

Some guiding questions

- ⌘ What are different ways to study the effects that media messages have on audience (consumers)?
- ⌘ How have these approaches changed over the years?
- ⌘ What are the differences between media-effects research and cultural approaches?
- ⌘ What are the strengths and limitations of each?

THREE ASPECTS OF MASS MEDIA

- ⌘ **INDUSTRY** (Producers and Marketers)
- ⌘ **TEXT** (Product)
- ⌘ **AUDIENCE** (Consumers)

MEDIA and AUDIENCES: Different Questions for Different Approaches

- ⌘ **What do the media do to people?** (MEDIA EFFECTS)
- ⌘ **What do people do with media texts?** (CULTURAL STUDIES)

Early Media Research

- ⌘ 19th century models of media analysis based upon moral and political arguments
- ⌘ 1920s-1930s—increased emphasis on data collection and numerical measurement in studying effects of media

Media research trends 1930-1960

- ⌘ **Propaganda analysis**
- ⌘ **Public opinion research**
- ⌘ **Social psychology studies**
- ⌘ **Marketing research**

PRIVATE RESEARCH

- ⌘ Conducted for a business, corporation or political group
- ⌘ Usually applied research (addresses real-life problem)
- ⌘ Often addresses a consumer problem
- ⌘ Seldom shared, though selected results released to news media

PUBLIC RESEARCH

- ⌘ Occurs in academic or government settings
- ⌘ Often more theoretical than applied (that is, tries to clarify or explain media effects)
- ⌘ Usually shared with the public and other researchers

EARLY MODELS for understanding media effects:

- ⌘ **Hypodermic Needle Model (direct effects)**
- ⌘ **Minimal Effects Model (selective exposure and retention)**
- ⌘ **Uses and Gratifications Model (variations in how people use media to satisfy emotional and intellectual needs)**

Direct effects theories

- ⌘ View relationship between media texts and consumers as *unmediated*
- ⌘ Sees individuals as *passive and in isolation*
- ⌘ Perceives media like a bullet or hypodermic needle

Minimal Effects theories

- ⌘ Media alone do not cause people to change beliefs and behaviors.
- ⌘ *Selective exposure and selective retention* of media messages
- ⌘ Mass media often just *reinforce* existing attitudes.
- ⌘ Social influence of opinion leaders and peers

Uses and Gratifications model

- ⌘ Views media consumers as *active* rather than passive
- ⌘ Looks at how media *satisfy emotional or intellectual needs*
- ⌘ ASKS: *Why and how do we use the media?*

SCIENTIFIC METHOD

- ⌘ Identify the research problem
- ⌘ Review existing research and theories
- ⌘ Develop working hypotheses and theories
- ⌘ Determine an appropriate research design
- ⌘ Collect data
- ⌘ Analyze results
- ⌘ Interpret implications of the study

Methods of studying media effects

- ⌘ Experiments—researchers expose *experimental group* to media content and compare with unexposed *control group*
- ⌘ Surveys—researchers collect data from respondents and look for correlations between media exposure and other variables
- ⌘ Content analysis—researchers systematically code and measure media content

CONTEMPORARY FRAMEWORKS OF MEDIA EFFECTS

- ⌘ Agenda-setting: news media tells us what is important
- ⌘ Cultivation effect: heavy TV viewing shapes our reality

CULTURAL STUDIES APPROACHES

- ⌘ Look at *media as part of our daily life*, not in a laboratory
- ⌘ Focuses on unequal arrangements of power and status in contemporary society
- ⌘ Adds **qualitative, interpretive approach** to the scientific approach of media effects research

CULTURAL STUDIES APPROACHES

- ⌘ Textual analysis—interpretations of social and cultural meanings of media texts
- ⌘ Audience studies—looks at how people interpret media texts and use them in their everyday lives and relationships
- ⌘ Political economy—focus on forces behind production of media texts

TEXTUAL CRITICISM analyzes

- ⌘ *Style and aesthetics*—media as art form
- ⌘ *Narrative or structural analysis*—media as myth or belief system
- ⌘ *Issues of representation*—gender, social roles, stereotypes, etc.

POLITICAL ECONOMY OF MEDIA

- ⌘ *Economic analysis*: how money influences the organization and functioning of media industries
- ⌘ *Industry structure*: how industries are organized, professional roles
- ⌘ *Media policy analysis*: evaluation of government regulation, allocation of resources

What are some of the strengths and limitations of

- ⌘Media effects research?
- ⌘Cultural research?
- ⌘Other approaches?