

**DIPLOMA IN MEDIA
AND COMMUNICATION**

**MCG 204
MASS MEDIA & SOCIETY**

WEEK 6

Max Weber (1864 – 1920)

- We exist in a sea of ideas and idea systems
- Some ideas, the “master symbols of legitimisation” seem to define the boundaries of culture. For example, work ethics, differed gratification and rationality are the defining ideas of modern society
- Ideas within the cultural ethos continually borrow from one another and mutually incorporate ideas and metaphors e.g. social philosophers took the idea of evolution from the realm of biology

- Sometimes, idea systems provoke the development of opposing idea systems
- Weber's point is that cultural sea of ideas forms an unintended atmosphere that people must take into account
- They use it, communicate it, redefine and recombine it

George Herbert Mead (1863-1931)

- Mead's goal was to understand how mind and self formed and how they were sustained
- Mead inquired after the reciprocal relationships of mind and self in society
- "Body is not self. As such, it becomes a self only when it has developed a mind within the context of social experience...." Mead
- Mind arises through communication by a conversation of gestures in the social process or context of experience e.g. a hug joins two people, pointing one's finger indicates a particular object.

- A full conversation of gestures makes and implies a range of connections
- Conversation makes place for each person by revealing that person's connections (daughter, good student, smart, middle-class, pretty, moral, short..)
- In time, an individual gains a sense of constancy about his/her place in social environment

Implication of Mead's Theory

- Topic circles: media is capable of generating topics for conversation that allow mutual external connections among people, e.g., sports, soap operas, news stories
- Social interest Collectivities: We naturally find ourselves empathetic with people in distant wars, issues of starvation in central Africa
- Lifestyle Clusters – The media can also generate suggestions for styles of life. The mass-advertised, mass produced array of consumer goods and services.

Conclusion of socialist view

- The media becomes a partner in the historical social processes of individualization, privatization, and weakening of community that characterizes a modern society.
- Meta-information - The media provides the meta-information necessary to organize and reorganize a modern, abstract society. Modern society is an abstract thing because of its size, tendency to incessant change, and vast complexity.