CHAPTER 12

Media as Agents of Socialization

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> You were never there for me, were you mother? **You** expected Mike and Carol Brady to raise me! I'm the bastard son of Claire Huxtable! I am a Lost Cunningham! I learned the facts of life from watching The Facts *of* Life! Oh God!
>
> —Jim Carrey as Ernie "Chip" Douglas in the movie ***The*** Cable Guy **(1996)**

Unlike Chip Douglas from the movie *The* Cable *Guy*, most children are not raised exclusively by television, without support from parents, teachers, and other caregivers. Nonetheless, media play an increasingly significant role as socializing agents in the lives of children and adolescents. Over the past 10 years, media consumption among youth has grown steadily. There have been significant increases in time spent watching television, listening to music, playing video games, and using the Internet and cell phones (Harris Interactive, 2008; Jones & Fox, 2009; Rideout, Foehr, & Roberts, 2010). Youth in the United States now use media for an average of 7.5 hours a day (Rideout et al., 2010).

The mass media explosion that began in the 1950s has dramatically changed the environment in which children are raised. Electronic media provide children with a variety of new learning opportunities and broaden the range of events children experience. Socialization is no longer restricted to the influences of family, peers, and other people in children's immediate surroundings. Indeed, most everything we experience as humans has an impact on the way the brain becomes wired, just as the things we eat have an impact on our body. As with a food diet, it is important to consider issues such

as amount, content, and age-appropriateness when it comes to a media diet (Warburton, 2012a). Although most research has focused on potential negative effects of some types of media, it is equally important to examine positive effects of a "healthy" media diet (Warburton & Highfield, 2012).

In the short term, media use affects behavior through priming cognitions and eliciting affect, increasing arousal and prompting imitation (C. A. Anderson et al., 2003; Paik & Comstock, 1994). In the long term, media influence beliefs, perceptions, behavioral scripts, and affective traits, bringing about lasting changes in personality (Gentile, Groves, & Gentile, 2014; Huesmann & Kirwil, 2007). Significant effects of media use have been demonstrated in a wide range of domains of socialization, including violence, helping, and education (overviewed in Table 12.1). This chapter broadly summarizes research findings concerning entertainment-focused mass media as agents of socialization. We do not include media that have been specifically designed to teach educational content or health-related behaviors. Some teachinglearning-based targeted media products have been found to teach their content successfully and represent a positive development in technology use, but they fall outside the scope of this chapter. First, we describe the general learning model (GLM), a useful theoretical framework for understanding socialization mechanisms. Next, we review relevant research on mass media and socialization. Finally, we identify key questions for future research.

The General Learning Model

The GLM (Barlett& Anderson, 2013; Buckley & Anderson, 2006; Gentile et al., 2014)—derived from the general aggression model (C. A. Anderson & Bushman, 2002; DeWall, Anderson, & Bushman, 2012)—is a useful framework for understanding short- and long-term media effects. It describes processes through which personal characteristics and environmental stimuli affect social behaviors in short-term contexts. It also shows how long-term attitudes, beliefs, and behavioral tendencies are formed through repeated exposure to various types of social encounters (including media use). We pay special attention to long-term learning processes because they are the key to media influences on socialization. Nonetheless, we describe short-term processes as well.

In any immediate situation, social behaviors are influenced by both person factors (e.g., personality, mood, genetic predispositions) and situation factors (e.g., media use, the physical environment, other people's actions). Person factors and situation factors influence one's present internal state—active cognitions, affect, and state of arousal. For example, playing a prosocial video game primes prosocial cognitions and increases positive affect (Greitemeyer & Osswald, 2009; Saleem, Anderson, & Gentile, 2012a, 2012b). These internal states jointly influence appraisal and decision-making processes. For instance, increased positive affect may increase benign (rather than hostile) attributions in an ambiguous social encounter. Such immediate appraisals occur automatically and require little mental effort. In contrast, people engage in reappraisal only when sufficient mental resources are available and when the immediate appraisal is perceived as both important and unsatisfactory (Buckley & Anderson, 2006). Thus, normal appraisal and decision-making processes can result in either impulsive or thoughtful actions of many types, prosocial and antisocial. In turn, that action influences the current social situation, essentially starting a new social episode.

TABLE 12.1. A Summary of Main Research Findings on Mass Media as Agents of Socialization

Positive effects	Evidence[a]
Prosocial (nonviolent) media	
Increase prosocial behavior	Fairly strong causal, both short and long term
Increase empathy	Moderate causal, both short and long term
Decrease aggression	Fairly strong causal short term
Civic engagement	Weak causal, only cross-sectional support
Educational media teach specific knowledge and skills	Fairly strong causal, short and long term
Media can promote multicultural awareness and weaken stereotypes	Weak short- and long-term evidence
Social media promote social networking	Weak long-term evidence, conflicting evidence of negative effects on social functioning
Parental involvement in media use protects against negative media effects	Moderate correlational long-term effects, weak experimental long-term evidence
Negative effects	**Evidence[a]**
Violent media	
Increase aggressive behavior	Very strong causal, both short and long term
Increase violent behavior	Fairly strong long term; moderate causal short term
Increase aggressive cognitions	Very strong causal, both short and long term
Increase aggressive affect	Very strong causal, both short and long term
Desensitize to violence	Very strong causal, both short and long term
Decrease empathy	Very strong causal, both short and long term
Decrease prosocial behavior	Very strong causal, both short and long term
Civic engagement	Weak causal, only cross-sectional support
Risk-glorifying media	
Increase positive attitudes toward risky behaviors	Fairly strong causal, short and long term
Increase likelihood of risky behaviors in real life	Fairly strong causal, short and long term
Stereotypical portrayals of women and ethnic minorities strengthen stereotypes	Fairly strong causal, short and long term
Other domains in need of research	
Identity development	Effects of cell phones, texting, and sexting
Social networking and social functioning	MMORPGs
Media and brain function	

[a]Strong evidence: Over 20 methodologically strong studies exist that provide evidence of the effect; moderate evidence: A total of 10 to 20 methodologically strong studies exist that provide evidence of the effect; weak evidence: Less than 10 methodologically strong studies exist that provide evidence of the effect; causal evidence: Multiple methodologically strong studies provide clear evidence of causality.

Through repeated priming and reinforcement of specific knowledge structures, exposure to any type of experience can lead to lasting influences on personality and social development (see Figure 12.1). Long-term effects occur through three interrelated processes: changes in cognitive constructs, cognitive-emotional constructs, and emotional constructs. Cognitive constructs include perceptual schemata, beliefs, and behavioral scripts. For example, long-term exposure to media violence leads to the development of a hostile attribution bias, a tendency to perceive other people's harmful actions as hostile rather than accidental (C. A. Anderson, Gentile, & Buckley, 2007). Violent media use also increases beliefs that aggression is an appropriate response (Moller & Krahé, 2009). Cognitive-emotional constructs include attitudes and stereotypes. For example, long-term exposure to media violence is associated with proviolence attitudes (Funk, Baldacci, Pasold, & Baumgardner, 2004). Stereotypical portrayals of racial groups in mass media influences real-world evaluations of minorities (Lett, Dipietro, & Johnson, 2004; Saleem & Anderson, 2013). Emotional constructs include conditioned emotions and affective traits. High exposure to media violence leads to desensitization and reduced empathy toward victims of violence (Carnagey, Anderson, & Bushman, 2007; Krahé & Möller, 2010; Mullin & Linz, 1995). These same psychological processes explain how

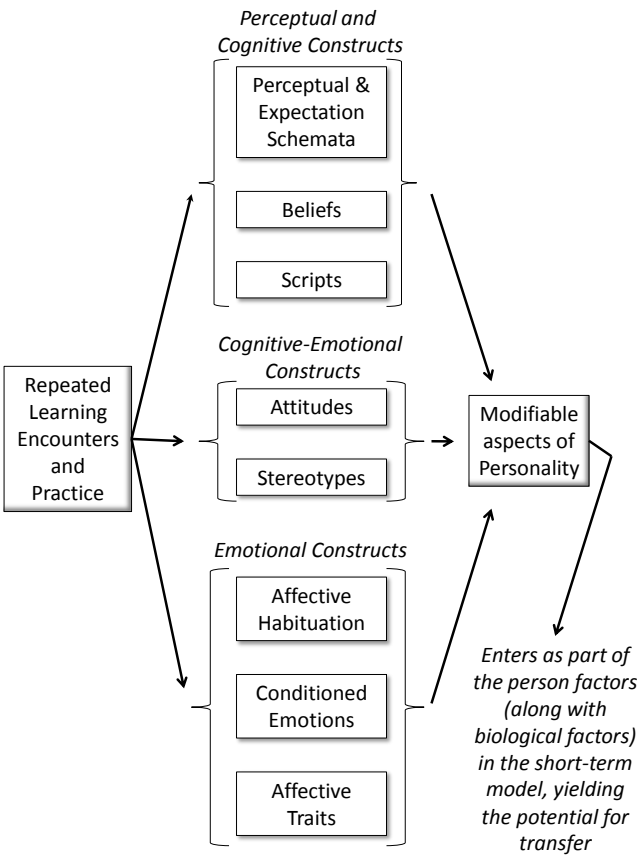

FIGURE 12.1. Long-term processes in the general learning model. From Gentile, Groves, and Gentile (2014). Copyright 2014 by Oxford University Press. Reprinted by permission.

prosocial media use increases empathy (Gentile et al., 2009; Greitemeyer, Osswald, & Brauer, 2010). In summary, people learn attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors from social interactions, real and fictional. What types of beliefs and behaviors are learned from media is largely determined by content.

Empirical Evidence of Socializing Influences of Mass Media

Negative Media Effects

Effects of Violent Media

Effects of media violence on aggression and related outcomes have received a huge amount of attention and are well understood. Experimental, correlational, and longitudinal studies, even experimental intervention studies, confirm that violent medic exposure is a causal risk factor for aggression (C. A. Anderson et al., 2010; C. A. Anderson, Berkowitz, et al., 2003; Bushman & Huesmann, 2012). Such effects have been found for movies, television shows (Huesmann, Moise-Titus, Podolski, & Eron, 2003), video games (C. A. Anderson et al., 2010), music (C. A. Anderson, Carnagey, & Eubanks, 2003), and even violent comic books (Kirsh & Olczak, 2002). They have been replicated across age, culture, and research teams.

EXPERIMENTAL EVIDENCE

Experimental research renders a clear picture of the immediate causal influence of media violence exposure on aggression. Many experiments show that even brief violent media exposure can lead to immediate increases in aggressive thoughts, hostile affect, and aggressive behavior. Such effects have been achieved with a variety of different aggression measures, including delivery of aversive noise blasts; administration of painful electric shocks; increases in pushing, hitting, and kicking observed during free play; and forcing hot sauce on a person who is known to dislike spicy foods. Experimental studies have also indicated that exposure to media violence leads to physiological desensitization to violence and decreases in empathy and prosocial behavior (Carnagey et cl., 2007; Krahé et al., 2011). For example, one experimental study found that playing a violent video game for 20 minutes made participants slower and less likely to help a victim injured in a fight (Bushman & Anderson, 2009).

One key short-term mechanism involves priming. Simply presenting individuals with images of guns primes aggressive thoughts and increases later aggressive behavior; the types of guns having the biggest impact depends on one's life experience with guns (hunters vs. nonhunters) (Bartholow, Anderson, Carnagey, & Benjamin, 2005). The effects of a single episode of media violence exposure can dissipate quickly (Barlett, Branch, Rodeheffer, & Harris, 2009), but repeated exposure leads to more lasting changes in emotions, cognition, and behavior (i.e., learning).

CORRELATIONAL AND LONGITUDINAL EVIDENCE

Correlational studies demonstrate long-term effects by revealing significant associations between habitual violent media use and real-life aggressive behaviors. For example,

preschoolers who typically watch violent television shows tend to exhibit more aggressive play tendencies (hitting, pushing, taking other children's toys; D. G. Singer & Singer, 1976). Children's use of violent media is also associated with perceptions of violence as a legitimate means for solving problems (Dominick & Greenberg, 1972). Of course, drawing causal conclusions from correlational data is risky because of potential confounds, which is why many correlational studies include statistical controls. For example; violent video game use is associated with violent behavior even after researchers control for numerous potential confounds, such as psychopathy (DeLisi, Vaughn, Gentile, Anderson, & Shook, 2013).

Longitudinal studies show that exposure to media violence leads to long-term increases in aggression (C. A. Anderson, Berkowitz, et al., 2007; Christakis & Zimmerman, 2007; Eron, Huesmann, Lefkowitz, & Walder, 1972). Huesmann and colleagues (2003) found that children who viewed more televised violence became more aggressive adults 15 years later, irrespective of how aggressive they had been is children. Long-term violent media use also leads to chronic desensitization to violence, reductions in empathy and prosocial behavior, and increases in aggressive thinking (e.g., C. **A.** Anderson et al., 2010).

META-ANALYTIC EVIDENCE

Meta-analyses integrate data from multiple studies and provide a comprehensive picture of violent media effects. In the media violence domain, over a dozen meta-analytic reviews have explored the effects of media violence (e.g., C. A. Anderson et al., 2010; Bushman & Huesmann, 2006; Paik & Comstock, 1994). Overall, these meta-analyses provide consistent evidence of small- to moderate-size effects of media violence on aggression, and on other theoretically relevant variables.

Effects of Risk-Glorifying Media

Media often glorify risk-taking behaviors, such as reckless driving, smoking, binge drinking, and unprotected sex. To give a few examples, the television show Jackass features young men engaging in a series of dangerous stunts such as pole vaulting over a sewage pit and getting tattooed on a buggy ride. Racing video games such as Need for Speed, Burnout, and Road Rash reward players for reckless driving. Several recent studies indicate that exposure to such risk-glorifying media impacts both risk-taking inclinations and actual risk-taking behaviors (Fischer, Greitemeyer, Kastenmüller, Vogrincic, & Sauer, 2011; Wills, Sargent, Gibbons, Gerrard, & Stoolmiller, 2009). These effects have been apparent in different types of visual media, including advertisements, movies, and video games. In this section, we pay special attention to two types of risk-taking behaviors that are influenced by media use: substance use and risky sexual behaviors.

SUBSTANCE USE

Positive portrayals of substance use that do not show negative consequences are frequent in the media. Some examples include alcohol advertisements (Ellickson, Collins, Hambarsoomians, & McCaffrey, 2005), and portrayals of alcohol use in movies and television shows (Wills et al., 2009).

Experimental studies indicate significant short-term effects of media that glorify substance use. For example, viewing movies that portray drinking in a positive light causes an increase in participants' expectations that drinking alcohol will lead to positive outcomes, such as camaraderie (Kulick & Rosenberg, 2001). After viewing film sequences that include smoking, people report greater likelihood of smoking in the future (Hines, Saris, & Throckmorton-Belzer, 2000).

Correlational studies, including some prospective studies, have found significant associations between exposure to risk-glorifying media and substance use in real life. For example, exposure to alcohol use in movies is related to early-onset and binge drinking among adolescents (Hanewinkel, Tanski, & Sargent, 2007; Sargent, Wills, Stoolmiller, Gibson, & Gibbons, 2006). Longitudinal studies yield similar effects. For example, early exposure to alcohol marketing predicts underage drinking (Collins, Ellickson, McCaffrey, & Hambarsoomians, 2007). Tobacco industry advertising predicts adolescent smoking onset (Pierce, Choi, Gilpin, Farkas, & Berry, 1998; Pierce, Lee, & Gilpin, 1994). Adolescents' exposure to alcohol use in movies predicts increased alcohol consumption and alcohol-related problems measured years later (Wills et al., 2009). Similar longitudinal effects have been shown for smoking (Dalton et al., 2003; Wills et al., 2009).

SEXUAL CONTENT

Learning about sexuality is a normative maturational achievement in adclescence. Unfortunately, a substantial number of adolescents report that they do not get adequate information about sexuality from parents and schools (J. D. Brown, Greenberg & Burkel-Rothfuss, 1993). This is one reason why mass media play a major role in the sexual socialization of most adolescents (Strasburger, 2005). Indeed, research has shown that half of all adolescents actively seek sexual content when choosing media (Bleakley, Hennessy, & Fishbein, 2011).

Sexual content is frequent in the media, especially in movies, sitcoms, and music (Kunkel, Eyal, Finnerty, Biely, & Donnerstein, 2005; Kunkel et al., 2007). However, portrayals of sexuality in the media often are unrealistic. Although over 75% of prime-time television shows have sexual content, they address the risks and responsibilities of sexual activity in only 14% of cases (Kunkel et al., 2005).

Frequent viewing of sexual content on television leads adolescents to overestimate the number of their peers who are sexually active (Buerkel-Rothfuss & Strouse, 1993; Ward & Rivadeneyra, 1999). Exposure to sexual content also changes teens' sexual expectations, attitudes, and intentions (Aubrey, Harrison, Kramer, & Yellin, 2003; L'Engle, Brown & Kenneavy, 2006; Ward, 2002). For example, males who view more sexual content in television shows are more likely to expect a broad range of sexual activities in relationships, whereas females who view a lot of sexual content in television shows are more likely to expect to initiate sex earlier in relationships (Ward & Rivadeneyra, 1999). Some research suggests that the impact of the media on sex-related "knowledge" is greater than the impact of family, peers, and school (Lou et al., 2012).

Studies also indicate significant effects on sexual behavior. Exposure to sexual content in different media (television shows, movies, music, and Internet sites) is linked to more actual sexual activity among adolescents (Bleakley et al., 2011). Exposure to a lot of sexual content on television predicts becoming sexually active at a younger age (Collins et al., 2004). Particularly alarming is the recent longitudinal finding that exposure to

violent X-rated material leads to increased sexually aggressive behavior by children and adolescents (Ybarra, Mitchell, Hamburger, Diener-West, & Leaf, 2011).

It is important to note that not all sexual media content has such negative effects. Media that convey accurate information about sexuality and include socially responsible messages effectively educate people about sexuality and promote responsible sexual behaviors (Brodie et al., 2001; Collins, Elliott, Berry, Kanouse, & Hunter, 2003; DuRant, Wolfson, LaFrance, Balkrishnan, & Altman, 2006).

Media and Stereotypes

Stereotypes are sets of socially shared beliefs about traits that are characteristic of members of a social category (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995). From a social cognitive view, stereotypes are a part of people's schemata about social categories (Fiske & Taylor, 1991). Like other elements of an individual's world, schema, race, and gender stereotypes are influenced by what he or she observes across contexts (in the family, in the peer group, in the mass media). Social cognitive models explain how observations of media can influence individuals' understanding of the social world (e.g., Bandura, 1986; Barlett & Anderson, 2013; Berkowitz, 1990; Crick & Dodge, 1994; Gentile et al., 2014). Specifically, media are powerful socializing agents that provide initial or reinforcing information to create cognitive structures and associations between social groups and certain shared characteristics (Entman & Rojecki, 2000). Through repeated media exposure, individuals form associative links between a social group (e.g., black males) and the stereotypical characteristics (e.g., criminality). Eventually these associations become automatized; when the social group category is activated, the associated stereotypes are automatically activated as well (Dixon & Azocar, 2007). Media-based ethnic stereotypes are especially influential for individuals who do not have direct contact with depicted minority members (Fujioka, 1999).

Media and Ethnic-Minority Stereotypes

Even though ethnic minorities make up over 40% of the U.S. population, their representation in American TV and film roles was about 27.5% in 2008 (McNary, 2009). Unfortunately, most of these ethnic-minority representations are negative (Children Now, 2001; Greenberg, Mastro, & Brand, 2002; Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005; Mastro & Greenberg, 2000). The most widely studied group in U.S. media has been African Americans (Harris, 2004). Several researchers have found that the mainstream media juxtapose African American characters with social problems, welfare, crime, poverty, drugs, and violence (e.g., Abraham, 2003). Other ethnic groups are underrepresented in the media. Despite the growing Latino population in the United States (17% of the total population in 2011), Latinos represent only 2–4% of characters on prime-time TV (Mastro & Greenberg, 2000) and a mere 1% of lead characters in top grossing. U.S motion pictures (Eschholz, Bufkin, & Long, 2002). Additionally, Latinos tend to be portrayed in negative or narrow roles when they do occur (Greenberg et al., 2002). Although limited (between 1 and 3% of characters on prime-time U.S. television), the portrayal of Asian Americans seems to be more positive than that of other ethnic groups (Harris, 2004). Since September 11, 2001, depictions of Arabs have increased in U.S. media, but most of these portrayals are negative, associating Arabs with terrorism, violence, and aggression (Shaheen, 2009). Negative Arab stereotypes are present in newspapers, television shows, movies,

Web animations, and even children's literature (Nacos & Torres-Reyna, 2007; Nisbet, Ostman, & Shanahan, 2008; Schmidt, 2006; Van Buren, 2006). In video games, Arabs are almost always depicted as terrorists (Dill, Gentile, Richter, & Dill, 2005; Machin & Suleiman, 2006; Sisler, 2008).

Several studies examined the effects of media-based ethnic stereotypes on attitudes toward those groups. Overall, these studies indicate that even a single exposure to stereotypes in the media can influence real-world evaluations of minorities (Dixon, 2006, 2007), provoke stereotypical responses (Gilliam & Iyengar, 2000), and guide intergroup outcomes (Mastro, 2003). For example, negative portrayals of African Americans significantly influence the evaluations of African Americans in general (Mastro & Tropp, 2004).

Portrayal of ethnic minorities in U.S. television news is more negative than that in fictional programming (Greenberg et al., 2002). When Dixon and Linz (2000) examined 20 weeks of news programming from Southern California, they found that African American perpetrators were overrepresented (37%) compared to actual Southern California crime reports (21%). Such stereotypical depictions have a negative impact on the majority's perceptions of and attitudes toward the stereotyped groups. For instance, overrepresentations of African American criminals on local and network news can lead to strong mental associations between this group and criminality, creating the perception of African Americans as violent and deviant (Dixon, 2008). In an experimental study, Johnson, Olivo, Reed, and Ashburn-Nardo (2009) found that stereotypical media depictions of African Americans after Hurricane Katrina decreased empathy and prosocial responding (i.e., policy support aimed at helping Katrina victims). Similarly, the amount of television news viewing subsequent to the September 11, 2001, attacks was associated with college students' negativity toward Muslim peers (Lett et al., 2004).

Many video games undermine perceptions of minority groups, first, by excluding them from taking on main character roles, and second, portraying them through stereotypical images (Children Now, 2001). A content analysis revealed that over 68% of main characters are European American, with 11% African American and 11% Latino (Dill et al., 2005). Empirical research in this area is limited, but the effects of video game-based stereotypes on attitudes should theoretically be the same as that of other forms of media. Indeed, Saleem and Anderson (2013) recently found that playing a video game portraying Arab as terrorists increased college students' anti-Arab bias and their perceptions of Arabs as aggressive.

MEDIA AND GENDER STEREOTYPES

Media depictions of gender are also problematic. Content analyses of video games reveal that the majority of characters are males (70%), and female characters are often presented as highly sexualized (Beasley & Collins-Standley, 2002; Dill et al., 2005). The Screen Actors Guild noted that male actors receive the majority of TV roles, especially in the supporting category, with about two roles for every female role (McNary, 2009). Content analyses of popular films reveal similar trends (Smith & Cook, 2012). Additionally, in 2011, women held only 34.4% of all jobs in prime-time programs as opposed to 47% of the actual labor force.

In one experimental study, men who were exposed to media-based stereotypical portrayals of women found victims of sexual harassment and rape less credible than men who exposed to nonstereotypical portrayals of women (Murphy, 1998). A meta-analysis of 31 studies revealed a positive correlation between exposure to media-based

gender stereotypes and gender-stereotypical attitudes and behaviars (Oppliger, 2007). Furthermore, exposure to physical appearance ideals in the media is associated with poor body image (Dohnt & Tiggemann, 2006) and self-destructive behaviors such as pathogenic dieting practices (Thomsen, Weber, & Brown, 2002). For example, researchers have found that media variables accounted for 15–33% of the variance in measures of adolescent girls' desire for thinness and their body dissatisfaction, bulimic behaviors, and thin-ideal endorsements (Botta, 1999).

Positive Media Effects

Effects of Prosocial Media

The positive impact of media on prosocial behavior (defined as voluntary behavior intended to benefit another) has received much less research attention than negative effects of media. But there is a growing research base, much of which is provided by the same research teams that study effects of violent media. Existing studies show consistent effects across research study types and media types; exposure to prcsocial media can lead to increases in prosocial behavior in both the short and the long term.

MEDIA WITHOUT PROSOCIAL MESSAGES

Interestingly, media do not need to have a prosocial message to promote prosocial behavior. Media that create a positive mood may facilitate helping behaviors without providing any sort of overt guidance. In particular, music without lyrics can create or enhance desired mood states or counteract undesired ones, and can imbue feelings such as tranquility, peacefulness, and happiness, as well as other positive emoticns (see Bruner, 1990; Roberts, Christenson, & Gentile, 2003). Music that induces a posi:ive mood can have a number of positive effects, including increases in helping behavior (Fried & Berkowitz, 1979; North, Tarrant, & Hargreaves, 2004) and decreases in anger, aggressive thoughts, and aggressive behaviors (Krahé & Bieneck, 2012). Similarly, in a recent experiment, Whitaker and Bushman (2012) found that participants who played a relaxing video game that did not have overt prosocial messages behaved less aggressively and more helpfully than those who had just played violent or neutral games.

MEDIA WITH PROSOCIAL MESSAGES

Most research on prosocial effects has looked at media that either provide prosocial messages or model prosocial behavior. Early television studies found that watching prosocial television was positively associated with children's helpful behavior and prosocial attitudes (Mares & Woodard, 2005; Rosenkoetter, 1999; Sprafkin & Rubinstein, 1979). Furthermore, in one longitudinal study, D. Anderson and colleagues (2000) found that children who regularly watched the prosocial television show Blue's Clues had greater increases in prosocial behavior over time than children who did not watch it.

VIDEO GAMES

Several recent studies have examined the impact of playing prosocial characters in nonviolent video games (Super Mario Sunshine, Chibi Robo, Firefighters: Saving Lives).

For example, playing a prosocial video game can lead to significant decreases in hurtful behavior and increases in helpful behaviors (Gentile et al., 2009; Greitemeyer, Agthe, Turner, & Gschwendtner, 2012; Saleem et al., 2012a). Other prosocial game effects found in experimental studies include increasing the player's likelihood of helping an experimenter with a mundane task (Whitaker & Bushman, 2012); coming to the aid of a female experimenter being harassed by an ex-boyfriend (Greitemeyer & Osswald, 2010); increasing positive emotions (Saleem et al., 2012b), empathy (Greitemeyer et al., 2010), and prosocial thinking (e.g., Greitemeyer & Osswald, 2010; Narvaez, Mattan, MacMichael, & Sqillace, 2008); and reducing hostility-related thoughts and emotions (e.g., Greitemeyer & Osswald, 2009; Greitemeyer et al., 2010; Saleem et al., 2012b).

Longitudinal and cross-sectional studies of prosocial video games are fewer in number but yield findings consistent with theory and the experimental studies. Prosocial video game play is positively correlated with cooperation, helping, and sharing, even when other factors that can affect prosocial behavior are taken into account (Gentile et al., 2009; Linder & Gentile, 2009). Importantly, more recent studies have tracked such changes over time. For example, Gentile and colleagues (2009) found that increases in prosocial behavior were linked with prosocial game playing over a 3- to 4-month period. Prot and colleagues (2014) assessed TV and video game habits, empathy, and prosocial behavior over a 2-year period in a large sample of Singaporean children. They found that early exposure to prosocial TV and video games led to increased prosocial behavior, that this effect was partly mediated by increases in empathy, and that violent media had the opposite effects.

MUSIC

Experiments using music with prosocial lyrics have yielded similar results. Compared to music with neutral lyrics, music with lyrics about helping and cooperation leads to increases in prosocial thoughts, greater empathy, and greater helping in the laboratory (Greitemeyer 2009a, 2009b), as well as kinder behavior in the real world (i.e., increases in tipping at a restaurant; see Jacob, Guéguen, & Boulbry, 2010). Prosocial lyrics also have been shown to reduce aggression-related thoughts and feelings and aggressive behavior, primarily through reductions in aggression-related feelings and increased empathy (Greitemeyer, 2009a, 2011).

OVERALL FINDINGS

Regardless of media or study type, recent evidence converges to show that nonviolent media with prosocial content have a positive effect on behaviors that help others. The behavioral effects appear mediate changes in thoughts and feelings.

Effects of Educational Media

Even though spending time with entertainment media can harm children's school performance (C. A. Anderson et al., 2007; Sharif & Sargent, 2006; Weis & Cerankosky, 2010), educational media can improve a variety of academic skills. Longitudinal studies have shown that educational television can have long-term educational benefits (D. Anderson et al., 2000; Ennemoser & Schneider, 2007). Educational program viewing

predicts development of reading competencies in early and middle childhood (Ennemoser & Schneider, 2007). Viewing educational programs at a preschool age is associated with better grades and reading more books in adolescence (D. Anderson et al., 2000). Interestingly, interactive shows that prompt children to engage actively, such as Blue's Clues and Dora the Explorer, may be especially effective teachers (Linebarger & Walker, 2005).

Educational video games may also have significant educational benefits. Video games have several characteristics that make them effective teachers: They require active participation, provide clear goals, give immediate feedback, adap: to the student's level, and encourage distributed learning (Gentile & Gentile, 2008). Educational video games have been used to teach children and adolescents a range of school subjects, such as mathematics, reading, and biology (Corbett, Koedinger, & Hadley, 2001; Murphy et al., 2002). Educational games can also be used to teach youth about specific health conditions and encourage health-promoting behaviors (S. J. Brown et al., 1997; Kato, Cole, Bradlyn, & Pollock, 2008; Lieberman, 2001).

In addition, numerous studies demonstrate that media can be purposefully used as a positive socializing influence (Lemieux, Fisher, & Pratto, 2008; Singhal, Cody, Rogers, & Sabido, 2004). For example, researchers have found that watching the television show Barney & Friends can teach children norms of polite social behavior (J. L. Singer & Singer, 1998). Findings from several studies indicate that responsible sexual behavior can be promoted through music (Lemieux et al., 2008), radio drama (Valence, Kim, Lettenmaier, Glass, & Dibba, 1994) and television shows (Collins et al., 2003).

Positive Effects on Ethnic Stereotypes and Gender Socialization

Just as stereotypes in the media increase stereotypical thinking by consumers of those media, exposure to counterstereotypical media exemplars can reduce stereotypical attitudes (Bodenhausen, Schwarz, Bless, & Wanke, 1995; Dasgupta & Greenwald, 2001; Ramasubramanian, 2011). However, note that even a very positive portrayal may contribute to misconceptions. For example, some white viewers of The Cosby Show cited the Huxtables as examples of why affirmative action is no longer necessary (Jhally & Lewis, 1992).

Media also can have positive effects on gender role socialization and gender stereotyping. Repeated TV appearances of women in traditionally male occupations can lead to more open attitudes in preteen girls toward considering these occupations (Wroblewski & Huston, 1987). Listening to music with proequality lyrics leads to more positive attitudes and behavior toward women (Greitemeyer, Hollingdale, & Traut-Mattausch, 2012).

Parental Involvement in Media Use

Parental involvement in media use can act as a protective factor to promote positive effects of media and mitigate negative effects (Gentile, Nathanson, Rasmussen, Reimer, & Walsh, 2012; Nathanson, 1999, 2004). However, the type of parental involvement matters. Three types of parental involvement in media use have been identified: active mediation, restrictive monitoring, and coviewing.

Active mediation includes conversations with children, in which parents explain or discuss media content. Active mediation predicts several positive outcomes, such as enhanced learning from television (Valkenburg, Krcmar, & deRoos, 1998) and skepticism

toward televised news (Austin, 1992). Active mediation has also been linked with reduced negative effects of advertising (Buijzen & Valkenburg, 2005), news (Buijzen, Walma van der Molen, & Sondij, 2007), and violent media content (Nathanson, 1999, 2004).

Restrictive monitoring involves posing explicit rules about media content and media time. Restrictions on time use yield both lower media consumption (Atkin, Greenberg, & Baldwin, 1991; Rideout et al., 2010) and better school performance (Gentile, Coyne, & Walsh, 2011; Gentile, Lynch, Linder, & Walsh, 2004). Having rules that restrict violent media content may mitigate media violence effects, beyond the direct effect on reducing time spent on violent media, perhaps by conveying family antiviolence attitudes (C. A. Anderson et al., 2007; Grusec, 1973; Nathanson, 1999).

Coviewing involves watching television or playing video games with children. Several studies suggest that coviewing may enhance effects of both positive and negative media content. Coviewing educational television has been shown to enhance children's learning (Salomon, 1977). On the other hand, coviewing of violent television can exacerbate media violence effects (Nathanson & Cantor, 2000).

Given the significant effects of parental involvement in media use, it is worrying that many parents do not monitor their children's media consumption. Only 52% of children in the United States report that their parents have rules concerning computer use, 46% for television use, 30% for video game use, and 26% for music (Rideout et al., 2010).

Emerging Socialization Domains and Effects

In this section, we briefly review several emerging domains in which modern media clearly are involved in socialization, but research is sparse or inconclusive.

Cell Phones, Texting, and Sexting

Cell phone use by young people has increased dramatically. Today, 78% of U.S. adolescents own cell phones, compared to only 45% in 2004 (Lenhart, Hitlin, & Madden, 2005; Madden, Lenhart, Duggan, Cortesi, & Gasser, 2013). About 33% of 8- to 10-year-olds use cell phones (Rideout et al., 2010). Young people average 30 minutes a day talking on a cell phone and send about 60 text messages (Lenhart, 2012; Rideout et al., 2010). Surprisingly, only 14% of parents set rules about texting, and only 27% limit the time spent on voice calls (Rideout et al., 2010).

Texting is a popular mode of communication by children and adolescents (Lenhart, Ling, Campbell, & Purcell, 2010). The majority of text messages are used to enhance and maintain intimate relationships, especially in friendships and in romantic relationships (Thurlow & Brown, 2002). Adolescents also use texting as a means of civic engagement (Lenhart et al., 2008). Voice calls are more commonly used to communicate with parents (Lenhart et al., 2010). Cell phones provide a way for parents to monitor and provide support to their children. There is limited mixed correlational evidence concerning impact on socialization, with some positive and some negative effects (Weisskirch, 2009). In summary, using cell phones does not necessarily lead to better (or poorer) parenting, parent–child relationships, or socialization experiences. High cell phone and texting use by youth has led to concerns about potential adverse effects (Zhao, Qiu, & Xie, 2012), but research has lagged.

One concern that is receiving attention is sexting—sending sexually explicit or suggestive images via cell phones (Mitchell, Finkelhor, Jones, & Wolak, 2012). About 15% of U.S. adolescents report having received messages with sexual content, whereas 4% report sending them (Lenhart, 2009). Older adolescents are more likely to send sexual photographs (8% among 17-year-olds compared to 4% among 12-year-olds). Thus, sexting is not a normative behavior, but a sizable minority does engage in it. Such behavior merits research attention given that it can result in considerable distress both for youth receiving images and for youth appearing in images (Mitchell et al., 2012). Recently, researchers have begun exploring the contexts in which sexting occurs, motivations for sexting, and associations between sexting and risky sexual behaviors. Sexting most commonly happens in existing romantic relationships, but it is sometimes also done as a prank or as a means to start a new relationship (Mitchell et al., 2012). One-third of such incidents have been found to be related to aggravating factors, such as alcohol or drug use (Mitchell et al., 2012). There is some evidence that sexting may lead to other risky sexual behaviors, but this research is currently limited to cross-sectional correlational studies (Benotsch, Snipes, Martin, & Bull, 2013). Of course, there are numerous reports of how sexting is used to embarrass and harass other youth, occasionally leading to suicide. Longitudinal studies are needed both to examine predictors and consequences of sexting and to explore prevention and intervention methods.

Media and Identity Development

A key part of human development is the creation of both a unique identity—a distinctive set of attributes, beliefs, desires, and principles that individuals think distinguishes them from others—and a group identity (Fearon, 1999). Identity formation is a particularly salient task for teens (Erikson, 1968), a group also characterized by considerable media use. The media with which children and youth identify can become incorporated into their personal and social identities (Warburton, 2012b), for good or ill.

Although a preference for any type of media can become incorporated into a person's identity, research most often examines the role of music preference. Music that a child likes may provide messages for how to behave (both in lyrics and video clips), and admired musicians may behave in ways that can be imitated. Thus, preferred music and musicians can influence a child's beliefs, feelings, and behavioral tendencies, and these in turn can become part of who children "think they are" (Warburton, 2012b). As Roe noted in 1996, "Music plays a central role in the process of identity construction of young people. This process includes not only elements of personal identity but also important aspects of national, regional, cultural, ethnic, and gender identity" (p. 85).

Given the extensive research showing causal long-term effects of antisocial and prosocial media on behavior, it is reasonable to expect corresponding positive and negative effects on identity development. However, more research is needed on this topic.

Media and Social Networking

Social Networking Media and Microblogs

More than half of U.S. teenagers log into their favorite social networking site at least once a day; almost one-fourth of them log in 10 times a day or more (O'Keeffe &

Clarke-Pearson, 2011). Clearly, social networking through websites, such as Facebook and LinkedIn, and microblogs, such as Twitter, play an important role in developing and maintaining social relationships for many people (Rideout et al., 2010). Whether the effects of these new socialization techniques are generally positive or negative for youth is unclear, and this probably is too broad a question. Social media have some well-publicized problems, including privacy issues, predatory behavior, and cyberbullying (Barlett et al., 2014). But, they also play a positive role in many people's everyday lives. For example, O'Keeffe and Clarke-Pearson (2011) suggest that social networking media provide youth with opportunities for (1) engaging with the wider community (through volunteering), (2) developing creativity through the sharing of artistic endeavors, (3) sharing and developing ideas, (4) developing increased tolerance through the expansion of social networks to include greater diversity, and (5) fostering one's individual identity and unique social skills. It is important to add that social networking has also been linked with enhanced learning opportunities (Borja, 2005; Boyd, 2008), better access to health information, and better health outcomes (increased adherence to medical treatments; see Krishna, Boren, & Balas, 2009). But, research on long-term positive and negative effects is relatively sparse.

Multimedia Devices and Massive Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games

Multimedia technology such as broadband-capable mobile devices also make it possible to reach out to another person at any time of the night or day using speech, e-mail, text messaging, picture images, or person-to-person video conferencing. Such devices markedly increase the options for direct and delayed interpersonal communication, and therefore the potential for connectedness between a person and his or her social networks (Warburton & Highfield, 2012). But whether this increased accessibility results in better, poorer, or mixed outcomes for youth development is unclear.

Massive multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPGs) such as World of Warcraft and Star Wars: The Old Republic are online video games that can have millions of subscribers and hundreds of thousands of players at any given moment. MMORPGs have become increasingly popular; one of the attractive features is the opportunity for social networking. For example, in World of Warcraft, players typically gather into guilds that work together within the game, and multiple players from the same guild can connect to each other in real time via audio headphones. Of course, such online communication can also lead to negative consequences. That is, online communication does not always lead to benefits equal to face-to-face communication and can result in lowered well-being (Pea et al., 2012).

Conclusion

The rapid expansion of research on media effects has increased our understanding of the roles media play in the socialization process. Media have significant socializing influences across a wide range of domains, such as aggression, stereotyping, helping, sexual behaviors, education, social networking, and identity development. The findings can be understood within the framework of the GLM, which delineates the processes through which media can affect social behavior in short-term and long-term contexts. The GLM

emphasizes the fact that media effects are complex and depend on content, structure, time, and context. Media effects can be harmful, such as the effects of violent media on aggression and the effects of stereotypical media portrayals of groups on stereotypes and behaviors toward outgroups. Media effects can also be beneficial, such as the effects of prosocial media use on helping. Parental involvement can be a protective factor that helps to foster positive media effects and ameliorate negative media effects.

Media psychology research has broadened over the past 20 years. Early studies focused on media violence effects, but several other lines of research have grown, such as media effects on risky behaviors and positive media effects on social networking and identity development. The rapid expansion of research in the field of media psychology has been accompanied by an overall trend toward better methodological quality in the field (Prot & Anderson, 2013). An especially important development is the increasing number of high-quality longitudinal studies, which demonstrate long-term, cumulative effects of media use on socialization (Gentile et al., 2009; Krahé & Moller, 2010). Methodological diversity also is increasing. For example, researchers have begun exploring how media affect brain function (Bailey, West, & Anderson, 2011; Hummer et al., 2010). Finally, recent studies demonstrate that the science of media effects can yield effective interventions that promote healthier media habits and ameliorate negative media effects on socialization (Möller, Krahé, Busching, & Krause, 2012).

In our view, several research areas within this field represent fruitful avenues for future research. One research question that merits further attention is that of age as a moderator of media effects. A large proportion of studies on socializing influences of mass media have been conducted on college-age adolescent and young adult populations, both for practical reasons and because of ethical concerns. More studies on children are needed to elucidate developmental differences in specific media effects. Further research also is needed on the neural bases of media effects. Finally, additional studies examining the impact of new technologies on socialization (e.g., cell phones and the Internet) are needed.

In summary, a broad research literature demonstrates that media are powerful socializing agents that can lead to numerous positive and negative outcomes. Given the extraordinary amount of time of children and adolescents spend interacting with media, increasing our understanding of both positive and negative media effects is an important research goal for practical reasons. Findings concerning the socializing influences of mass media have implications for theory development, for public policy decisions, and for developing interventions that can promote healthier media habits among youth.

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