【Article】

Title: Review of media effects and their application to new media settings

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1. Introduction

The study of media effects is an effort to measure and understand the media's effects on the public's opinions and behaviors. The field can be particularly fascinating to study, because it tends to cross the boundaries of research and social activism.

There are numerous theories used to explain and predict media effects（McQuail, 2011, p. 454）. The study and formulation of theories about media effects evolved mainly in America at the beginning of the 20th century. Potter（2012）defines media effects as "things that occur as a result – either in part or in whole – from media influence"（p. 318）. Some of the important aspects of media effects include that they can（1）happen simultaneously with media, or long/short after the exposure;（2）continue a few seconds, or into perpetuity;（3）be positive or negative;（4）change or reinforce existing opinions or attitudes;（5）influence institutions and/or society;（6）take place intentionally or unintentionally;（7）have a direct or indirect impact; and（8）be easily detectable or lurking and hard to observe（Potter, 2012, pp.318-389）.

McLeod and Reeves（1980, p. 18）outlined a variety of ways to consider media effects, and asserted that the variances are characterized, depending on who is influenced, what is affected, how the process occurs, and when effect is evidenced. The field of research into media effects features a series of phases marked by paradigm shifts which are generally classified into two to four phases（Okada, 1992, p. 25）.

2. An Overview of Media Effects

In keeping with the approach of McQuail, this paper divides media effects research and theories into four phases（2011, p. 455）.

2.1 First Phase

Since the end of the 1920s, thousands of studies on media effects have been conducted, along with the development of social science research techniques and appearance of films and movies（Spark, 2016, p. 56）. A private foundation called the Payne Fund launched the initial systematic research conducted by the exceptional psychologists of the time, in order to discover media impact on children and adolescents（Blumer, 1933, p. 2; Sparks, 2016, p. 57）. The studies were implemented through surveys, questionnaire, and interviews, as well as through direct observation of people's behavior and attitudes（Dale, 1935, pp. 11- 25）. Although the science behind the Payne Fund studies is less than clear cut（Jowett, Jarvie & Fuller, 2006, p. 387), the studies nonetheless reflected and responded to a growing concern about the effects of movies on youth in society. The Payne Fund research became the model for subsequent media research（Campbell, Martin, & Fabos, 2014, p. 523）up until the early 1960s（McQuail, 2011, p. 456）.

The study of the time was concluded that movies could be dangerous for children, which was direct, extreme, simplistic, and uniform. Consequently, the outcome of the Payne Fund's work contributed to the establishment of the movie industry's voluntary production code（Campbell, Martin, & Fabos, 2014, p. 552）. Mass broadcast media was a new phenomenon, and there was an innate impulse on the part of social scientists to adopt more of a proactive, protective role, in response to alarming data regarding the impact of media content. In 1936, Gallup, Poper, and Crossley established a public opinion polling industry, starting with a "one person, one vote" definition of opinion（Converse, 1987, p. 15）. It applied systematic sampling methods, although the theoretical frameworks did not allow for individual differences（Igo, 2006, pp. 115-117）. As a new medium of that day, radio significantly and quickly entered listeners' everyday lives. The public was open and credulous regarding radio content, tending to believe artful fiction radio dramas as true. The dynamics of this period resulted in the magic bullet model of direct and strong media influence; in another words, a hypodermic needle model of mass communication

(Sparks, 2016, p. 63), or the uniform-effects model (Griffin, Ledbetter, & Sparks, 2015, p. 355).

2.2 Second Phase

The second phase of media effects analysis lasted from the end of the 1930s to the end of 1960s (McQuail, 2011, p. 456). With the rise of empirical research designs, scholars began discovering and demonstrating that media may not necessarily lead people to convert their attitudes and behaviors (Campbell, Martin, & Fabos, 2014, p. 557). Scholars realized that media effects were more complicated than previously assumed. Klapper (1960) states that "mass communication does not ordinarily serve as a necessary or sufficient cause of audience effects, but rather functions through a nexus of mediating factors" (p. 8), while the danger in research is "the tendency to go overboard in blindly minimizing the effects and potentialities of mass communication" (p. 251). The precipitating event occurred in the context of a longitudinal panel study about the role of radio messages on the 1940 presidential election. It is known as *The People's Choice* study, and was conducted by Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet published in 1944 (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet, 1968). People's selective exposure to information in their homogeneous networks led to the idea that the role of media was often merely one reinforcement (p. 14). Further, people often acquire information without it changing their attitude and/or behaviors (McQuail, 2010, p. 457). By way of partial explanation, Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955/2009) suggest that "ideas, often, seem to flow *from* [italics in original] radio and print *to* [italics in original] opinion leaders and *from them* [italics in original] to the less active sections of the population" (p. 51). In the era of phase two, media was limited to fewer opinion leaders, who influenced others through an indirect two-step flow of communication. Hovland and Weiss (1951, pp. 635-650) revealed that expertise and trustworthiness of opinion leaders heighten source credibility. Rogers (1995), in his book "Diffusion of Innovations," published in 1962, confirmed that "[t]he first step, from media sources to opinion leaders, is mainly a transfer of *information* [italics in original], whereas the second step, from opinion leaders to their followers, also involves the spread of interpersonal *influence* [italics in original]" (p. 285).

The notion of the two-step flow of communication theory has developed widely

in comparison with the Uses and Gratification studies, which began with intensive interviews of a relatively small population of respondents in the 1940s. The Uses and Gratification studies are envisioned for an active audience that uses media in order to satisfy their individual needs, rather than a passive audience that is affected by media messages in the two-step flow of communication（Donsbach, 2015, p. 976）．At the phase two, researchers envisaged the media as having limited effects, encompassing principally four keys:（1）selective exposure and selective perception;（2）interpersonal communication;（3）a two-step flow of communication;（4）and Uses and Gratifications.

2.3 Third Phase

During the late of the 1960s and 1970s, as television cemented its prominence, the perception of mass media's influence underwent a resurgence（McQuail, 2011, p. 456）．The development of more sophisticated research techniques facilitated greater accuracy in assessing media's societal impact. In this phase, research tended to focus more on media's broader social and institutional effects. Research also began to take into account what people learn as a result of their exposure to media, beyond just opinion or behavior. Further, the research attention turned to the media's collective effects, its influence on social reality, ideology, and the structures of opinion or belief in precise population subsets（McQuail, 2011, p. 458）．However, this strong or weak effects perspective has been criticized as oversimplified, with the reasons that the focus was generally on a limited range of effects, short time effects on individuals, and direct effects on attitudes and opinions（Lang & Lang, 1981, p. 659; McLeod, Kosicki, & Pan, 1991, p. 239）．

2.4 Fourth Phase

In the 1970s, a new approach to the media appeared as social constructivist shifted from behaviorist（Gamson & Modigliani, 1989, p. 37; McQuail, 2011, p. 459）．This view acknowledged a negotiation of meaning between media and audience. McQuail（2011, p. 459）summarizes this emerging paradigm of media effects by referring to two main points within Gerbner's cultivation theory and Noell-Neumann's spiral of silence theory:（1）"media 'construct' social formations and even history itself by framing images of reality（in fiction as well as news）in predictable and patterned ways" and（2）"people in audiences construct for themselves their own view of social

reality and their place in it, in interaction with the symbolic constructions offered by the media" (p. 459). These observations emphasize how media interact with social movements in society, including movements in favor of peace and the environment. Perse (2001, p. 51) views this phase as cognitive-transactional effects, which historically progressed from direct effects, conditional (social and phycological) effects, and cumulative effects. Through the longitudinal panel study in Sweden conducted from 1975 to 1998, Rosengren and Windahl suggest that media content and use was influenced by social experience (Rosengren, 2014, p. 39). A more sophisticated research method and view of media effects reveal many different types of theories over time.

3. Review of Three Important Media Effects

Among a number of media theories and approaches, Bryant and Miron (2004, p. 662) suggest three important and most-cited theories in mass communication research developed during the past 50 years: Uses and Gratifications, Cultivation theory, and Agenda-setting theory. These are still applied to cutting-edge research (Bryant & Mirion 2004, p. 662; Griffin, Ledbetter, & Sparks, 2015, p. 354). Following is a review of the three media theories.

3.1. Uses and Gratifications

The principal elements of the Uses and Gratifications theory and research began in the second phase of this paper referenced above. The theory pivots on the fundamental questions of why people use media, and for what they use them. The theory springs from functionalist sociology views in terms of the satisfaction of social and individual personal needs by the communication media (Wright, 1974, p. 210). Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1974, p. 20) state that "(1) the social and psychological origins of (2) needs, which generate (3) expectations of (4) the mass media or other sources, which lead to (5) differential patterns of media exposure (or engagement in other activities), resulting in (6) need gratification and (7) other consequences, perhaps mostly unintended ones" (p. 20). Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitgh (1973, p. 513) focused on research of gratifications as a need inherent in the consuming audiences' satisfactions, wishes or motives, while referring to the distinction made by Schramm, Lyle, and Parker (1961, p. 61) between the reality and pleasure principles in the socialization theories of Freud, Maslow's hierarchy of human needs, and Lasswell's

scheme of communication. According to Rubin（1994）, on the premise of Uses and Gratifications study, there are five assumptions:（a）"communication behavior, including media selection and use, is goal-directed, purposive, and motivated"；（b）"people take the initiative in selecting and using communication vehicles to satisfy felt needs or desires"；（c）"a host of social and psychological factors mediate people's communication behavior"；(d)"media compete with other forms of communication(i.e., functional alternatives) for selection, attention, and use to gratify our needs or wants"；and（e）"people are typically more influential than the media in the relationship, but not always"（p. 420）. In this paradigm, media consumers can be viewed as having not only a habitual urge for media use, but a sense of friendship or emotional intimacy; thus loneliness and parasocial interaction may be motives（Rubin, Perse, & Powell, 1985, p. 156）.

3.1.1 Typologies

The Uses and Gratifications studies attempted to summarize and generalize themselves the theoretical typologies of media use and individual's social condition, attitudes and behaviors. A number of typologies and models have been developed using survey instruments from older media studies and combined or adapted preexisting typologies. McQuail, Blumler and Brown（1972, p. 135）proposed a four typology of media-person interaction: Diversion; Personal relationships; Personal identity; and Surveillance. Rubin（1983, p. 46）identified nine categories: Passing time; Companionship; Escape; Enjoyment; Social interaction; Relaxation, Information; Excitement; and Arousal. Katz, Gurevitch, and Haas（1973, pp. 164-181）listed the social and psychological needs satisfied by exposure to media, and developed thirty-five needs which were classified into five groupings: Cognitive needs; Affective needs; Personal integrative needs; Social integrative needs; and Tension release needs（Katz, Gurevitch, & Haas, 1973, p.169）. Rosengren and Windahl（1972, pp. 180-190）produced a typology of relations between audience and actors of mass media: Complemental; Supplemental; or Substitutional to an individual's interpersonal relationships under different social skills and environment. Levy and Windahl（1985, pp. 109-122）focused on the concept of audience activity, and provided a typology of two dimensions:（1）the qualitative orientation of the audience towards the communication process, including being Selective, Involved, or in a Using relationship to communications;

（2）the dimension related to specific phases in the communication sequence, including a pre-exposure, exposure itself, and post-exposure（Levy & Windahl 1985, p. 113）.

3.2 Cultivation Theory

Gerbner developed his Cultivation theory in the fourth phase of media effects when the limited effects paradigm discussed earlier herein was still strong. The cultivation theory addresses the fundamental assumption that media cultivate or create a worldview which becomes the reality, even if it could be distorted（Riddle, 2009, p. 1）. Television is viewed as "a cultural arm of the established industrial order and as such serves primarily to maintain, stabilize and reinforce rather than to alter, threaten or weaken conventional beliefs and behaviours"（Gross, 1977, p. 180 in McQuail, 1986, p. 100）. This statement suggests the idea of "the cultivation effect very close to that posited by the critical theorists of the Frankfurt School and not far from later Marxist analysis"（McQuail, 2011, p. 495）. Gerbner used the term "Cultivation" because a cultivation approach means a cultural process relating "to coherent frameworks or knowledge and to underlying general concepts … cultivated by exposure to the total and organically related world of television rather than exposure to individual programs and selections"（Gerbner, 1990, p. 255）.

The hypothesis was that watching television unintentionally and gradually influences the beliefs about the nature of the social world, and also causes a selective view of reality. Questions concerning violence and crime have generally been at the center of this theory. Early cultivation research found a high correlation between longer television viewing and increasing crime statistics（Gerbner & Gross, 1976, pp. 186-192）. Because of television's availability to everyone, "[t]elevision is the chief creator of synthetic cultural patterns（entertainment and information）for the most heterogeneous mass publics in history, including large groups that have never before shared in any common public message systems"（Gerbner, Gross, Jackson-Beeck, Jeffries-Fox, & Signorielli, 1978, p. 178）. Social construction of reality, symbolic interaction, and television as a ritual medium underlay this theory（Baran & Davis, 2006, p. 332）.

3.2.1 Cultural Indicators Project and a three-pronged study strategy

Gerbner's initial study in 1972 was called the Violence Index（Gerbner & Gross, 1976, p. 174）．This produced an annual content analysis of television prime-time programs that quantified the volume of embedded violence. One of the study results was the conclusion that "crime in prime time is at least ten times as rampant as in the real world"（Gerbner, Gross, Morgan & Signorielli, 1982, p. 106）．This study provoked controversy, with various opposing perspectives and insufficient causal links. Thus, Gerbner established Cultural Indicators Project in 1973 to conduct regular examination of television programs and the "conceptions of social reality that viewing cultivates in child and adult audiences"（Gerbner & Gross, 1976, p. 174）．

With this Cultural Indicators Project, Gerbner attempted to work as a public policy institution and to be independent from the pinions and requests from political agencies, media enterprises, and industrial concerns. Gerbner wanted his work to be conducted for the benefit of general viewers and consumers（Gerbner, 1973, p. 556）． The project used a three-pronged analysis model, the aim of which was to reveal, as accurately as possible, the real effects of television on its viewers（Gerbner, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1986, p. 22）．The first prong was "institutional process analysis"（Gerbner, 1973, p. 559）．It was designed to reveal the organization of policies or practices that directed the flow of media messages. This prong involved direct communications with television program producers, with the objective of acquiring behind-the-scenes information. The second prong was "message system analysis"（Gerbner, 1973, p. 563）．This was to discern the nature of the actual programming content. Gerbner's third prong was "cultivation analysis"（p. 567）which was designed to more fully understand the effects of media messages on viewers' beliefs and attitudes regarding the social world. This analysis is conducted by observing and analyzing the results of persistent streams of cultural messages. Gerbner explained, "Given our premise that television's images cultivate the dominant tendencies of our culture's beliefs, ideologies, and world views, the observable independent contributions of television can only be relatively small. But just as an average temperature shift of a few degrees can lead to an ice age or the outcomes of elections can be determined by slight margins, so too can a relatively small but pervasive influence make a crucial difference"（Gerbner, Gross, Jackson-Beeck, Jeffries-Fox, & Signorielli, 1980, p. 14）．Few would dispute that television has an overwhelming

influence in our cultural beliefs, thought patterns and world views, even though television's own ascertainable contributions may be comparatively minuscule. Yet, seemingly minuscule factors can have monumental impact on outcomes. How large a factor may appear is less important than the nature of its persistent influence.

3.2.2 Findings of the Cultural Indicators Project: Mainstreaming and Resonance

Through the Cultural Indicators Project, especially as a result of the "message system analysis" and "cultivation analysis" components, two new datasets came to light: "mainstreaming" and "resonance" (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan & Signorielli, 1980, p. 10). According to Gerbner, Gross, Morgan and Signorielli (1980, p. 15), "mainstreaming" means that heavy television viewers have a tendency to let television's symbols crowd out other sources and monopolize and dominate other sources of information and ideas about the world. These weighted social realities are internalized by viewers, and become native attitudes that drive behaviors. Cumulatively, these individual transformations can eventually create new mainstream culturally prevailing realities. The cultural landscape, thus, arguably comes to reflect television's reality rather than any objective reality. Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli (1980, p. 15) found in the responses of different groups of viewers, differences that usually are associated with the varied cultural, social, and political characteristics of these groups, are diminished in the responses of heavy viewers in these same groups. The other finding, "resonance" occurs when people view television scenes that are most consistent with their own perceived everyday reality. "[T]he combination may result in a coherent and powerful "double does" of the television world and real-life circumstances may "resonate" and lead to markedly amplified cultivation patters. Gerbner, Gross, Morgan and Signorielli (1980, p. 22) found that heavy television viewers tended to regard the world as a meaner place than those with lighter television viewers. Further, likewise, less educated and low income viewers saw the world as a meaner place than well-educated and wealthy viewers. Gerbner (1990) characterized the television dynamics "as the 3B's: cultivation implies the *blurring* [italics in original] of traditional distinctions, the *blending* [italics in original] of conceptions into television's cultural mainstream, and the *bending* [italics in original] of the mainstream to the institutional interests of the medium and its sponsors" (p. 261).

3.3 Agenda-setting

McCombs and Shaw formally developed the agenda-setting theory in 1972 (fourth phrase), referring to the degree to which the media determines public opinion (Griffin, Ledbetter, & Sparks, 2015, p. 375). The news media simultaneously suggests to viewers how much significance should be attached to that information (Baran & David, 2006, p. 315). They examined the idea of Lippmann (1922/2008, p. 16), who stated that the mass media are the principle connection between events in the world and the images in the minds of the public, and people normally respond to pictures in their heads rather than in their environment. Trenaman and McQuail (1961) noted, "The evidence strongly suggests that people think *about* [italics in original] what they are told but at no level do they think *what* [italics in original] they are told" (p. 178).

There are two cognitive effects related to the agenda-setting theory: Priming and Framing. Priming occurs when a given message activates a mental concept. Iyengar and Kinder (1987) proposed as "agenda-setting hypothesis" that the "problems that receive prominent attention on the national news become the problems the viewing public regards as the nation's most important" (p. 16). Framing is close to activation of entire interpretive schemas. Scheufele (2000) states that framing is based on "the concept of prospect theory" (p. 309.). McCombs and Shaw (1972) developed the notion of agenda setting and stated that "[i]n choosing and displaying news, editors, newsroom staff, and broadcasters play an important part on shaping political reality. Readers learn not only about a given issues, but how much importance to attach to that issue from the amount of information in a news story and its position. … The mass media may well determine the important issues – that is, the media may set the "agenda" of the campaign" (p. 176). Referring to the result of their study, McCombs and Shaw (1972) also reported that "The media appear to have exerted a considerable impact on voters' judgements of what they considered the major issues of the campaign. … In short, the data suggest a very strong relationship between the emphasis placed on different campaign issues by the media … and the judgements of voters as to the salience and importance of various campaign topics" (pp. 180-181).

While the concept of media agenda-setting is clearly documented, and sobering, the ominousness of that power is somewhat offset in societies where there is freedom of the press. Where viewers have choices for their media viewing, and thus the

opportunity to see contrasts in content and filtering hierarchies, any one media source's agenda-setting influence is diluted. If there is a marketplace of ideas, and no universal power to squelch or marginalize datasets, agenda-setting will have comparatively limited opportunity to channel societal thought and behavior patterns. With this in mind, it may be that Gerber's work has greater urgency in the context of dictatorship style society where "media" is a monolithic, agenda–driven and centrally controlled enterprise of the state.

4. New media

  With the rapid development of telecommunication technology, the line between the sender and receiver of mediated messages became not clear. Rogers (1986, p. 7) differentiated new media from traditional media, identifying three distinctive features of new media: Interactivity, Demassification, and Asynchroneity. Rogers (1986) pointed out that the study of television media effects was conducted based on the presumption of a linear, one-way model of communication; thus, "[c]onventional research methodologies and traditional models of human communication are inadequate. That's why the new communication technologies represent a new ball game for communication research" (p. 7). However, some mass media scholars suggested that traditional Uses and Gratifications typology may still provide a useful framework. For example, Papacharissi and Rubin (2000, p. 189) investigated the motives for people's use of the Internet, and developed a typology: Information seeking, Pass time, Convenience, Entertainment, and Interpersonal uses. Haridakis and Hansen (2009, p. 331) found that people watch and share YouTube videos for Convenient entertainment, Interpersonal connection, Convenient information seeking, Escape, Co-viewing, and Social interaction. The core assumption of Uses and Gratifications is active audience, and theoretically and practically conventional typologies continue being adaptable. From cultivation perspectives, Wober (1978, p. 315) pointed out whereas in England there was little violence in British programs, American films and television programs are aired in most countries (Morgan & Shanahan, 1995, p. 173). Today's expanded technological media environment provides more content specific life-related programs that can be seen all over the glove (Morgn, Shanahan, & Signorielli, 2015, p. 686). Shanahan and Morgan (1999) stated that "the content of message is more germane than the technology with which they are delivered" (p. 201). When the Internet is used for social networking,

such as with Tweeter and Facebook, a process becomes more akin to interpersonal communication than mass-produced stories. This may not be directly relevant to the traditional model of cultivation; however,﹁may intersect with and either bolster or short-circuit the cultivation process﹂(Morgan, Shanahan, & Signorielli, 2015, p. 687). Traditional agenda-setting effects also provide a new paradigm. Nowadays social media, including Twitter have been used as news and information. Conway, Kenski, and Di (2015, pp. 363-380) studied a symbiotic relationship between agendas in political campaigns using Twitter and traditional news, with varying levels of intensity and temporal difference by issue. They found that positive correlations between issue ranks in news reports and Twitter feeds, and also that social media helped to predict the media agenda by reciprocal influence. The media affects theories and approaches certainly help cast light on the current social mechanisms in the new media world.

The future of media research is very exciting. The field is arguably segmenting into two directions: traditional and commercial. Traditional media research continues to focus on understanding the ways in which new interactive forms of media influence attitudes and behaviors. This could include a revisiting of more socially activist-oriented research; particularly in certain aspects of new media is interactivity such as video games. There is growing societal concern about the potentially harmful mass effect of violent and engrossing video games on the population - it could be likened to the concerns that drove the more proactive efforts of Gerbner and the Payne Fund in the early eras of movies and television. By contrast, a new wave of media research is more commercially oriented (Hutchinson, 2019). Advanced algorithms monitor our online activity with the aim of refining marketing and sales techniques. Unlike traditional media research, this splinter endeavor is deployed for the benefit of private interests, not the public interest. Furthermore, its methodologies and results are secretive, usually not public. It would appear that as our technologies continue to evolve and gain complexity, media research will do the same.

5. Conclusion

The human race is forever publishing the wheel of scientific progress, questioning﹁Can it be done?﹂Once it is done, and a new technology emerges, only then do we ask,﹁What does it mean?﹂The pioneers of media research did just that, walking

closely on the heels of media technologies as they evolved, seeking to understand societal impact. Not just from a dispassionate perspective of scientific curiosity, but occasionally as self-activated guardians of social and cultural well-being. The premier innovators in the field were as much social activists as academic researchers, seeking to protect consumers of media from the perceived harmful effects thereof; politicking for more informed and conservative media self-governance with respect to violent content（"the code"）; searching an ever more sophisticated and interactive ways to demonstrate causal connections between media content and societies' psychological well-being（the Cultural Indicators Project）. Not all media research is characterized by ensuing social activism. More modern studies, focused on new media, are comparatively dispassionate, possibly because media has become so fragmented, diversified and compartmentalized that it is not seen as the monolithic messaging juggernaut that it was in the early days of media research - possibly also because of a heightened prioritization of freedom of speech as a societal value.

   Over history, media effects theories and approaches have sought to understand, predict and explain people's behaviors and opinions. My review of general media effects theories and approaches has focused on three important models: Use and Gratifications, Cultivation, and Agenda setting. Following is a table illustrating the noteworthy characteristics among them（Table 1）.

	Sender or Receiver	Approach	Research point	New Media
Uses and Gratifications	Active audience（receivers）	Functionalist (psychological Perspective)	individual differences perspective and motivation	SNS Twitter/ Retweet（loosely-linked connections that allow for diffusion of new information）
Cultivation	Perceived activity	Socio-culturalist Constructionist	amount of television viewing	SNS（acculturation） YouTube

Agenda-setting	content creators and senders responding to audiences	Cognitivist	(news) media set the public agenda	Online news（SNS Twitter feeds help predict news）（reciprocal）

Table 1. *A comparison of three models*

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