

Chapter 2: Making Sense of Research on Media Effects and Media Culture

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. The idea that messages that affect all people powerfully and directly refers to
 - a. Agenda setting
 - b. Two-step flow
 - c. **Magic bullet**
 - d. Gatekeepers

Also known as the hypodermic theory, the magic bullets assumes an instant effect of messages on people, much like a shot in the arm.

2. How media affect the standards people use to evaluate what they see and hear is called
 - a. **Priming**
 - b. Framing
 - c. Agenda setting
 - d. Opinion leaders

Priming is the process through which people develop standards to judge things. This process happens through media.

3. Which body of theory explores the intersections of economics and culture?
 - a. Critical theory
 - b. **Political economy**
 - c. Cultural colonialism
 - d. Cultivation studies

Political economy studies the impacts of business practices on cultural products.

4. Which body of theory attempts to show how stereotyping in media extends power relationships?
 - a. **Cultivation studies**
 - b. Culture studies
 - c. Political economy studies
 - d. Polysemous studies

Pioneered by Gerber and his colleagues, cultivation studies suggests that the power derives in how, over time, people come to believe the stereotype they are shown. These stereotypes then cultivate these power relationships.

5. The possibility of a text possessing multiple interpretations means that it is
 - a. Primed
 - b. Propaganda
 - c. **Polysemous**
 - d. Political

Polysemous means that a text is open to multiple interpretations. All texts have multiple meanings -- never just one.

6. By definition, mass media research involves applying what kind of method to understand or solve problems regarding mass media?
 - a. Deliberate
 - b. Qualitative
 - c. Quantitative
 - d. Systematic**
7. Which of the following is true according to the graph concerning the percentage of U.S. households with home internet access?
 - a. Elderly people are online more, as they are usually retired and have more free time
 - b. Lower income people are online more than those with higher incomes
 - c. College-educated people are online more than those with high school educations**
 - d. Households with non-English speaking parents are online more, as they use the internet for social interaction
8. Some scholars believe a text is open to many meanings because people may interpret it differently. What word do the scholars use for such a text?
 - a. polysemous**
 - b. polymorphous
 - c. polytheorous
 - d. polylingous
9. The text refers specifically to a cable television series that has come under heavy criticism due to its extremely violent content. What series is it?
 - a. Breaking Bad
 - b. Game of Thrones**
 - c. The Walking Dead
 - d. American Horror Story: Coven
10. Table 2.1 compares various media research theories. What is the aim of the Annenberg School in that table?
 - a. cultivation studies**
 - b. historical approaches
 - c. anthropological approaches
 - d. searching for community
11. Again, referring to Table 2.1 concerning Media Research Theories. Lazarsfeld, Katz and Merton are participating researchers in which school of theory?
 - a. Columbia School**
 - b. Annenberg School
 - c. Chicago School
 - d. Frankfurt School

12. Das Capital, written by Karl Marx, was of great interest to which school during the 1930s and 1940s?
- a. Harvard University
 - b. The Frankfurt School**
 - c. Columbia University
 - d. Deutscher Akademischer Dienst Universitat
13. The naturalistic experiment was used to study the effects of which of the following?
- a. subliminal advertising
 - b. propaganda**
 - c. vertical integration
 - d. product placement in films
14. The idea that messages delivered through the mass media persuade all people powerfully and directly without the people having any control over the way they react is known as what theory?
- a. scatter theory
 - b. agenda setting theory
 - c. magic bullet or hypodermic needle approach**
 - d. shotgun approach
15. The following quote appears at the start of the chapter. "There are in fact no masses; there are only ways of seeing people as masses." Who said that?
- a. Raymond Williams, Cultural Philosopher**
 - b. Thomas Edison, Inventor
 - c. Thomas Mann, Author and Philosopher
 - d. Jay Leno, Television Personality
16. Empirical research
- a. uses concepts as jumping-off points for study
 - b. is often guided by conceptual research
 - c. contributes to the development of theories
 - d. all of these**
17. Harold Laswell and other researchers feared that mass media could be used
- a. to undermine democracy
 - b. as weapons of persuasion
 - c. for propaganda purposes
 - d. all of these**
18. Journalist Walter Lippman
- a. wrote an important book titled Public Opinion in 1920
 - b. wrote about how the work routines of reporters contributed to the propaganda function of journalism
 - c. argued that news media are a primary source of "the ideas in our heads"
 - d. all of these**
19. The "magic bullet" concept of mass communication

- a. was shared by the early researchers interested in propaganda
 - b. held that mass communication was powerful and direct
 - c. held that people had little control over how they reacted to mass media messages
 - d. **all of these**
20. The Columbia School
- a. discovered the two-step-model
 - b. emphasized the idea of active audiences
 - c. conducted a survey of how people used radio and newspapers
 - d. **all of these**
21. Paul Lazarsfeld conducted his panel survey
- a. **during the 1940 presidential election**
 - b. during the early years of the war in Iraq
 - c. during the 2004 presidential selection
 - d. as part of the Payne Fund Studies
22. Uses and gratifications research understands the audience as
- a. especially susceptible to manipulation
 - b. **active**
 - c. naïve
 - d. spectators
23. Hovland's research revealed that under normal circumstances, where all aspects of the communication environment could not be equal, the mass media's ability to change people's attitudes and behaviors on controversial issues was
- a. uniform
 - b. dependent on education
 - c. **minimal**
 - d. an outcome of the agenda
24. The concept of priming is closely associated with the concept of
- a. **agenda setting**
 - b. two-step-flow
 - c. stereotypes
 - d. uses and gratifications
25. The research orientations referred to as the mainstream approaches developed out of research activities at
- a. the Yale School
 - b. the Columbia School
 - c. the Payne Fund Studies
 - d. **all of these**
26. Members of the Frankfurt School agreed that social power
- a. has no place in mass communication
 - b. has limited influences

- c. **is evident in all aspects of media content**
 - d. is not a factor in entertainment
- 27. The Frankfurt School's writings about the corrosive influence of capitalism on culture came to be known as
 - a. anti-capitalist theory
 - b. **critical theory**
 - c. Marxist theory
 - d. European theory
- 28. Political economists, like Ben Bagdikian, tend to focus
 - a. only on cultural issues
 - b. **on how organizational relationships create demands for particular types of media content**
 - c. uncritically on vertical integration
 - d. agenda setting
- 29. Cultivation research
 - a. tends to regard TV violence as a source of release for audiences
 - b. does not concern itself with power relationships in society
 - c. **tends to regard TV violence as a factor that reinforces power**
 - d. focuses only on news and education, not on entertainment
- 30. The area of cultural studies is composed of
 - a. **many approaches to understanding the connection between mass media and social power**
 - b. mainstream research approaches that view the audience as active
 - c. cultivation researchers
 - d. all of these
- 31. In general, cultural scholars tend to highlight
 - a. the ways that media often functions like a "hypodermic needle" injecting media messages into the minds of consumers
 - b. **meaning making practices related to technologies and texts**
 - c. the relationship between video games and violence
 - d. networks of media ownership and influence
- 32. Cultural studies research methods generally do NOT include
 - a. historical approaches
 - b. linguistic and literary approaches
 - c. critical theory approaches
 - d. **"two-step flow" approaches**
- 33. Scholars who study Agenda Setting agree that
 - a. the liberal agenda has potentially dangerous effects on our society
 - b. the agendas of politicians are the most powerful force on our media

- c. **the media often guide people on what to think about through selective focus on issues.**
 - d. all of these
34. The writings of George Creel and Upton Sinclair were
- a. solid examples of uses and gratifications research
 - b. **works of critical propaganda analysis**
 - c. largely the result of Russian leadership
 - d. mostly quantitative but still empirical
35. The multiple approaches to mass communication research explored in this chapter
- a. have been the source of contentious debates among scholars
 - b. represent different philosophical foundations
 - c. can be used as needed to best fit the specific research question
 - d. **all of these**

TRUE/FALSE QUESTIONS

1. Propaganda refers to messages designed to change people's attitudes and behaviors about social issues.
TRUE
It was feared that propaganda would spread lies and fear among the general population.
2. In his book *Public Opinion*, Robert McChesney describes how the media places ideas in our heads.
FALSE
*Walter Lippmann wrote *Public Opinion* in 1922.*
3. A panel survey involves getting a group of people together once and asking them questions.
FALSE
A panel survey involves asking questions over a period of time.
4. Digital divide refers to the differences among different groups of people in their getting access to information.
FALSE
Knowledge gap refers to the difference. The digital divide refers to the differences in access to technology.
5. George Gerbner and his colleagues at the Annenberg School for Communication are best known for originating the ideas on active audiences.
FALSE
The ideas of active audiences actually originated earlier with Columbia University's sociology department.
6. Mass media research involves the use of systematic methods to understand or solve problems regarding the mass media.

TRUE

7. A content analysis counts certain aspects of media products.

TRUE

8. Reliability refers to the extent to which a study accurately describes the circumstances that exist in the real world.

FALSE

9. George Creel headed the U.S. propaganda effort during World War One.

TRUE

10. Carl Hovland's American Soldier research is an example of a naturalistic experiment.

TRUE

11. People who are information-rich to begin with get richer faster than people who are information-poor.

TRUE

12. The term digital divide refers to the separation of new and old media.

FALSE

13. The term knowledge gap refers to the differences that exist between print and electronic media.

FALSE

14. Media activist Robert McChesney has argued that a journalistic system that focuses more on attracting the attention of audiences rather than trying to build an informed society threatens the ability of citizens to participate in public affairs.

TRUE

15. Cultural colonialism is a term that refers to how different parts of the world specialize in doing what they do best.

FALSE

16. An understanding of media research is interesting but certainly not crucial to developing media literacy.

FALSE

17. Education has little influence in determining whether or not a person pays attention to news and public affairs.

FALSE

18. Opinion leaders are important elements in the two-step-flow.

TRUE

19. Although sociology has influenced mass communication research, anthropology has not.

FALSE

20. It is usually impossible for a media literate person to recognize how a particular example of media research fits into a particular research tradition.

FALSE

21. The two-step-flow model indicates that media influence people in ways consistent with the magic-bullet concept.

FALSE

22. Both quantitative and qualitative research are empirical.

TRUE

23. Scholars who study media effects tend to have little interest in television programs that contain acts of violence.

FALSE

24. Conceptual research has no influence on the types of questions asked by empirical researchers.

FALSE

25. Early communications researchers such as Elihu Katz explored what cultivation effects of what he called "hidden curriculum" TV violence.

FALSE

26. Unlike other Frankfurt School scholars Adorno stressed the positive aspects of what he called the "culture industry"

FALSE

27. Cultural studies researcher use a "two step flow" model to discuss the influence of government-sponsored media to citizens.

FALSE

28. Most critics of mainstream research feel that it focuses too much on the reinforcement of currently held beliefs.

FALSE

29. While early studies of media were foundational, today's media can scholars play an equally important role.

TRUE

30. Part of becoming media literate involves taking a stand on why the media are important.

TRUE

ESSAY QUESTIONS

1. Explain the hypodermic needle approach to mass media influence and why the name of the model might be considered too simplistic to describe the actual tenets of propaganda analysis.

The magic bullet or hypodermic needle approach to mass media influence;

- ***Referred to research on propaganda during the 1920s and the 1930s which believed that messages delivered through the mass media persuaded all people directly, without people being able to control how they reacted.***
- ***Assumed that most members of society shared similar understandings of media output. The label "hypodermic needle" might be considered too simplistic because propaganda analysis***
- ***Did not believe that all types of messages would be equally persuasive***
- ***Emphasized that propaganda was more likely to work under conditions of media monopoly than under competitive conditions***
- ***Held that people could be taught to evaluate propaganda critically***

2. Discuss the findings of Columbia School research in the 1940s.

Research at the Columbia School in the 1940s exemplified by Harold Lazarsfeld, Robert Merton and Elihu Katz, looked at the mediating effects of interpersonal relations on media impact.

- ***The two-step flow model of communication: the impact of mass media in two steps:***

***Mass media content first picked up by frequent media users (opinion leaders)
Opinion leaders influence others through discussions***

- ***Columbia School research proposed that audiences were active, meaning that people responded to content based on their personal backgrounds, interests and interpersonal relationships.***
- ***Columbia School research also focused on why people used mass media, approach later known as uses and gratification research.***

3. Discuss why proponents of the critical approach to mass media research criticize the mainstream approach.

Two lines of criticism:

- ***The mainstream approach stresses change rather than continuity***

***Most people's opinions don't change after exposure to mass media.
Reinforcement of their opinion is often the major consequence of exposure.***

- ***The mainstream approach ignores the power of social forces that shape the media environment***

***mainstream approach overemphasizes the individual's relationship with the media.
we should study instead how powerful groups influence media content in ways that reinforces the status quo.***

4. What is cultivation analysis, and what does it claim? "Cultivation studies, most associated with George Gerbner, look at the long-term influence of media representations on how mainstream audiences think about the world.

- Cultivation studies claim that long-term heavy exposure to mainstream media reinforces stereotypes about social groups.

- Cultivation studies also claim that long-term heavy exposure to the violent content on television cultivates beliefs about a "mean world" in mainstream audiences and produces more self-protective and mistrustful behaviors.

- Cultivation studies conclude that media's messages of fear reinforce the status quo.

5. Explain cultural colonialism as proposed by political economic theory.

Cultural colonialism involves the study of factors that encourage the spread of Western (often U.S.) news and entertainment throughout the world. It involves the exercise of control over an area or people by a dominant power, not so much through force of arms as by surrounding the weaker countries with cultural materials that reflect values and beliefs supporting the interests of that dominant power. The political economists who explore cultural colonialism argue that by celebrating values such as commercialism and immediate gratification, the cultural colonizers encourage markets for goods that reflect those values and so help their own their own country's business interests. Additionally, this process begins to erode the values of the receiving culture.