



Media Audiences

You will need to consider:

- How media producers **target, attract, reach, address and potentially construct** audiences.
- How media industries target audiences through the **content and appeal** of media products and through the ways in which they are **marketed, distributed and circulated**.
- How audiences interpret the media, **including how they may interpret the same media text in different ways**.
- How media organisations reflect the different **needs of mass and specialized audiences**, including through targeting.
- How audiences **use media** in different ways, reflecting demographic factors as well as **aspects of identity and cultural capital**.
- The role and significance of **specialised audiences, including niche and fan**, to the media.
- The way in which different audience interpretations reflect **social, cultural and historical circumstances**.
- Reception theory (including Hall).



Critical Perspectives

- Reception theory Stuart Hall.

Task: How Does *No Burqas Behind Bars* Target Audiences?

- Who is the audience for *No Burqas Behind Bars*? Think about age, gender and social class, lifestyle and taste. Justify your response.
- How does the text itself target audiences? Consider genre, narrative, character, representations and intertextuality.
- How does the marketing target audiences? Social media, festivals, awards, posters and trailers.

Task: Look at the ACORN classification document. Are there other audiences here who might watch *No Burqas Behind Bars*?

How do Audiences Respond to *no Burqas Behind Bars*?

- Identification – Uses & Gratifications Model. Audiences may identify with characters and their



individualized stories.

- Surveillance – audience given “real” insight into current situation in Afghanistan.
- Enigma –Who will be released? What will happen to the women? Will Nadjibeh sell her son? Will Sima be moved?
- Will Sara and Javid be together?
- Response on social media – shock, outrage/action.
- Testimonial – e.g. on DVD cover – (ABC1 audiences).The reviews act as opinion leaders and audiences believe in the show’s quality because of this (Lazarsfeld – 2-step flow).
- Audiences may consider/question their own attitudes by comparing them to those of the characters.

Audience Response

- **Imdb (Internet Movie Database)** 6.9/10 from 140 views
- Won the International Emmy Award 2014 for Outstanding Documentary
- Prix Europe 2014, AWARDED with the Prix Europa for Best Documentary
- Swedish TV Awards “Kristallen” (August 2014, Nominated Best TV Documentary)
- Brooklyn Film Festival 2014,Awarded Best Feature Documentary
- Rome Independent Film Festival (March 2014,Awarded Best International Documentary)
- Although it’s on Rotten Tomatoes and on Amazon, there are no reviews at 23/10/2017
- Shown at HRAFF 2014 (Human Rights Film Festival)

Social Media

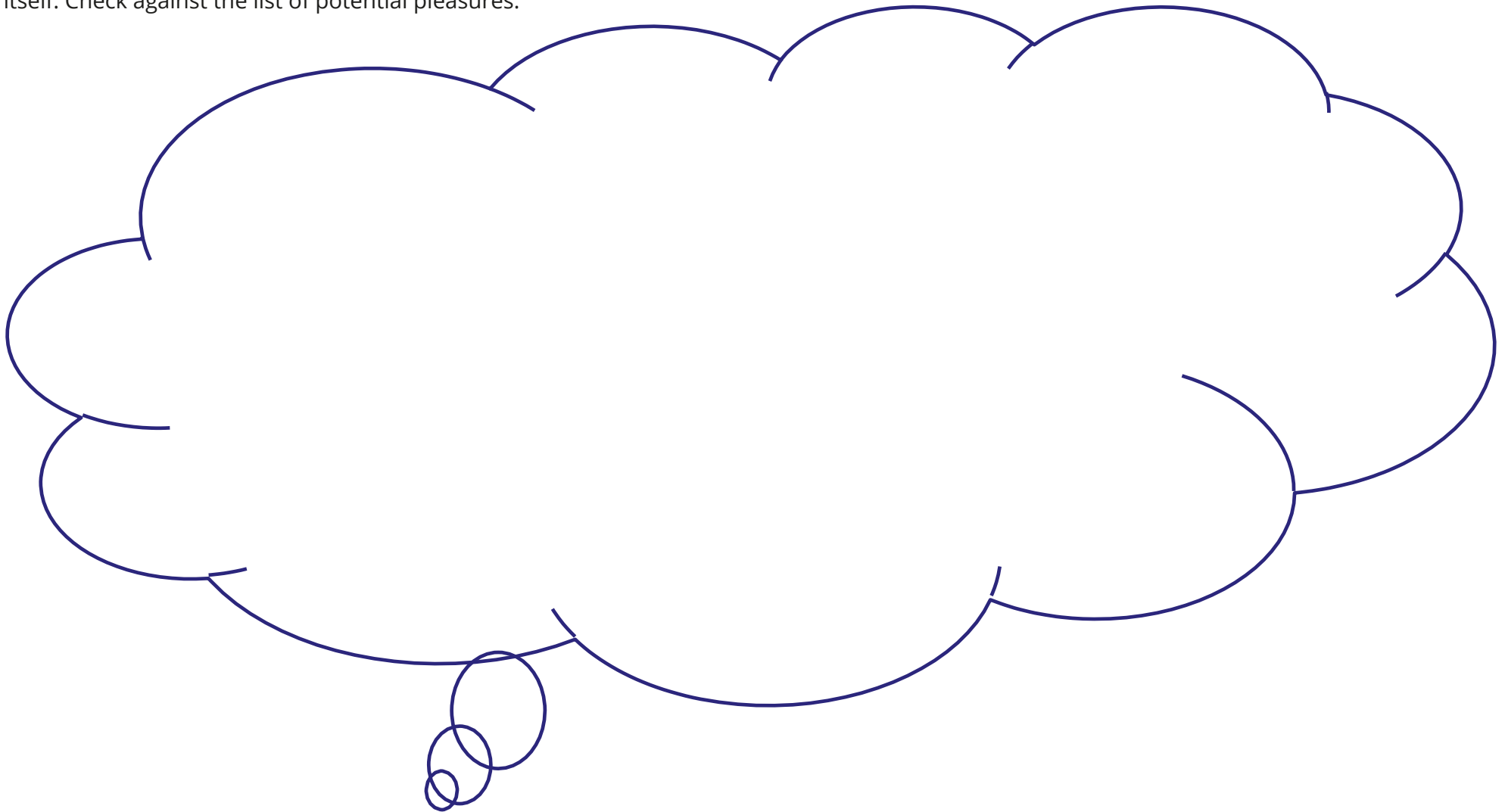
3,993 views on You Tube posted by Brave Afghan 20/7/17 with 15 likes and 2 dislikes (one very racist comment)

- Posted on Nima Films Facebook page
- 6,237 people like this
- 6,209 people follow this
- Erik Meesters:
‘We just saw the two movies about Sara....at the end we were left in shock. We hope she is ok. Brilliant documentary. Heart breaking’.



Audience Task: What 'Pleasures' Might Audiences Gain From No Burqas Behind Bars?

Task: Create a word cloud of the 'pleasures' or gratification we might gain from the text. Develop three of these points with examples from the text itself. Check against the list of potential pleasures.





Audience Positioning: How Does the Text Position Audiences? Discuss in Groups and Feed Back to the Class

We are:

- Positioned with the women from the opening shot from behind the burqa. We seek answers to narrative enigma codes (as defined by Barthes) – what is going on?
- We become part of the group in the compound. This fulfils the audience's need for belonging or their social needs within Blumler & Katz' Uses & Gratifications model.
- Positioned to decode the women as "different" but sympathetic and vulnerable – particularly through their backstory.
- Positioned with the West to see Afghanistan's ideology as archaic and unjust.

Readings – Stuart Hall

Look at the reviews on page 4-5.

Extended writing task:

Write a paragraph on each of the following questions

1. What is the preferred meaning of *No Burqas Behind Bars*?
2. How is this encoded?
3. What other readings might this text generate? Give examples.

Preferred Reading: Summarise

"My journeys to Afghanistan have opened my eyes to the power that is hidden underneath the burqa. Young girls and women who run away from their male owners are quite aware of the risk it entails for their lives. Yet, they risk their lives in order to try and achieve freedom. These women have never heard of things such as human rights or emancipation. Still, they act against the cruelty that they are suffering and the men who are abusing them. They do this in a way that signifies how important their self-determination is for them. There is an ocean of power underneath the burqa. If only the women of Afghanistan could get rid of the burqa, and if only they could achieve a relative safety in society, this power would be released and change their lives and then change society once and forever."

Nima Sarvestani, co-director

<https://www.roninfilms.com.au/feature/10530/no-burqas-behind-bars.html>



IMDB Review – Preferred Reading

User Reviews imdb Future outside prison? 20 April 2013 | by stensson (Stockholm, Sweden)

“Afghanistan. One woman is in prison for six years because of murder. Another is there for 15 years, because she ran away from home. That’s reality, but it also seems to be more freedom behind bars than in front of them. The women don’t risk to get killed.

A very strong documentary. We meet many kinds of previous lives and different characters. Some women are in prison together with their children. Another is close to her boyfriend who also is a moral convict, but on the other side of the wall. The female guardians sometimes are attacked, but mostly it’s about sisterhood in a very special society.

Touching, very human, much closeness. To be strongly recommended.”