1940s and 1950s.

Studies that examined the ability of media to influence voting found that well-informed people relied more on personal experience, prior knowledge, and their own reasoning.

However, media “experts” more likely influenced those who were less informed.



Limited-effects Theory

Critics point to two problems with this perspective:

First, they claim that limited-effects theory ignores the media's role in framing and limiting the discussion and debate of issues.

How media frames the debate and what questions members of the media ask change the outcome of the discussion and the possible conclusions people may draw.

Second, this theory came into existence when the availability and dominance of media was far less widespread.

Class-dominant Theory

- The **class-dominant theory** argues that the media reflects and projects the view of a minority elite, which controls it. Those people who own and control the corporations that produce media consist of this elite.
- Advocates of this view concern themselves particularly with massive collective mergers of media organizations
- Their concern is that when ownership is restricted, a few people then have the ability to manipulate what people can see or hear. For example, owners can easily avoid or silence stories that expose unethical corporate behavior



Class-dominant Theory



- Critics of this theory counter these arguments by saying that local control of news media largely lies beyond the reach of large corporate offices elsewhere, and that the quality of news depends upon good journalists.

Culturalist Theory

- The **culturalist theory**, developed in the 1980s and 1990s, combines the other two theories and claims that people interact with media to create their own meanings out of the images and messages they receive.
- This theory sees audiences as playing an active rather than passive role in relation to mass media





Culturalist Theory

- One strand of research focuses on the audiences and how they interact with media; the other strand of research focuses on those who produce the media, particularly the news.
- Theorists emphasize that audiences choose what to watch among a wide range of options, choose how much to watch, and may choose the mute button over the programming selected by the network or cable station.

Culturalist Theory



- researchers find that when people approach material, whether written text or media images and messages, they interpret that material based on their own knowledge and experience.
- Thus, when researchers ask different groups to explain the meaning of a particular song or video, the groups produce widely divergent interpretations based on age, gender, race, ethnicity, and religious background.

Culturalist Theory

Therefore, culturalist theorists claim that, while a few elite in large corporations may exert significant control over what information media produces and distributes, personal perspective plays a more powerful role in how the audience members interpret those messages.

