ED 360 671   CS 508 258

AUTHOR   Bissland, James H.
TITLE   "Mediolatry" in the Middle Range: The Need for
                Cross-Media Critical Research.
PUB DATE   15 Sep 92
NOTE   34p.; Paper presented at the Joint Meeting of the
                Southern States Communication Association and the
                Central States Communication Association (Lexington,
                KY, April 14-18, 1993).
PUB TYPE   Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports -
                Research/Technical (143) -- Viewpoints
                (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120)

EDRS PRICE   MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS   Content Analysis; Higher Education; Journalism; *Mass
                Media; *Media Research; Research Methodology;
                *Research Needs; Scholarly Journals; Scholarship
IDENTIFIERS   *Research Suggestions; *System Dynamics

ABSTRACT
        A study investigated how much attention mass
communication scholars writing in "Journalism Quarterly" give to each
of the mass communication industries, to what extent the various
media segments are studied, and how data from diverse industry
segments are used. All 1,135 articles from both the main and Research
in Brief sections of "Journalism Quarterly" published in the 1980s
were reviewed. Results indicated that: (1) 72.2% of all the articles
had newspapers and/or television among their principal subjects; (2)
52.4% had one or the other as their only subjects; (3) only 6.8% of
all articles were not media-specific; (4) 72.9% of the articles
examined only one media industry; and (5) only 3.3% of the articles
even allowed for the possibility of systematic relationships by
studying the interactive effects between two or more media
industries. Findings suggest that a systems perspective is needed to
restore research interest in the connectedness of diverse media
industries. Such an approach should proceed in the "middle range"
between narrowly focused studies on the organizational level and
grander theory on the social institutional level. Mass communication
scholars need to diversify their methodologies and break away from an
excessive reliance on single-method studies, particularly
quantitative ones. Researchers also need to break the grip of
"mediolatry," which not only obscures many media industries but also
overlooks systematic relationships among them. (Three tables of data
are included; 43 references are attached.) (RS)

"MEDIOLATRY" IN THE MIDDLE RANGE:
THE NEED FOR CROSS-MEDIA CRITICAL RESEARCH

James H. Bissland, Ph.D.
Department of Journalism
School of Mass Communication
Bowling Green State University
Bowling Green, OH 43403
(419) 372-2076

Sept. 15, 1992

A paper submitted to
CSCA/SSCA Mass Communication Divisions

--Abstract--

"MEDIOLATRY" IN THE MIDDLE RANGE:
THE NEED FOR CROSS-MEDIA CRITICAL RESEARCH

In 1982 the Association for Education in Journalism signaled an
expansion of its cognitive domain by adding Mass Communication to
its name. However, a content analysis of 10 years of its
principal research journal finds Journalism Quarterly dominated
by single-industry studies, principally of newspaper and
television journalism. This "mediolatry" not only obscures many
other media industries, but overlooks the systemic relationships
between all media, and their growing convergence, which may
sustain ideological hegemony. As it has with women, minorities
and other under-researched subjects, the dominant paradigm sets
an invisible agenda controlled by chauvinists. Focusing on the
trees (and only certain ones at that) has largely blinded
researchers to the forest. Researchers need to challenge the
abdundance of administrative research in the liberal-pluralist
tradition by doing more critical studies which cut across the
boundaries of media industries, examine systemic relationships,
and empirically test Marxist, cultural, and other critical
approaches.

"MEDIOLATRY" IN THE MIDDLE RANGE:

THE NEED FOR CROSS-MEDIA CRITICAL RESEARCH

*There are, in the lives of professors of mass communication, certain
events which are as dependable in their rotation as the change of
the seasons, Oscar night, or the return of the swallows to
Capistrano. Once a year brings a flurry of surveys from colleagues
across the land preparing last-minute convention papers ("Your help
is needed!"). Twice annually students report back the discovery that
their internships taught them far more than they ever learned in the
classroom. And four times a year the postperson delivers the
official research journal of the Association for Education in
Journalism and Mass Communication. It is almost entirely about
journalism. It has almost nothing to do with mass communication.*

In 1960 Elihu Katz wrote that too many mass communication
scholars envisioned society as an audience of atomized
individuals hooked up to the mass media but not with each other
(Katz 1964, p. 113). Thirty years later, it could be said that
too many scholars view the media as discrete industries hooked up
to complex, interactive audiences, but not to each other.

Systems thinking has permeated the language but not always the
curriculum and research designs of journalism and mass

ERIC
Full Text Provided by ERIC

communication scholars. "Celebrating diversity is one thing,"
Blanchard and Christ have remarked; "but we celebrate
fragmentation" (1988, p. 11). Most undergraduates are still
educated in industry-specific sequences such as newspaper,
magazine, and public relations. Many of their programs,
according to the 1987 edition of the so-called Oregon Report, are
"little more than industry-oriented trade schools" that "instead
of providing coherence in understanding the media...[are]
fragmenting their efforts" (School of Journalism, University of
Oregon, pp. 3, 61). Not surprisingly, faculty in such schools
concentrate on single-industry studies--for example, newspapers,
broadcast television, magazines, and so on--while paying little
attention to their media ecology. Under-utilized is a level of
analysis which takes into account the linkages, exchanges, and
mutual adaptations that exist <u>between</u> the various media segments.

Entwined with this problem is a preoccupation with certain
industries, to the near-exclusion of certain others. This flies
in the face of proclamations to the contrary. For example, in an
effort to reflect "a breadth of membership activity and
interest," the Association for Education in Journalism in 1982
added "Mass Communication" to its name. <u>Journalism Quarterly</u>,
AEJMC's largest research journal, declared itself open to
"reports of original investigations into <u>any</u> area of mass
communication" (<u>59</u>, p. 693, emphasis added). But even a casual

review of JQ suggests that most of its authors are still engrossed with journalism and focused on a narrow range of industries.

In 1985 Zerbinos presented a paper to AEJMC's Communication Theory and Methodology Division in which she decried mass communication researchers' "methodolatry," a term credited to Bell and Newby (1977) signifying excessive reliance on single-method studies, particularly quantitative ones. Like Bell and Newby, Zerbinos urged the replacement of this "positivistic hegemony" with a "decent methodological pluralism." She argued that more use of qualitative methods and the combining of more methods in a single study would improve the testing of theories.

The term "mediolatry" is offered now to denote an excessive reliance by researchers on single-industry studies as well as a lack of variety in the industries they choose to examine. It is argued that scholars who strive to overcome mediolatry, like those who avoid methodolatry, will be able to better test certain theoretical propositions.

METHODOLOGY

This paper is concerned with the epistemology of mass communication, particularly certain issues of its shape and coherence. The research questions are:

1. How much attention are mass communication scholars writing
    in <u>Journalism Quarterly</u> giving each of the mass
    communication industries (also referred to hereafter as
    "media segments")?

2. To what extent are the various media segments studied
    <u>discretely</u> and in isolation from each other, and to what
    extent are they studied <u>collectively</u>, i.e., across
    traditional industrial boundaries?

3. When studied collectively, how are the data from the diverse
    industry segments used--i.e.. <u>accumulatively</u>, <u>comparatively</u>,
    or <u>interactively</u>?

The entire output of <u>JQ</u> during the decade of the 1980s was
examined: 40 issues, from Vol. 57, No. 1 (Spring 1980) through
Vol. 66, No. 4 (Winter 1989). All articles from both the main
and Research in Brief sections were reviewed. Because of the
self-evident nature of the data sought, it was not deemed
necessary to use multiple coders. In the following analysis, an
article was counted as specific to a media industry only if it
gave it substantive attention. Incidental and secondary mentions
did not qualify. (For purposes of this study, advertising is
counted as a separate media segment, even when it had been

researched within the context of specific media.)

RESULTS

By Winter 1989, scholars had published 1,135 articles in

Journalism Quarterly during the Eighties. The overwhelming

majority of articles were focused on specific segments: only 77

--6.8%--were not media specific, choosing instead to discuss mass

communication or the media in general terms. Moreover, the

researchers and their journal demonstrated strong preferences for

certain media analyzed in certain ways.

Among the industries studied, newspapers and broadcast television

dwarfed all others in commanding attention (Table 1).

Newspapers, by themselves or with other media, were among the

principal subjects in no fewer than 618 articles, 54.4% of the

total, while broadcast television was among the principal

subjects in 339 articles, or 29.9%. Adding newspapers and

broadcast television together, including articles using both, 819

articles, or 72.2%, of all JQ articles published in the 1980s had

newspapers and/or television among their principal subjects.

Magazines were a distant third in interest, with 14.8%

penetration, while splinters of less than 10% each went to all

other areas: radio, advertising, non-media-specific topics,

miscellaneous media (such as electronic publishing, comic books,

recorded music, and business information services), cable

television, books, public relations, and movies.

By the end of the decade, JQ was publishing an average of 129

articles per year (based on 1987-1989), and in a typical year all

but about 9 of them were media-specific. Of the remaining 120

articles, each year typically saw about 93 concerning newspapers

and/or television, wholly or in part. Perhaps 19 would

substantively touch on magazines; about a dozen, radio; 10 or 11,

advertising. The remaining media industries--cable television,

book publishing, public relations, movies, and miscellaneous

media, such as comic books, electronic publishing, or recorded

music--would each get no more than 3 or 4 treatments, and

sometimes none at all.*

TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

As well as favoring certain media industries, researchers most

often worked strictly on the organizational level and treated

each industry by itself, without reference to others. No fewer

than 827 articles, or 72.9% of all, examined behavior in only one

---

*   Totals exceed 129 because a few articles dealt with multiple media.

media segment--e.g., newspapers only, or radio only, etc. Indeed, as Table 2 indicates, research on more than one media segment was unusual; on more than two, remarkable.

TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

Unavoidably, these two preferences--for certain media segments and for single-segment studies--converge. Thus, 419 articles, or 50.7% of all single-medium articles published in the Eighties, are studies of newspapers only, without reference to other industries. Another 176 articles--21.3% of all single-medium studies--examine broadcast television exclusively. As Table 3 indicates, no other media industries enjoy as much exclusive attention; the remaining 28% of the single-medium studies are divided among eight different media segments..

TABLE 3

Of the 1,058 media-specific articles published in JQ during the
decade, only 231 (21.8%) looked at more than one medium. How the
researchers used the data collected in these multiple-media
articles was also analyzed for this paper. Researchers use data
accumulatively, comparatively, or interactively. Data used
accumulatively is simply aggregated by researchers but not
manipulated in any other way. In JQ in the 1980s, historical and
legal studies most often took this form, but so did an occasional
quantitative analysis. In comparative studies, data from two or
more media segments are contrasted with each other. For example,
scholars sometimes compared "old" and "new" media (such as
newspapers versus television, or broadcast television versus
cable television) against each other in terms of credibility or
uses and gratifications. Interactive studies measure the effects
or relationships various media segments had on each other; for
example, cable television's effect on broadcast television, or
the interaction of advertising and editorial content.

Studies which primarily simply accumulate data, without
significant further manipulation, accounted for 132, or 57.1%, of
the multiple-media studies. Studies which were primarily
comparative accounted for 62 articles, or 26.8% of the total.
Thus, only 37 articles--16% of the multi-media studies, and only

3.3% of all JQ published during the Eighties--examined the
interactive effects of different media segments on each other.

SYSTEMS THINKING

"While the vocabulary of systems has made a strong impact upon
communication science...actual implementation of systems
approaches are rare," Chaffee and Berger have noted (1987, p.
118). Such critics of America mass communication research as
Oscar Gandy, Philip Elliott and Paul Hirsch have argued the need
to turn from a "narrow, fragmented...atomistic" American approach
to a broader systems perspective (Jasperse, 1979, p. 39).

Sometimes charged with the peculiar ability to explain everything
and nothing at all at once, systems theory is not so much theory
as it is a way of thinking about things (Ruben 1972, p. 121). In
discussing its value to communication scholars, Monge (1977)
suggested that systems theory can provide an "explanatory
framework" capable of accommodating a variety of "contrasting and
complementary modes of explanation" (p. 19).

The value of systems thinking lies in its focusing attention on
"how sets of events are structured and how they function in
relation to their 'environment,'" (Laszlo, 1972). In this
regard, four organizational properties should be kept in mind
when conducting research: (1) Systems are wholes composed of

numerous parts; (2) systems strive to maintain themselves in

changing environments; (3) systems grow, change and

differentiate, and (4) systems include hierarchies of

systems...they are systems within systems. For energy renewal,

all open systems engage in processes of exchange across system

boundaries; thus, any communication system is

> constantly interacting with its environment to dispose of
> its product, to obtain materials, to recruit personnel, and
> to obtain the general support of outside structures to
> facilitate these functions. There is a constant need for
> environmental support (Katz and Kahn, 1971, p. 27).

Thus, the connections between parallel systems and subsystems,

how their events are structured, and how these systems deal with

their media environments need study as well as bounded systems

themselves. Among other things, open-systems thinking would

focus attention on the "isomorphy of concepts, laws and models in

various [media segments]" (Ruben, 1972, p. 122) in the mass

communication field.

LEVEL OF ANALYSIS

In Durkheim's famous words, "social facts have social causes."

But social facts and social causes can be studied on a number of

different levels, with each level of analysis highlighting some

phenomena while obscuring others (Ruben, 1972, p. 128). Mass

communication scholars in JQ have preferred to focus on the level

of individual organizations and their native industrial segments:

primarily newspapers and the newspaper industry, or television

stations and the broadcast industry.   But, as Berkowitz has

observed, "There is a level of organization within societies

which cannot be adequately understood by simply observing

individual behavior" (Berkowitz, 1982, p. 11).

On the cross-media level, journalism and mass communication

scholars have usually treated the entities they were studying as

if they were closed systems, functioning in isolation from each

other.   Scholars may look at the interaction between media

industry and consumer, industry and government, or industry and

its resources, but all too seldom do they look at the interaction

of the various media segments with each other within the

institution of mass communication.   This is simply unrealistic.

Living systems are in constant interaction with their

environments; part of the environment of any communication system

is composed of other communication systems; the various

communication systems that are known as industry segments are,

therefore, co-determining phenomena.

Many years ago, Merton (1968) argued for "theories of the middle

range," which he described as:

> [T]heories that lie between the minor but necessary working
> hypotheses that evolve in abundance during day-to-day
> research and the all-inclusive systematic efforts to develop
> a unified theory that will explain all the observed
> uniformities of social behavior, social organization and
> social change (p. 39).

Merton was calling for approaches which were abstracted enough to
hold the potential of generalizability, but "close enough to
observed data to be incorporated in propositions that permit
empirical testing." This is the "somewhere" which Boulding said
must be found between "the specific that has no meaning and the
general that has no content" (Ruben, 1972, p. 123). This paper
suggests that more theoretical and empirical attention be paid to
a network level of analysis which lies in between, on the one
hand, specific media outlets and their segments, such as
newspapers, broadcast television, magazines and so on, and, on
the other hand, the larger social institutions, such the mass
communication system in general (for example, in De Fleur and
Ball-Rokeach's theory of media dependency [1989]). This level of
analysis, the trans-industrial or cross-media, examines the
interaction, exchanges, and mutual effects media segments have on
each other: newspapers, radio and television on books, and vice
versa, for example. Work on this level is framed in systems
thinking, which is "basically concerned with the problems of
relationships, of structure, and of interdependence rather than
with the constant attributes of objects" (Katz and Kahn, 1971, p.
19).

With "rare exceptions...communication scholars have restricted
their investigations to intraorganizational networks," according

to Monge (1987, p. 256, emphasis added). But the work of
organizational and other scholars powerfully suggests the kind of
studies which could be conducted in mass communication, but
seldom have. For example, Eisenberg et al (1985) and Zeitz
(1980) have examined the communication and informational linkages
that link organizations--and, by extension, presumably, similar
industries. Because communication and information are the
primary products of the mass communication industries, not just
managerial data, it would seem especially appropriate to examine
these linkages, or networks.

Another fruitful area for study in mass communication would what
Monge calls the "densely connected networks of elite power and
influence" which control major segments of society--for example,
interlocking memberships on corporate boards, not to mention
other kinds of activity shared by elites in which reciprocal
bonds may be born and nourished.

The "invisible colleges" (Crane, 1972) through which dispersed
professionals maintain contact, conduct exchanges, and share
cognitively constitute still another trans-industrial area for
study.

Whatever scholarly arguments can be mustered, however, the rush
of daily events may do more than anything else to blast media

chauvinists out of their grooves. Events in recent years increasingly point to media convergence--a phenomenon which makes even more manifest the connections between the media.

CONVERGENCE OF THE MEDIA

The diverse segments of the mass communication industry are converging in at least four ways: structurally, technologically, cognitively, and economically.

(1) Structural convergence: Newspaper chains, yesterday's bete noir for media critics, are rapidly being overshadowed by the rise of multi-media conglomerates. While consolidation continues to take place inside industry segments, from book publishing to recorded music, the most dramatic action in recent years has taken place across industrial lines. For example, born recently (along with a mountain of debt), was Time Warner, the world's largest media corporation. Among its properties are 16 major magazines, such as Time, Money, and Sports Illustrated; film, record, and book publishing operations; the Book-of-the-Month Club, and cable TV system with more than 5.5 million subscribers. At about the same time, the attractiveness of media properties led Gulf and Western, Inc., to shed both its name and its highly successful consumer and commercial loan operation, the Associates First Capital Corporation, and become simply Paramount Communications, Inc.: 26 book publishing imprints; an educational

software company; five television stations; Paramount Pictures,

Television, and Home Video; theater chains; and even sports

teams. Hearst, once a big name only in newspapers, now owns such

big names in book publishing as Avon and William Morrow & Co.

Hearst also owns broadcasters, cable systems, and TV production

and distribution systems. The Times Mirror Co. owns not only the

Los Angeles Times and other papers, but broadcast and cable TV,

books and magazines. Newhouse Communications, owners of

newspapers ranging from the Cleveland Plain Dealer to the

Springfield (Mass.) Union and News, owns Advance Publications,

Inc., which owns the elite New Yorker magazine and major book

publisher Random House, which in turn owns prestigious Pantheon

Books. Time executives have been quoted as predicting that there

will "eventually be about a half-dozen global powers in media"

("Time-Warner Merger," 1989). Obviously, these corporate

overlords see commonalities in their properties that media

scholars are failing for the most part to examine.

(2) Technological convergence: The new technologies of

communication, especially the computer, the satellite dish, and

fiber optics, are leading to what Pool called the "convergence of

modes...the blurring [of] the lines between the media." Rubin

and Wikler (1989) explained:

> Services that in the past were provided in separate ways now
> share wires, cables, and radio waves. And services that
> once depended on a single medium, such as print, can be
> provided in a number of ways (p. 70).

For example, newspapers have become increasingly electronic. Not only words but, increasingly, photographs are being reduced to binary information, which can then be transmitted by satellite from a newsroom in New York City to a printing plant in a Midwest corn field. Newspapers continue to experiment with electronic text and facsimile delivery systems. Meanwhile, book authors on the West Coast, for example, are increasingly writing their manuscripts on computers and sending the data on disk or by wire to publishers on the East Coast, who can then transmit the captured keystrokes to printers in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Within the foreseeable future, the "book" may be available on a pocket-sized display screen, the "newspaper" may be home-delivered via fiber optics.

Dizard (1985) has said we are entering a new information environment, "the Age of the Integrated Grid,"

> in which messages can move in any form (voice, visual, or print) through an integrated, linked network of wire or wireless channels. Wire and wireless channels are becoming interchangeable parts of a unitary information utility, the nervous system of post-industrial America (p. 44)

(3) Cognitive convergence: The popular (if not financial) success of USA Today, the first newspaper designed for the television age; the ripple effect through all the news media of every fad discovered by one of them; and the "novelization" of successful movies or TV shows, are only a few examples of media

symbiosis, the trans-industrial migration of form and content.
Books are just one example: the president of a major book
publisher has remarked, "In a certain sense, we are the software
of the television and movie media" (Whiteside, 1981). A member
of a California talent agency says,

> We're putting books together that are predicated on magazine
> articles, putting books together that are predicated on
> screenplays, and putting movies together that are predicated
> on books (p. 71).

In book publishing, the sale of "rights"--arrangements for
distribution through other media--has become a major portion of
the business. Increasingly, media content is being generated and
used in multi-media ways.

(4) Economic convergence: The American media industries are
often portrayed as competing with each other--i.e., television
versus newspapers, or books versus other diversions. But it
would be equally useful to look at how they economically support
and complement each other, through what Tuchman calls "cross-
referencing" (1988, p. 604). For example, the cognitive
convergence described above yields a synergistic effect in the
market of media products. It is not uncommon for a book to
appear in hardcover, trade, and mass market versions (by as many
as three different publishers); re-appear as a broadcast or cable
television mini series and still later as a movie for theater
release--or vice versa; be serialized in a magazine, and be sold

in audio cassette version. Each of these versions is expected to
promote the sale of the others; thus, the whole property in all
its manifestations can become greater than the sum of its parts.
Moreover, all of this activity typically will be promoted in
great detail, not just in the trade press but in the popular
media, with authors and other artists appearing on TV and radio
talk shows, interviews and feature stories appearing in the
editorial columns of magazines and newspapers, not to mention
acres and hours of paid advertising. Most commonly thought of as
competing for the time and dollars of audiences, the media in
fact are highly dependent on each other for their economic
success.

A recent example is "lambada," an erotic Latin dance which first
appeared early in 1990 as recorded music, was then hyped by cable
videos, noted with leering interest by network news, written
about in newspapers and magazines, produced as an instructional
video tape for dancers, and turned into two movies (which were
advertised via TV and newspapers)--all within the space of a few
weeks. If lambada had become a major American craze (it did
not), books--hardcover, trade paperback and mass market
paperback--would have appeared as well (which would have been
publicized and advertised in print and broadcast media....)

Tuchman explains:

The media have additional influence as a cross-referenced, self-supporting structure: They presume and create each other's legitimacy within the general context of a much-legitimated consumerism (1988, p. 604).

TWO PARADIGMS

Two useful approaches for analyzing mass communication are the

liberal-pluralist and Marxist paradigms. According to Gurevitch,

Bennett, Curran, & Woollacott (1982):

> The pluralists see society as a complex of competing groups and interests, none of them predominant all of the time. Media organizations are seen as bounded organizational systems, enjoying an important degree of autonomy from the state, political parties and institutionalized pressure groups. Control of the media is said to be in the hands of an autonomous managerial elite who allow a considerable degree of flexibility to media professionals. A basic symmetry is seen to exist between media institutions and their audiences....(page 2).

Liberal-pluralism, which the British say is the traditional

American approach, has dominated the research of mass

communication scholars publishing in JQ. Liberal-pluralism is

congenial to administrative research, which concerns itself with

whether media managements are reaching their goals efficiently.

It does not ordinarily challenge the foundation principles on

which the system is based. This contrasts sharply with the

Marxist view:

> Marxists view capitalist society as being one of class domination; the media are seen as part of an ideological arena in which various class views are fought out, although within the context of the dominance of certain classes; ultimate control is increasingly concentrated in monopoly capital; media professionals, while enjoying the illusion of autonomy, are socialized into and internalize the norms of the dominant culture; the media taken as a whole, relay interpretive frameworks consonant with the interests of the

> dominant classes, and media audiences...lack ready access to
> alternative meaning systems....(p. 2).

A key Marxist concept is that of the "false consciousness" of

reality by the masses which the media allegedly foster as a form

of social control. One does not have to be a Marxist to be find

Marxist approaches heuristic. (Related to the Marxist position

are cultural/critical studies, which can be equally critical and

have been heavily influenced by Marxist ideas, such as that of

"false consciousness.") In recent years, several American

scholars--who come primarily from the discipline of sociology and

do not publish in Journalism Quarterly--have examined the media

in light of the idea of ideological hegemony, a concept from the

late Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci. Gitlin (1980) has argued

for this approach, explaining:

> [H]egemony is a ruling class's (or alliance's) domination of
> subordinate classes and groups through the elaboration and
> penetration of ideology (ideas and assumptions) into their
> common sense and everyday practice; it is the systematic
> (but not necessarily or even usually deliberate) engineering
> of mass consent to the established order (p. 253).

In short, it is "the exercise of power over the interpretation of

reality" (Philip Schlesinger, quoted in Gitlin 1980, p. 251).

This reality, says Gitlin (1979) has sanctified consumer

satisfaction as "the premium definition of 'the pursuit of

happiness.'" Gitlin and others have shown how the news media,

through their policies and practices, have marginalized

challenges to the established order and trivialized questions

about it:

> Political news is treated as if it were crime news--what
> went wrong today, not what goes wrong every day. A
> demonstration is treated as a potential or actual disruption
> of legitimate order, not as a statement about the world
> (1980, p. 271).

However, the Marxist tradition in Britain has long been anti-

empirical, "unencumbered by a felt need to test ideas with data"

(Becker 1984, p. 68). But slowly interest has been growing both

in Britain and the United States for positivistic approaches to

Marxist theory. As Golding and Murdock (1978) have observed:

> To say that the mass media are saturated with bourgeois
> ideology is simply to pose a series of questions for
> investigation. To begin to answer them, however, it is
> necessary to go on to show how this hegemony is actually
> reproduced through the concrete activities of media
> personnel and the interpreting procedures of consumers. (p.
> 350)

Murdock and Golding believe there are "a number of links" which

Marxist scholars should research in an empirical way: for

example, links between the work situation and the market

situation, links between occupational ideologies and a culture's

general values and its ruling ideology. To these might be added

the links between supposedly competing media industries, their

links with larger power elites, and the ways in which alliances

of powerful groups use the media to build their bases for

legitimate authority.

In any case, what is important here is Marxist and Marxist-

inspired concerns for the linkages, the connectedness, and the

systemic relationships that operate among the mass media. Among

the most important of these systemic relationships are those that operate cross-media; this paper argues that scholars writing in JQ should be examining them more closely, and with a critical eye. Testing hegemonic theory, for example, would provide a useful contrast to the prevailing liberal-pluralist paradigm and its abundance of administrative product.

CONCLUSION

Although the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication is open to "a breadth of membership activity and interest," writers in its research journal Journalism Quarterly have taken a relatively narrow perspective. They have preferred to concentrate on newspapers and broadcast television: 72.2% of all JQ articles published in the 1980s had newspapers and/or television among their principal subjects; 52.4% had one or the other as their only subjects. All remaining space, by contrast, was splintered among magazines, radio, advertising, cable television, books, public relations, movies, miscellaneous media (such as recorded music, electronic publishing, business information services). Only 6.8% of all JQ articles were not media-specific.

Mass communication scholars are also apt to talk about an open-systems world while taking something less than a systems approach in their research. Of the 1,135 articles published in Journalism

Quarterly during the 1980s, 72.9% examined only one media

industry, thereby disregarding their media environment. And of

those few articles which considered two or more media industries

in depth, most used the data accumulatively, some comparatively.

But only 3.3% of all JQ articles during the 1980s even allowed

for the possibility of systemic relationships by studying the

interactive effects between two or media industries.

This paper argues that a systems perspective is needed to restore

research interest in the connectedness of diverse media

industries. Such an approach should proceed in the "middle

range" between narrowly focused studies on the organizational

level and grander theory on the social institution level. While

systems theory would have been an appropriate approach at any

time, increasing media convergence is making it imperative.

Structurally, technologically, cognitively and economically, the

confluence of what had once seemed like separate streams of media

activity are shaping the dawning information age.

It is not argued here that single-industry studies do not

contribute to critical approaches to the media. Nor have the

possibilities for researching newspapers and television have been

exhausted. And there should always be a role in JQ for

administrative research. As Lemert (1989) has observed, research

which critics might label administrative can be useful to society

as well as the industries.

But while it is a useful way of looking at things, administrative research in the liberal-pluralist tradition is also a way of not looking at other things. One does not need to be a Marxist to see the utility of testing another theoretical approach, achieving what Merton called a "shift in the angle of vision" (1968, p. 42). For example, this may lead us to test hegemonic theory: that shared understandings and mutual adaptations between the various media industries serve to legitimate and conserve an ideology of "liberal capitalism" that serves the interests of a ruling elite. Although the liberal-pluralist and Marxist (as well as cultural/critical) approaches are commonly thought of as opposing each other, researchers may find they complement each other--at least, as alternating tools for investigation. And, as Monge has pointed out, a systems perspective can provide an "explanatory framework" capable of accommodating a variety of "contrasting and complementary modes of explanation."

Lemert (1989) said (in regard to the news media, at least) that "it is essential that a tradition of sustained, high-quality critical analysis be created" (p. 20). As a study of the pages of Journalism Quarterly makes clear, however, certain practices of researchers impede such a development. Zerbinos observed that mass communication scholars need to diversify their methodologies and break away from "methodolatry," an excessive

reliance on single-method studies, particularly quantitative ones. But this paper argues that researchers also need to break the grip of "mediolatry," which not only obscures many media industries but also overlooks systemic relationships between them which may have major social significance, such as ideological hegemony. Although the media are rapidly converging, many researchers see only trees (and only certain ones at that), and not the forest.

Indeed, until researchers become willing to take ideological hegemony into account in their scholarship, they may well serve as examples of it.

Sept. 4, 1992

TABLE 1

MEDIA INDUSTRIES COVERED
IN <u>JOURNALISM QUARTERLY</u> 1980-89

Media Industry	Number of Articles Including	Percentage of total[1]
Newspapers	618	54.4
Broadcast Television	339	29.9
Magazines	168	14.8
Radio	105	9.3
Advertising	96	8.5
Not Media Specific	77	6.8
Miscellaneous[2]	32	2.8
Cable Television	31	2.7
Books	25	2.2
Public Relations	25	2.2
Movies	7	0.6

NOTE: Because some articles treated more than one medium, a
        total for the middle column, above, would exceed the
        number of articles published during the study period:
        1,135. Likewise, the righthand column would exceed
        100%.

[1] Percentage is of total number of articles published (1,135).

[2] Includes brochures, leaflets, broadsides; comic books;
    yearbooks and school plays; business information services;
    electronic publishing; recorded music.

TABLE 2

FOCUS OF MEDIA STUDIED
IN JOURNALISM QUARTERLY 1980-1989

Number of Media Studied	Number of Articles	Percent
Not Media Specific	77	6.8%
One medium	827	72.9
Two media	130	11.5
Three media	60	5.3
Four media	30	2.6
Five media	7	0.6
Six media	4	0.4
	1,135	100.0%

TABLE 3

MEDIA COVERED BY SINGLE-INDUSTRY STUDIES
IN JOURNALISM QUARTERLY 1980-89

Media Industry	Number of Articles Including	Percentage of total
Newspapers	419	50.7
Broadcast Television	176	21.3
Advertising	82	9.9
Magazines	74	8.9
Radio	19	2.3
Cable Television	18	2.2
Public Relations	18	2.2
Miscellaneous1	14	1.7
Books	5	0.6
Movies	2	0.2
TOTALS	827	100.0

[1] Includes brochures, leaflets, broadsides; comic books; yearbooks and school plays; business information services; electronic publishing, recorded music (except videos).

REFERENCES

Becker, S. L. (1984). Marxist approaches to media studies: The British experience," <u>Critical Studies in Mass Communication</u>, <u>1</u>, 66-80.

Bell, C., & Newby, H. (1977). <u>Doing Sociological Research</u>. New York: The Free Press.

Berkowitz, S. D. (1982). <u>An introduction to structural analysis: The network approach to social research</u>. Toronto: Butterworths.

Blanchard, R. O., & Christ, W. (1988). Beyond the generic curriculum: The enriched major for journalism and mass communication, <u>Insights, Journal of the Association of Schools of Journalism and Mass Communication</u>. October, 9-12.

Breed, W. (1964). Mass communication and sociocultural integration. In L. A. Dexter & D. M. White (Eds.), <u>People, Society, and Mass Communications</u> (pp. 183-200). New York: The Free Press.

Breed, W. (1960). Social control in the news room. In W. Schramm (Ed.), <u>Mass Communications</u>, 2nd ed., pp. 178-194. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Chaffee, S. H., & Berger, C. R. (1987). What communication scientists do. In C. R. Berger & S. H. Chaffee (Eds.), <u>Handbook of Communication Science</u> (pp. 239-270). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Crane, D. (1972). <u>Invisible colleges: Diffusion of knowledge in scientific communities</u>. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

De Fleur, M. L., & Ball-Rokeach, S. (1989). Theories of Mass Communication, 5th ed. New York: Longman.

Dizard, W. P. Jr. (1985). The Coming Information Age. New York: Longman.

Eisenberg, E. M., Farace, R. V., Monge, P. R., Bettinghaus, E. P., Kurchner-Hawkins, R., Miller, K., & Rothman, L. (1985). Communication linkages in interorganizational systems. In B. Dervin & M. Voigt (Eds.), Progress in communication sciences (Vol. 6, pp. 210-261). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Gitlin, T. (1979). Prime time ideology: The hegemonic process in television entertainment. Social Problems 26, 251-266.

Gitlin, Todd. (1980). The whole world is watching: Mass media in the making & unmaking of the New Left. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Golding, P., & Murdock, G. (1978). Theories of communication theories of society. Communication Research, 5, 339-356.

Gurevitch, M., Bennett, T., Curran, J., & Woollacott, J. (1982). Culture, Society and the Media. London: Methuen, 1982.

Jasperse, S. (1979, August). A comparison of European and American traditions of mass communication research. Paper presented to the International Communication Division, annual convention of the Association for Education in Journalism, Houston, TX.

Katz, D., & Kahn, R. (1971). Open-system theory. In J. G. Maurer (Ed.), Readings in organization theory: Open-system approaches (pp. 13-29). New York: Random House.

Katz, E. (1964). Communications research and the image of society: Convergence of two traditions. In L. A. Dexter & D. M. White (Eds.), People, society, and mass communications (pp. 110-120). New York: The Free Press.

Laszlo, E. (1972). The systems view of the world. New York: Braziller.

Lemert, J. B. (1989). Criticizing the Media: Empirical Approaches. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Merton, R. K. (1968). Social Theory and Social Structure. New York: The Free Press.

Monge, P. R.   (1977).   The systems perspective as a theoretical basis for the study of human communication. Communication Quarterly, 25, 19-29.

Monge, P. R.   (1987).   The network level of analysis. In C. R. Berger & S. H. Chaffee (Eds.), Handbook of Communication Science (pp. 239-270). Sage: Newbury Park, CA.

School of Journalism, University of Oregon. (1987). Planning for curricular change in journalism education: A report of the project on the future of journalism and mass communication education ("The Oregon Report"), 2nd. ed. Eugene, OR: School of Journalism, University of Oregon.

Ruben, B. D.   (1972)   General systems theory: An approach to human communication.   In R. W. Budd and B. D. Ruben (Eds.), Approaches to human communication. New York: Spartan Books.

Rubin, J. S., & Wikler, J.   (1989, August).   The future of the word. World Monitor, pp. 29-31.

"Time-Warner Merger: Threat to the First Amendment," (1989, March/April). Extra!, p. 16.

Toulmin, S.   (1969).   Concepts and the explanation of human Behavior. In T. Mischel (Ed.), Human Action. New York: Academic Press.

Tuchman, G.   (1988).   Mass media institutions.   In N. J. Smelser (Ed.) Handbook of sociology (pp. 601-626). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Whiteside, T.   (1981).   The blockbuster complex: Conglomerates, show business, and book publishing. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.

Zeitz, G.   (1980).   Interorganizational dialectics. Administrative Science Quarterly, 25, 72-88.

Zerbinos, E.   (1985, August).   Avoiding 'Methodolatry' in mass communication research: A call for multimethod triangulation. Paper presented to the annual convention of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Memphis, TN.