

Patterns of Ownership of the Media

Ownership of the main mass media in Britain and America is becoming concentrated in the hands of fewer companies.

In the UK, around 86% of the total circulation of national daily and Sunday newspapers is controlled by just four companies.

One individual, Rupert Murdoch, is the major force behind News UK, whose newspapers make up about 32% of all national daily newspaper sales in the UK.

Bagdikian shows that five global firms (Walt Disney, News Corporation, Time Warner, CBS and Viacom) own most of the newspapers, magazines, book publishers, film studios and radio and television stations in the United States.

UK National Newspaper Group Ownership

Company	Share of UK national daily newspaper circulation (%)	National newspapers	Also owns
News UK and News Corporation	32	Sun, The Times	39% of Sky; HarperCollins publishers; Wide range of websites
Daily Mail and General Trust	24	Daily Mail	Second largest regional newspaper owners with over 100 papers; 20% of ITN; Various radio stations; Wide range of websites
Trinity Mirror	15	Daily Mirror; Daily Record; People	Over 130 local and regional newspapers; Over 300 websites
Northern & Shell	12	Daily Express; Daily Star	OK! Magazine; Various websites
Telegraph Media Group (part of Press Holdings Limited)	7	Daily Telegraph	Spectator
Pearson	3	Financial Times	Longman, Pearson and Penguin book publishers; 50% of The Economist Group; Rough Guides
Guardian Media Group/Scott Trust	3	Guardian	Auto Trader; Shares in various consumer magazines

Features of Media Ownership

Bagdikian points out that the concentration of media ownership means a handful of global media companies and moguls (**lords of the global village**), dominate the world's mass media and control every step in the information process.

These features of media ownership include the following:

Concentration of ownership

Most of the media of all kinds are concentrated in the hands of a few very large companies.

Vertical integration

There is concentration of ownership within a single type of media, such as one company owning all stages in the production and distribution of a media product, e.g. Time Warner makes its own films and distributes them to its own cinemas.

Horizontal integration/cross media ownership

This is where some media companies own a range of media, e.g. newspapers, satellite television etc.

Global ownership

Media ownership is international with owners having interests in many different countries around the world.

Conglomeration and diversification

Media companies are often part of huge conglomerates. These are companies that have a diverse range of interests in a wide variety of products besides the media.

Global conglomeration

This is a combination of global ownership and conglomeration. Conglomerates that media companies are part of are often also global conglomerates.

Synergy

This is when media companies produce, promote and sell a product in a variety of forms, either through different parts of the same company or through collaboration with different companies. This is done to promote greater sales of that product. For example, a film might be promoted by advertising in newspapers. The film might be used to promote the sales of the book on which the film is based, then sold as a DVD with music from the film released as a CD. It may also be turned into a computer game and be further promoted with toys, sweets, home products etc. Examples include Harry Potter and Star Wars.

Technological convergence

This is when media companies try to maximise sales of their products by making them available in a variety of formats which can be accessed on a single device. For example, a single device like a smartphone or a tablet may be used to advertise a film, to watch the film, to download and listen to the music, to play the related computer game or to read the book.

The Manipulative/Instrumentalist Approach

The dominant ideology

Marxists see societies as having a **dominant ideology**, which is that of the dominant class in society. This ideology justifies the advantages of wealthy and powerful groups in society and justifies the disadvantages of those who lack wealth and power. It is spread through society by what Althusser called the **ideological state apparatuses**, which includes agents like the media, which maintain **false class consciousness**.

Writers like Miliband argue the media play an important role in spreading this dominant ideology. They argue the media control access to the knowledge people have about society and encourage them to accept inequality. The media promote information which makes those who challenge the system seem unreasonable or extreme.

This suggests the media owners directly control media content and manipulate that content and media audiences to protect their profits and spread the dominant ideology, e.g. that society is meritocratic. Media therefore acts as an **agent of ideological control**. Examples include the negative portrayal of asylum seekers and welfare claimants.

This can also be seen via government censorship, e.g. via DSMA Notices and the Official Secrets Act. Information censored may challenge the dominant ideology.

The influence of owners

Curran and Seaton found evidence which suggested media owners did interfere and manipulate newspaper content to protect their own interests. For example, in February 2003, Rupert Murdoch argued strongly in interviews for the war in Iraq. All of his 175 newspapers also agreed with this view. Murdoch admitted in 2007 that he exercised editorial control on major issues in the 'Sun' and the 'News of the World', such as which party to back in a general election or policy on Europe.

The Leveson Inquiry in 2012 uncovered a range of links between media owners and governments, with media support given to political parties in return for government policies favourable to the interests of media owners, e.g. the links between then PM David Cameron and Rebekah Brooks, one of Murdoch's former editors.

Media editors, journalists etc, have little choice but to run the media in the way that owners want as they depend on the owners for their jobs.

Commodity fetishism

The manipulative/instrumentalist approach assumes the media audience is passive and unquestioningly accept the interpretation of the limited range of opinions and reports found in media content. The public is fed dumbed down, undemanding and trivial content which stops them focusing on serious issues or encourages them to interpret serious issues in ways favourable to the dominant class. They are encouraged to focus on 'must have products' (known as **commodity fetishism**) rather than think about serious issues.

Criticisms

The state regulates media ownership so no one person or company has too much influence. By law, the media have to report news impartially.

Audiences are not as gullible and easily manipulated as the manipulative approach suggests. People can accept, reject or re-interpret the preferred content of media messages.

Pluralists and **neophiliacs** (people who welcome new technology and use new media) suggest the new digital media and **citizen journalism** has undermined the influence of media owners.

The Hegemonic Approach

This is a more Neo Marxist approach and is particularly associated with the Glasgow Media Group (GMG). This agrees with the manipulative approach of the mass media being owned by a few members of the wealthy elite and that it spreads a dominant ideology. However, it suggests that owners, although they have influence, rarely have day to day control of the content of the media. This is in the hands of managers and journalists.

Hegemony

This approach emphasises the concept of **hegemony** (the dominance in society of a set of ideas, in this case the ruling class). This was first developed by Gramsci and refers to the idea that dominant ruling class ideology is made to seem everyday common sense to all classes. This enables the ruling class to maintain their power.

The GMG suggest media managers and journalists still generally support the dominant ideology, but by choice, not because they are ordered to by owners. The GMG points out that most journalists tend to be white, middle class and male and their socialisation means they have similar views to the dominant class, e.g. 56% of journalists are independently educated (The Sutton Trust). Their views are seen as reasonable and they report the news in keeping with the common sense assumptions of the dominant ideology. This means only a limited range of opinions are reported whilst any views outside the dominant ideology are portrayed as unreasonable, extreme etc.

Economic pressures

Many managers and journalists are also motivated by a desire to attract audiences, and therefore advertisers, to make profit for the companies they work for. Therefore, journalists will put forward news and opinions designed to attract large audiences. This, however, may mean that sometimes they develop critical views which don't reflect the dominant ideology in order to appeal to a larger audience, e.g. campaigns against government corruption, closing of the News of the World after advertisers pulled out following the phone hacking scandal.

Agenda setting and gatekeeping

The GMG also suggests the dominant ideology often means some items are deliberately excluded from reporting and audiences are encouraged to think about some events rather than others. For example, the damage caused by rioters in British cities in 2011 rather than why people were rioting. This is known as **agenda setting** (where the media manage which issues are presented for public discussion and debate) and **gatekeeping** (where some people and organisations have the power to limit access to something useful, e.g. information).

This also means people are encouraged to discuss popular or mass culture rather than thinking about the problems with capitalism (the Frankfurt School).

Agenda setting and gatekeeping also means audiences have little real choice of media content as the media is produced within the framework of the dominant ideology. This is illustrated by Philo who studied coverage of the global banking crisis. He found the media focused attention predominantly on the views and solutions of the main political parties and the bankers themselves, not solutions outside the existing financial system.

As a result, audiences unconsciously see the dominant ideology as reasonable.

Criticisms

It underrates the power and influence of the owners. For example, former 'Sun' editors have said how Rupert Murdoch's editors constantly consider how he would present a story.

Agenda setting/gatekeeping suggests manipulation of audiences which is similar to the manipulative/instrumentalist approach.

Pluralists suggest new globalised digital media has undermined the influence of owners and put more control in the hands of media audiences.

The Pluralist Approach

Varied opinions

The pluralists argue modern societies are democratic and therefore power in society is spread among a wide variety of groups and individuals. The media gives everyone's views a platform.

There is a wide range of competing newspapers, television channels etc, including public broadcasting, e.g. the BBC, reflecting a range of audience interests and ideas, including those which challenge the dominant ideology. Audiences are seen as **heterogeneous** (diverse).

Importance of attracting audiences and advertisers.

They argue media content is driven not by a dominant ideology or the political interests of owners, but by the fight for profits through high circulation and audience figures.

The only control over media content is consumer choice, and the media have to be responsive to audience tastes and wishes otherwise they'll go out of business. The audience has **purchasing power**. For example, BlackBerry was very popular with young people but failed to update its features to compete with smartphones manufactured by Apple.

If some political viewpoints are represented more in the media, this reflects what audiences want. For example, if the majority of UK newspapers raise concerns about Jeremy Corbyn's policy on nuclear weapons, this reflects the concerns of the majority of the population.

Journalists have to produce stories that offer a wide selection of views, using **news values** (the values that make a story newsworthy) which attract audiences.

Choice for audiences

Audiences are free to choose what media they consume in a **pick and mix approach** as there is a wide range of media they can choose from. They also have the freedom to accept, reject, reinterpret or ignore media content in accordance with their tastes and views. The new globalised digital media and social media particularly, enable all sorts of views to be presented through citizen journalism.

Media professionalism

Journalists and editors would never allow owners to compromise their independence. Journalists have too much integrity to be biased.

The media have a history of investigating those in power, e.g. the Washington Post's investigation of the Watergate scandal.

Limits/controls on owners

Owners are unable to control media content for the following reasons:

- Need to compete with other media organisations to attract audiences and advertisers. Therefore media content needs to reflect what audiences want.
- Media regulators e.g. Ofcom, prevent any one owner or company from dominating the media.
- These regulators also investigate the quality of content, e.g. if it is biased, as well as audience complaints.
- Media businesses are too large for owners to constantly interfere. Whale argues media owners are too concerned by financial issues with their companies to interfere in media content.

Criticisms

Not all groups in society have equal influence on editors and journalists to get their views across. The main sources of information tend to consist of the most powerful and influential members of society (**primary definers**).

Only very rich groups will have the resources required to launch major media companies to get their views across independently, and both governments and rich individuals have used political or legal pressure to stop stories which threaten their interests.

The pressure to attract audiences limits media choice. News is sensationalised and turned into **infotainment** (information packaged to entertain) as the media aim to attract large audiences with unchallenging content. There is a marked increase in **tabloidization** (where there is a decline in serious news reporting and replacement with sensationalised or gossipy journalism focused on human interest stories, celebrity culture, scandal as well as more focus on entertainment).

Hegemonic theorists argue people have been socialised by the media into the belief that they are being provided with what they want.

The Postmodernist View

The Postmodernists see globalisation of the media as providing greater choice of media products and lifestyles, opening up greater awareness of different cultures and providing opportunities for a range of different identities.

Hyperreality

Baudrillard argues we live in a **media saturated society** in which media images dominate and distort the way we see the world. For example the news uses technology to provide a sanitised version of events around the world. This distorted view of the world is called **hyperreality** which is a view of the world created by the media with the image of an event more real than the event it is depicting. Baudrillard argues the media present **simulacra**, which are media images which appear to reflect things in the real world but have no basis in reality.

Because media blurs the distinction between reality and hyperreality, it leaves audiences confused about what is real and what is media created, e.g. 'reality' TV shows.

Media producers or media consumers?

The distinction between media producers and media consumers is now blurring. Media products are now often produced by ordinary people rather than media organisations, e.g. blogs and YouTube videos.

Media products of media corporations are also being reinvented, for example Lego parodies of Star Wars films.

Choice for audiences

Media messages in the postmodern world are **polysemic**. This means they can be interpreted in a variety of ways which results in media owners, journalists and companies being unable to influence what we think.

Levene argues that consumers now have a greater amount of choice over what media they consume and can use it challenge powerful groups in society. An example of this is when university students in 2007 used Facebook and Twitter to construct a viral campaign to defeat HSBC's proposals to introduce overdraft fees.

Influence of the media on identity

Strinati emphasises the importance of the media in shaping consumer choices. Popular culture bombards us daily and increasingly dominate the way we define ourselves. The media creates pressures to consume and many of us define our identities in terms of media imagery. Media induced trends become more important than the usefulness of products. In films, the storyline doesn't matter but special effects and who the stars are matter more. There are people who are famous only for being made into celebrities by the media.

Baudrillard suggests we identify more with media images than we do with our own daily experiences and we increasingly live media-led virtual lives. We are more likely to get excited about acts on the 'X Factor' or interact with people we barely know on social media than we are to get involved with the communities we live in.

Criticisms

Postmodernists assume people do not interpret, ignore or reject media imagery and messages.

Media images and representations of gender, age etc don't open up new choices of identity but reinforce stereotypes.

Many people do not have access to new media and cannot afford to make free choices between media promoted lifestyles and identities.

Marxists argue the choice Postmodernists talk about is a myth as transnational media conglomerates control the majority of media output.

The media are only one element in shaping our lives. Other experiences and agents will shape our behaviour and identities.

The Feminist View

Feminists argue the majority of owners, editors and journalists are male. Therefore programming is biased towards male interests.

As a result, media companies transmit a patriarchal ideology.

Women in the media face a glass ceiling where they are unable to get the top jobs, which influence media content.

Control of the Media

Owners of the media obviously have a large amount of control over what the media produce etc. However, there are some limits to what the media can report.

Formal Controls on the Media

The law

The law restricts the media's freedom to report anything they choose in any way they like.

The main legal limits are:

- *Laws of libel*: these forbid the publication of an untrue statement about a person which might bring him or her into contempt, ridicule, dislike or hostility in society.
- *The Official Secrets Act*: makes it a criminal offence to report, without authorisation, any official government activity which the government defines as an official secret.
- *Defence and Security Media Advisory Notices (DSMA Notices)*: these are issued by the government as requests to journalists not to report information which the government believes might be damaging to national security.
- *The Racial and Religious Hatred Act and the Equality Act*: these forbid the expression of opinions which will encourage hatred or discrimination against people because of their ethnic group or religious beliefs.
- *The Obscene Publications Act*: this forbids the publication of anything a court considers to be obscene and likely to corrupt people who are likely to read, see or hear it.
- *Contempt of Court provision*: this forbids the reporting, expressing of opinions or publication of material about cases which are in the process of being dealt with in a court of law and which is likely to jeopardise a fair trial.

Ofcom

In 2003, the Office of Communications was established as a media regulator with responsibilities across television, radio, telecommunications and wireless communication services.

This has responsibility for:

- Furthering the interests of consumers.
- Securing the best use of the radio spectrum.
- Ensuring a wide range of television, radio, electronic media and communications networks are available in the UK, with high quality services having a broad appeal.
- Protecting the public from any offensive or potentially harmful effects of broadcast media.
- Safeguarding people from being unfairly treated in television and radio programmes.

The BBC

The BBC is established by a Royal Charter and is a largely state funded body, which is governed by the BBC Trust, whose members are appointed by the Queen on advice from government ministers.

The Trust sets the strategic direction of the BBC and has a clear duty to represent the interests of licence fee payers and to ensure the BBC remains independent. The BBC is partly regulated by the Trust and partly by Ofcom.

The BBC is financed through television licence fees, plus income from private spin off companies. The state can therefore have some control over the BBC by refusing to raise the licence fee.

Although the BBC is not a private business run solely to make a profit, it still has to compete with commercial broadcasting by attracting audiences large enough to justify the licence fee.

Independent broadcasting

This includes all non-BBC television and radio stations. These are regulated by Ofcom.

The Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO)

This is an independent regulator for the newspaper and magazine industry in the UK which was established by the newspaper industry in 2014 to replace the Press Complaints Commission (PCC) which was discredited by its inadequate response to the phone hacking scandal.

IPSO seeks to monitor and maintain the standards of journalism set out in the Editors' Code of Practice, which deals with issues such as accuracy, invasion of privacy, intrusion into grief or shock, and harassment. IPSO considers and investigates complaints about the content of newspapers that breach acceptable standards, and the behaviour of journalists.

Many see IPSO as very similar to the PCC and not as independent, but the puppet of the big newspaper corporations which are more concerned with their interests than the public's interest.

How Governments Influence and Control Media Output

As well as the measures previously explained, governments try to influence the output of the media in a number of other ways:

- 1) Official government press conferences and briefings which present the official government position and therefore hope to present their view in the media.
- 2) Leaks and off the record briefings: these are informal and non attributable (they don't quote a named source) where governments try to manage what is reported in the news. Journalists who give favourable exposure to the government via these briefings are likely to be given preferential treatment in future, e.g. access to government sources.
- 3) Use of government spin doctors who try to manipulate the media by providing a favourable slant to a potentially unpopular news item. They also attempt to bury bad news by releasing information at the same time as a more sensational story or during holidays when most journalists and audiences are on holiday.
- 4) Refusal to issue broadcasting licences to those whom it deems are unfit and unsuitable.
- 5) Refusal to allow the use of some forms of computer software and the use of surveillance software to block access to some internet sites, e.g. Google withdrew from China in 2010 because the Chinese government was doing this; also the United States attacking the WikiLeaks website.
- 6) Electronic surveillance of emails, monitoring of websites and intercepts of mobile calls. In 2014, a new law was passed in the UK allowing police and security services to scrutinise the public's email and social media communications.

Media Effects Introduction

There are different views on how much influence the media has on the ways people think and behave. People might not accept everything they see in the media or may respond in different ways.

In most cases a **media text** (a media product which describes or represents something) is **polysemic**, which means it can be interpreted in different ways by different people.

It is also important to remember that the media is only one agent that influences people's behaviour. There are a number of other agents of socialisation as well as different influences on people's behaviour.

Methodological Problems of Researching Media Effects

- 1) It is difficult to establish whether it is the media, or other social factors, that cause any alleged effects. For example, if it is argued that those who watch more violence on TV are more aggressive than those who don't, this might be because some people's social situation has made them more aggressive which has then led to them watching more violent programmes.
- 2) It is almost impossible to separate the effects of the media on audiences from the whole range of other factors influencing people, such as their social circumstances, experiences and knowledge. Even people exposed to the same media texts do not respond in the same way so there must be other influences on audiences.
- 3) It is hard to establish, with the spread of the new media, which media cause any alleged effects. It could be TV, newspapers etc.
- 4) It is practically impossible to establish what people's values and behaviour might have been without any media influence. For example, people might have been racist, sexist or supported the dominant ideology anyway, even without media influence.
- 5) In a media saturated society, everyone is exposed to some form of media and for all of their lives. This means it is almost impossible to compare different effects between those who have been exposed to the media and those who haven't, as there aren't likely to be people who haven't been exposed to the media at all.

Media Effects Models

There are a range of media effects models with the differences between them based around 2 key and related questions:

- 1) *How passive or active are the audiences?* This is about the extent to which media audiences engage with the media they consume. Do they simply accept what they consume, do they interpret and criticise media texts giving them different meanings, or do they reject them altogether?
- 2) *How powerful are the media in affecting audiences?* How influential are the media compared to other influences such as their own experiences or the influence of other agents of socialisation.

Active Audience Models

Active audience models see the media as less influential than the passive audience approach. They believe audiences are not homogeneous and they vary in terms of social characteristics and personal experiences. These factors will influence their choices in the way they use the media, what they use them for, and the ways they interpret media texts.

The Two Step Flow Model

Katz and Lazarsfeld suggest social networks are dominated by **opinion leaders**. These are people with influence because other members of these social networks respect them and their opinion, e.g. family members, friends in peer groups.

Opinion leaders consume different types of media and media content and form strong opinions on this information.

Therefore media content goes through two stages before it has an effect on audiences:

- 1) The opinion leader is exposed to the media content. They then interpret and filter these media texts and form an opinion on them.
- 2) They then pass on their opinion to others in their social groups, who are influenced by that interpretation.

This means audiences receive **mediated messages** (altered and interpreted) from opinion leaders whose views they respect.

This model recognises audiences are not isolated individuals but the social groups they belong to influence their opinions and responses to media content.

Criticisms

There are probably more than two steps in the media's influence. Media content could be interpreted by different individuals in different groups. For example, parents may have one view, a workmate another and a teacher another. This might mean interpretations get bounced around in a variety of groups, creating many steps in the flow of media influence.

It suggests people are vulnerable to manipulation by opinion leaders. It doesn't recognise that people may have views and experiences of their own which affect their interpretations.

It suggest the audience is divided into active viewers (opinion leaders) and passive viewers who are influenced by the opinion leaders. It doesn't explain why opinion leaders are influenced by media content whilst others are not.

With the rise of the new media the role of opinion leaders may be less influential or replaced by a huge and diverse range of opinion leaders.

Selective Filtering

This is an interpretivist approach. Klapper suggested people make choices and interpret what they see in the media.

Klapper suggests there are three filters people apply:

- 1) **Selective exposure:** people must first choose what they wish to consume and they may choose only media messages that fit in with their existing views and interests, e.g. they may refuse to watch a programme that doesn't fit with their views.
- 2) **Selective perception:** people will react differently to the same message and may choose to accept or reject a message depending on whether it fits their views and interests, e.g. people may ignore parts of reports that don't match their views.

- 3) **Selective retention:** people will forget material that isn't in line with their views and only remember media messages with which they generally agree.

An example of this could be during the Iraq war of 2003, the 'Daily Mirror' opposed the war, yet half its readers were in favour of it.

This indicates audiences are heterogeneous and respond to the same media content in different ways.

Reception Analysis

This suggests media texts are **encoded** by those who produce them. This means they contain an intended meaning which they expect audiences to believe. This encoding is the **dominant hegemonic viewpoint** and reflects the dominant ideology which is held by most people who work in the media.

Most audiences will interpret or **decode** media texts in the way they were intended because the dominant hegemonic viewpoint appears as the normal and reasonable position. Other audiences, though, may interpret it differently due to their social situations and experiences.

Morley applied this in a study of the BBC1 news programme 'Nationwide' which ran from the late 1960s to early 1980s. He found people might decode media texts in one of 3 ways:

- 1) The **preferred or dominant reading:** audiences decode media texts in the way media producers intended, e.g. all benefit claimants are scroungers.
- 2) A **negotiated reading:** audiences generally accept the preferred/dominant reading but amend it to some extent to fit their own beliefs and experiences, e.g. most benefit claimants are probably scroungers but not all as they know of some really deserving cases.
- 3) An **oppositional reading:** audiences reject the preferred/dominant reading, e.g. they reject the media view of scroungers.

Morley suggests the particular reading that audiences adopt will be influenced by their own knowledge and experiences, the social groups they belong to and their social characteristics. This shows audiences are heterogeneous.

Criticisms

Morley's study wasn't ecologically valid. It didn't take place in people's home environments where they normally watch television.

The Cultural Effects Model

The Neo Marxist cultural effects model suggest the media do have an effect on the audience. However, it doesn't regard audiences as simply passive consumers of media content.

This model recognises that the media are owned and heavily influenced by the dominant groups in society and their interests strongly influence the content of the media. This content mainly reflects the dominant ideology.

This model suggests the media will generally spread the dominant ideology, but it accepts audiences interpret the media they consume and may respond in different ways depending on their social characteristics and their own experiences, e.g. women may reject gender stereotyping whilst people who have positive, first hand experiences of minority ethnic groups may reject racist stereotypes. Those without these experiences may accept the media content as they have no experiences to compare it to.

Nonetheless this model suggests the media gradually influence the audience over a period of time in a sort of **drip-drip effect**. This gradually shapes peoples taken for granted ideas which they see as common sense and their everyday view of the world. For example, if we see minority ethnic groups nearly always portrayed in the context of crime, over time this will form the stereotypes we have of these groups.

Therefore, media coverage of particular issues results in most people agreeing with the media's reporting of these issues. This links with **gatekeeping**.

Through this process, audiences see the dominant ideology is common sense and the hegemony of this ideology is maintained.

The Glasgow Media Group

The GMG are very critical of the encoding/decoding and selective filtering approaches as well as of the view that media texts are polysemic.

They accept that audiences are active but stress that much of their research shows that most people accept the dominant media account unless they have access to alternative forms of information.

In a study of the 1984/5 miners' strike in Britain, when TV news repeatedly showed images of miners in violent clashes with police, the GMG found people from different class and political backgrounds interpreted these images in the same way and believed the media account that the miners were responsible for the trouble. This was true even among those who were sympathetic to the miners.

The only exception to this was among those who had actually seen a picket line, who, regardless of their class or politics, rejected the media account.

This study suggests that the decoding and selective filtering approaches underestimate the extent of the media's ability to mould public understanding of social issues. They concluded the media did have an effect on how audiences think about the world and the majority of audiences rely on traditional news sources for their understanding of issues.

The GMG also show the media play a key role in influencing what we do not think about through **agenda setting**. This may mean alternative sources of information are not available to most people.

Criticisms

It assumes media personnel work within the framework and assumptions of the dominant ideology. It fails to recognise journalists have some independence and can sometimes be very critical of the dominant ideology.

The Uses and Gratifications Model

Compared to the other models this assumes the media have the weakest effects and the audience is the most active. It is associated with pluralism. It emphasises what audiences do with the media or use the media for, rather than what the media do to influence audiences.

This model starts with a view that media audiences are thinking, active human beings who use the media in various ways for their own various interests (**gratifications**).

McQuail suggests a variety of uses and gratifications of the media. They may be used for:

- *Diversion*: for leisure, entertainment and relaxation to escape daily routines.
- *Personal relationships*: to keep up with family and friends; for companionship through identifying with media communities like 'Coronation Street' or characters; as a conversation starter in group situations; new media may be used to establish relationships with people you've never met.
- *Personal identity*: to explore and confirm people's own identities or to explore new areas of identity.
- *Surveillance*: to access information about things that might affect users, to find out about the world or to help them do things, accomplish something or make their minds up about issues. This might involve news or current affairs programmes or seeking out information through traditional media or new media.
- *Background wallpaper*: while doing other things.

This has been used to research people who were members of Facebook groups. Researchers found online groups were used to satisfy multiple needs: entertainment (diversion), talking with others on a particular topic (personal relationships), maintain their personal status (personal identity) and to receive information about events related to the group (surveillance).

The variety of uses of the media means people make conscious choices, select and interpret what they consume from the media and use them for a range of needs which they themselves decide upon.

These different uses mean the effects of the media are likely to be different for different individuals. The uses and gratifications of the media will also be influenced by social characteristics and previous experiences.

This model also recognises that audiences have some power to decide media content. A failure by media companies to satisfy audience gratifications will mean no consumers of that media and therefore no advertisers.

Criticisms

It overestimates the power of the audience to influence media content. It also underestimates the influence of the media to shape and influence the choices people make the gratifications they get from the media. The media may create the different gratifications themselves, through advertising for example.

It focuses too much on the use of media by individuals. It doesn't allow for the group aspects of media audiences like the two step flow and cultural effects models. These models show groups will influence people's uses and gratifications of the media.

The focus on individual uses and gratifications ignores the wider social factors affecting the way audiences respond. Common experiences and values may mean many people will respond in similar ways to media content.

The Hypodermic Syringe Model

This is a very simple model, which is sometimes called the magic bullet theory. It was developed by the Frankfurt School of Marxists who saw the media as an agent of ideological control. Most commentators would now regard it as an old fashioned and inadequate view of the relationship between media content and audiences.

Passive audiences

This model suggests the media act like a hypodermic syringe injecting media texts into media audiences.

Audiences are seen as unthinking, passive receivers of media texts. In this view, media messages fill audiences with the dominant ideology, sexist and racist images, scenes of violence or other content and the audience immediately acts on these messages.

It assumes the audience is also homogeneous (all have the same characteristics).

Link to moral panics

It is this model which lies behind many moral panics over the effects of the media on behaviour, and it was sometimes used to partly explain the London riots in 2011 with some claiming social media were fuelling the riots.

On rare occasions, people may react quite directly to what they see in the media, e.g. copycat crimes or urban riots. Advertisers also spend millions of pounds on advertising their products which we can assume have some effect on consumers and sales of these products.

Imitation

Bandura's bobo doll experiment demonstrated that when children observed acts of violence they were more likely to be violent themselves. In this experiment, some children saw a bobo doll being attacked by adults, whilst another group did not. The group who had observed violence, behaved violently themselves.

McCabe and Martin argue media violence has a **disinhibition** effect. This means it convinces children that in some social situations, discussion and negotiation can be replaced with violence.

Desensitisation

Newson argues exposure to media violence encourages young people to identify with violent perpetrators rather than victims.

She noted that children and teenagers are subjected to thousands of acts of violence through exposure to the media and that this may have a drip drip effect where they become **desensitised** to violence over time. This involves them seeing violence as normal, particularly for solving problems.

Huesmann et al's study supported this. They found that people who watched violent shows at an early age were more likely to be aggressive in their 20s.

Newson's conclusions led to increased censorship of the film industry with age certificates for films and television companies adopting the 9 o'clock watershed.

Links to feminism

The hypodermic syringe model has been used by feminists such as Wolf to argue that media representations of femininity may be producing a generation of females who suffer from eating disorders.

Links to Marxism

Marcuse believed the media transmitted a mass culture which made audiences more vulnerable to ruling class ideology.

Evaluation

Catharsis

Feshbach and Sanger found screen violence can provide an outlet for people's violent tendencies which is known as **catharsis**. They found that participants who had seen only aggressive programmes during their study had less aggressive behaviour.

Sensitisation

Ramos et al found participants in their research were more empathetic towards' victims suffering when they knew they were watching real violence. Therefore, some sociologists argue media violence actually **sensitises** audiences to violence and its consequences.

Methodological problems

Bandura's experiment was criticised as it took place in a laboratory. It therefore lacked **ecological validity** as the children were not in their natural environment. This could have affected their behaviour.

The studies that support the hypodermic syringe model are not clear about how violence should be defined. For example, should cartoon violence be included?

Other criticisms

This model assumes the entire audience is passive and homogenous and will react in the same way to media content. However, people may have a range of responses depending on their own social situation and experiences.

It ignores the fact that audiences interpret media content in different ways and give different meanings to media texts.

Violence and the Media

Violence is now part of popular culture and more people are exposed to it than ever before. The new media mean violent imagery is found everywhere, people can access it whenever they want and it is almost impossible to control. Digital technology also means media violence is interactive, e.g. through video games.

Questions about whether the media cause violent behaviour have been around for almost as long as mass media has existed. This violence is often blamed for increasing crime and violence in society, e.g. the murder of James Bulger.

There has been a lot of research into this issue with a review by Anderson et al claiming research showed indisputably that media violence increased the likelihood of aggressive and violent behaviour immediately and in the long term.

However, some of these claims have been disputed. A review by Newburn and Hagell concluded the link between media violence and violent behaviour was not proven and children displaying violent tendencies may have done so anyway regardless of TV viewing. A report by the Broadcasting Standards Commission found children are sophisticated media users and aware they are not watching reality. Other researchers have argued their studies have shown no evidence of long term links between media violence and real life violence.

Competing claims about the effects of media violence

The uncertainty of the effects of media violence on real life violence is shown by the range of contradictory conclusions summarised below:

- 1) **Copycatting or imitation:** this argues exposure to media violence causes children to copy what they see and behave more aggressively in the real world, as shown by Bandura et al's bobo doll experiments. This links with the hypodermic syringe model.
- 2) **Catharsis:** Feshbach and Sanger argued media violence reduces violence as it allows people to live out their violent tendencies in the fantasy world of the media rather than in the real world.
- 3) **Desensitization:** some writers have suggested repeated exposure of children to media violence has gradual 'drip-drip' effects, socialising audiences into accepting a culture of violence in which it is seen as a normal part of life and a legitimate way of solving problems. This means people are less sensitive when they witness real-world violence, have less sympathy for victims, and have an increased likelihood of aggressive behaviour.
- 4) **Sensitization:** Young argued exposure to violence in the media can make people more sensitive to the consequences of violence and less tolerant of real-life violence.
- 5) *Media violence causes psychological disturbance in some children:* watching media violence frightens young children, causing nightmares, anxiety etc and these effects may be long lasting.
- 6) *The exaggeration of the fear of violence:* even if what is shown by the media will not make people violent, it may lead people to believe we live in a violent society. For example, those who watch more TV have exaggerated fears about crime.

Methodological Problems of Researching Media Violence

Research into this issue is very difficult. Researchers need to agree on what violence is and how it can be measured.

Some researchers point out that any link between media violence and violent behaviour doesn't mean media violence causes the behaviour. For example, if research shows those who watch more violent TV tend to be more aggressive, researchers must answer 3 key questions:

- 1) Whether more aggressive people choose to watch violent programmes (selective exposure).
- 2) Whether violent programmes make viewers aggressive (media effects).
- 3) Whether certain social circumstances both make people more aggressive and lead them to watch more violent TV.

Livingstone and Ferguson point out that media effects models have tried to resolve these issues by using the experimental method of research. In this method small samples have been exposed to media violence in an artificial laboratory environment to see whether they then behave violently, e.g. Bandura et al's bobo doll experiment. However, there are problems with this method:

- 1) It is very unethical to deliberately expose people, especially children, to violent imagery. This raises issues of harm (to themselves and others) and issues around vulnerable groups.
- 2) There is a problem with how media violence is defined (operationalised) in the first place. The media depicts different types of violence, e.g. boxing, crime dramas, cartoons, clashes between police and protesters. These may not be seen by researchers in the same way. There is a difference between showing real-life violence, fictional violence and cartoon violence and it is likely people are able to distinguish between them and react differently to them.
- 3) The hypodermic syringe model underlies much of the research. This doesn't look at how people interpret what they see, the context within which they view the violence or the wider range of influences on people's behaviour.
- 4) It is almost impossible to avoid the Hawthorne effect. Gauntlett criticises experimental studies like Bandura et al's on the grounds that people may behave quite differently in real life and may alter their behaviour or attitudes as a response to being studied. Also the presence and social characteristics of a research can affect behaviour, particularly in children.
- 5) Laboratory experiments only last for a short time and there can only measure the immediate effects of media violence. This doesn't mean these effects are long lasting.
- 6) Laboratory experiments use small samples. This raises questions about whether the results can be generalised to the whole population.
- 7) It is difficult to separate the effects of media violence from other possible causes of violence.
- 8) It is almost impossible to find a group that hasn't been exposed to media violence. It is necessary to have a control group who haven't been exposed to media violence. Yet, in a media-saturated society, this is almost impossible.
- 9) The new media makes it almost impossible to test media effects. Audiences increasingly use different media and watch bits of programmes across multiple TV channels, for example. The meanings of whole programmes, e.g. the causes of violence, may not actually be watched. This makes it difficult to know what violence people are exposed to and what meanings audiences give to what they see.

The New Media

This refers to screen based, digital technology involving the integration of images, text and sound, and to the technology used for the distribution and consumption of digitized media content.

While the traditional media involves different devices for different media content, the new media involves **technological convergence** where a single device can be used to consume a variety of types of media.

It has been argued this technological convergence may be contributing to the blurring of boundaries between traditional activities such as searching for information and other activities such as entertainment as people constantly switch between different activities or combine the two.

Jenkins argues technological convergence has led to **cultural convergence**, which is:

- The way new media users interact with a media content, e.g. most individuals use the internet now for shopping.
- The way new media users interact with other members of society, e.g. via social networking sites.

Features of the New Media

The features discussed below also outline the new media's main differences from the traditional media.

Lister et al suggest there are 5 main concepts that distinguish new media from traditional media.

Digitality

This means 'using computers', where all data is converted into binary code which can then be stored and distributed via screen based products. This allows for technological convergence.

Interactivity

This means consumers have an opportunity to interact with media, customise media and can create their own content.

This interactivity on the internet has been referred to as **Web 2.0** to distinguish it from the original Web 1, where users were limited to the passive viewing of content that was created for them. In Web 2.0, users collaborate and interact with one another. This interactivity is also found in new digital TVs (the red button) and internet TV.

Jenkins suggests this interactivity has led to:

- **Participatory culture:** producers and consumers of media now interact with each other. Consumers produce content which producers consume and incorporate into new media texts. Media audiences are now involved in information-production rather than information-reception. This gives consumers more control and the circulation of new media content depends heavily on consumers' active participation.
- **Collective intelligence:** using the new media has become a collective process. No-one knows everything but each of us knows something. New media enables people to put all their individual knowledge together to create shared intelligence. Jenkins suggests this is a new source of media power which potentially represents an alternative to that of media owners.

Web 2.0 combines these two features. Examples include Amazon's user reviews or TripAdvisor. These build collective intelligence about products or holiday services and counter the power of advertising.

Hypertextuality

This refers to the links which form a web of connections to other bits of information. This gives users a way of searching, interacting with and customising the media for their own use.

Dispersal

This refers to the way the new media are less centralized and more adapted to individual choices.

There has been a huge growth of media products of all kinds which have become a part of everyday life, which is shown by the fact the new media and related devices are used on an everyday basis.

The production of media content is now becoming dispersed throughout the population, rather than being limited to employees in the media industry. For example, people upload their own videos to the internet and it was estimated there were 164 million blogs in the **blogosphere** (a collective term for all blogs) in 2011.

Virtuality

This refers to the ways people can now immerse themselves in completely unreal, interactive experiences in virtual worlds created by new technology, e.g. computer games. People can also create imaginary identities in online communication and networking sites like Twitter.

The Significance of the New Media in Contemporary Society

Curran and Seaton suggest there are two general views on the new media's significance in contemporary society:

- 1) The **cultural optimist** view: sees the new media as playing a positive role in society. This is held by neophiliacs who like and embrace new technology and use new media.
- 2) The **cultural pessimist** view: has a more negative view of the impact of new media.

The Cultural Optimist/Neophiliac View

More informed consumers, wider choices and more user participation

In 2013 UK media audiences had a choice of over 500 digital terrestrial, satellite and cable TV channels and in 2015 there were about 172 million active websites.

Information, shopping etc are all now available online and accessible through different devices. This provides consumers with more information and choices than ever before. Consumers also have the opportunities to participate in using and producing media content.

Greater democracy

The new media have meant there is more information available to all. McNair argues the internet means anyone with a computer/smartphone and internet connection can set up a blog or website. There are greater opportunities to report, criticise and comment than ever before. For example, ordinary people can now publish their thoughts, attack those in power and report on events excluded from mainstream media. For example, mobile phone footage in 2009 provided evidence that police brutality contributed to the death of Ian Tomlinson.

Social movements and campaigns now use the new media to spread their ideas, build support and coordinate protests. Protest and campaigning websites, e.g. 38 Degrees, have enabled protest groups to reach a worldwide audience rapidly. These movements promote a culture of questioning, challenging and holding individuals and organisations to account.

The new media, particularly social networking, have become key tools in mobilising people to fight against oppressive and corrupt regimes across the world. For example, new media and technology were crucial in the Arab Spring. Video and photos shot on mobile phones showing evidence of violent acts by some oppressive regimes in the Arab world were uploaded and viewed by a global audience and the global media. Twitter and Facebook were also used to coordinate and publicise protests.

The internet also gives a voice to those who would otherwise be unheard because traditional new media doesn't report on their views.

The internet has also been used by hacktivist networks such as Anonymous which have hacked corporate, government and terrorist websites.

More access to all kinds of information

Social media enable news and information from a wide range of sources to be brought to the attention of people who have missed them. This potentially gives people more power in society as they can gain information themselves rather than relying on others for it. For example, people can check their health conditions through websites like NHS Choices.

The world becomes a global village

This links to the term used by McLuhan. In this global village, the new media promote cultural diversity, national barriers are reduced, the boundaries between the global and the local are blurred and different people and cultures are brought together promoting greater understanding between different cultures.

Social life and social interaction is enhanced

The new media also enables people to build their identities and make lifestyle choices in a media saturated society.

The new media has opened up new channels for communication which has enhanced existing face to face interactions. Factors like gender etc, combined with geographical location might have once meant some conversations would have been impossible. This is not the case anymore with the internet and new media.

People can also construct alternative identities and social networking sites can enhance social networks, e.g. re-establishing contact with old friends.

The Cultural Pessimist View

This is held by those who believe the neophiliacs have exaggerated the benefits of the new media and ignored or underestimated the negative aspects.

Cultural and media imperialism

This is the idea that the new media have led to the imposition of Western, especially American, cultural values which has undermined local cultures and cultural independence.

The power of unelected commercial companies.

As the internet becomes more central to our lives, the power of the companies providing this technology increases. This poses a threat to democracy as more and more of what we know is dominated and controlled by global corporations. MacKinnon uses the concept of **sovereigns of cyberspace** to describe the power of multinational corporations like Amazon, Apple, Facebook, and Microsoft etc to control internet access, satellite channels, social networking and mobile technology. These companies are not elected or accountable to the public and exercise what Curran and Seaton call **power without responsibility**.

The internet is dominated by these sovereigns of cyberspace (the top 5 internet sites visited in 2015 were Google, Facebook, YouTube, Amazon and eBay). We are also seeing concentration of ownership amongst internet companies. In addition, many traditional media companies engage in cross media ownership, meaning traditional media owners are still involved in new media.

These companies have enormous power to stifle free expression. For example, in 2011 Amazon removed WikiLeaks from its cloud computing servers. Also during the Arab Spring Facebook took down a page used by activists.

The vast majority of websites carry mainstream material and online comments that are within the dominant ideology. Also the majority of news consumed online still comes from established newspaper and broadcasting companies. For example, the BBC, Daily Mail Online and the Telegraph were in the top 20 sites visited in 2015.

Websites calling for social and political change etc are under resourced, don't attract (or don't want) advertising and are marginalised. They are swamped by the sheer extent of well-resourced websites run by corporations who seek to ensure their view of the world and their interests are those that are dominant. In many ways the issues of ownership, government

controls over the media, the social construction of the news and agenda setting are as applicable to the new media as they were to the traditional media.

Censorship and control

MacKinnon demonstrates how some undemocratic regimes, e.g. China, control new media use. Government censorship and surveillance using filtering, blocking and surveillance technology is often used in these nations. For example, most of China's social networks use content management teams to censor messages which might cause problems for the government.

Western democracies, e.g. the UK, are increasingly using the same technologies, with the government recently proposing more cyber surveillance with laws to monitor the content of emails, social networks and Skype traffic. The ex-CIA analyst Edward Snowden claimed in 2015 that British security services have the technology to access private information stored on people's smartphones.

The lack of regulation

The global nature of the new media means there is a lack of regulation by national bodies like Ofcom. This means undesirable and illegal things can thrive virtually unchecked, e.g. racist organisations can set up websites, whilst individuals can engage in cybercrime or trolling.

Commercialization

The new media are essentially driven by consumerism and commercialization. The new media are about making money for the companies that produce the technology, who provide the internet connections, who provide the websites and services and for those that advertise. For example, social networking is more about targeting advertising at people because they are willing to give away large amounts of information about their interests etc.

Very little internet content is political and so it cannot be argued it has improved democracy by making people more informed and engaged.

Marxists argue that the commercialisation of new media encourages consumerism and commodity fetishism which benefits capitalism.

Limited consumer choice

The digital divide means there are still many people who are unable to access the alleged increased consumer choices available through the new media.

Many cultural pessimists suggest, however, there is no real increase in consumer choice. Preston, for example, points out that, while digital media offer customers the choice of what they want to consume, they don't bring to their attention (unlike newspapers and TV) the stories people didn't know they wanted to be informed about until they had consumed them. If people rely for their news on recommendations from likeminded friend and contacts on social media it could mean they are consuming less news and are no longer exposed to a broader news agenda.

Curran et al showed how there is now poorer quality media content, with dumbing down and tabloidization of popular culture to attract large audiences. This and infotainment has replaced serious news in order to encourage people to consume media.

Poor quality information

Keen claims the internet is chaotic. He argues it has no moral code and is a place where there is a lot of invalid information. He makes four key criticisms of the new media:

- 1) Social networking sites don't contribute to democracy. They are just tools for self broadcasting and self-promotion.
- 2) User generated sites such as Wikipedia are open to abuse and are unreliable. The internet has also created a generation of cut and paste plagiarists.
- 3) Much of the output of sites like Twitter and blogs is unchecked and uninformed opinion.
- 4) The internet is contributing to cultural illiteracy. The web provides easy access to 'facts' which has resulted in young people having shorter attention spans and poor problem solving skills.

The recent controversy around fake news, particularly during the 2016 US presidential election supports this idea that lots of information in the new media is invalid.

Also, much so called 'factual' information on the internet is often little more than disguised advertising (advertorials).

Increasing surveillance

There are endless examples of how the new media have increased social control. For example, in America a teacher lost her job after a parent spotted a Facebook picture of her with a glass of wine in one hand and a beer in the other. A North Yorkshire police constable has used social networking to post pictures and videos of graffiti and appeal to local residents for help in catching the culprits.

While some might see these examples as a welcome use of the new media, such techniques can also be used by those with power to monitor and control protesters and to condemn all forms of non-conformist behaviour. Mobile signals can be used to locate mobile users, enabling the agents of social control to find out where people are. These agents can also monitor who is posting information online, and communications between individuals and groups.

The undermining of human relationships and communities

Turkle refers to new media users as **cyborgs** because they are always connected to each other via new media technology. She argues people now live full time on the web and constantly check their smartphones, for example, for texts, emails and social network updates.

This, however, has resulted in less 'real' connections to people and to more anxiety and isolation. People may have lots of 'friends' on Facebook, but Americans say they have fewer friends than before. People engage with 'friends' via the new media when they could be engaged with people face to face, e.g. texting whilst having dinner with family.

Not so new media

Cornford and Robins argue the new media are not that new. They argue that traditional media technologies, e.g. television and telephone landlines, are still central to the use of new media such as games consoles.

They also suggest that traditional media was interactive with people writing to newspapers or calling into radio stations.

The only thing that is new is that the new media is much quicker than traditional media.

The Effects of New Media on Traditional Media

All the traditional media companies are massively involved in the new media. This is part of horizontal integration and cross media ownership.

This means there is a form of synergy between the traditional and new media as they support and interact with one another.

Changes Influencing Traditional Media

Some of the changes from the development and growth of the new media which have had an impact on the traditional media include:

- Decline in newspaper sales and reduced viewing figures of TV news bulletins.
- Cheaper, more mobile and widely accessible digital technologies, e.g. smartphones.
- Newspapers, TV channels etc having their own websites. The readerships of these websites often exceed the readership of the printed formats.
- Technologies expanding live coverage, e.g. mobile phone footage of a news event.
- Use of the new media to form the content of the traditional media, e.g. newspapers using the internet for research and ideas, such as bloggers.
- Online criticisms of mainstream news output.
- Development of online newsrooms in traditional media.
- Engagement with the interactive aspects of new media, e.g. email, on traditional media articles.

The Effects of Changes on Traditional Media

Bivens suggests these changes have led to 3 significant changes in traditional journalism:

1) Shifts in traditional news flow cycles

The rise of citizen journalism has created a huge increase in the amount of information available and has increased the speed of flow of news. An item posted by a blogger in one part of the world immediately becomes available to anyone with access to new media technology.

The traditional media no longer control the flow of information and need to respond regularly to this increased flow of news from citizen journalists.

This increased flow means journalists have less time to process the news.

2) Heightened accountability

Citizen journalism has made traditional media more accountable to the public as their reports are scrutinised by the public and responded to online.

News organisations are aware of their accountability and often use their related websites to offer more interactivity and transparency.

3) Evolving news values

Some important news values include importance, interest, entertainment, proximity and immediacy. In the competitive media market, all media need to give the impression of being up to date and immediate. The new media enables news organisations to provide more immediacy through instant live coverage, e.g. from citizen journalists.

News values may be changing as traditional media are incorporating 'non-professional' material like citizen reports into the news.

The Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism suggested the growing use of new media to access the news has meant traditional media, e.g. newspapers, face an uphill struggle to make money. This leads to a growing concentration of power in the hands of new media providers, e.g. Facebook. These organisations increasingly have more control over news agendas, at the expense of traditional media organisations.

The reduced power of ownership?

McNair suggests the new media have meant elite groups have less power to influence news agendas. Top down control by owners, editors etc is replaced by what he calls **cultural chaos**, which means more disruption, dissent, openness and diversity.

Citizen journalists have growing power to influence the news that is reported by traditional media. This has undermined the influence of owners and given more power to ordinary people.

Agenda setting and gatekeeping can be challenged by citizen journalism. Online reports are potentially viewed by huge global audiences and traditional media cannot afford to ignore items which are made newsworthy by citizen journalists.

Bivens, though, suggests this shift in power is only slight and elite groups are adapting and will likely continue to find ways of shaping news output. She suggests news organisations still have the power to limit debate and points to the way opposing views and radical critiques of foreign and domestic policies remain rare among mainstream news accounts despite their popularity online. Philo's study of the traditional media's response to the global banking crisis is a good example of this.

The rise of churnalism and infotainment

This has become more prevalent in the traditional media due to cost cutting by owners and their attempts to attract audiences. It is also due to time pressures due to the changing news flow cycles.

Changing relationships with media audiences

The new media have forced traditional media to be more accountable and responsive to their audiences, allowing more interactive comment and more personalised content.

They have also had to be more responsive in the way content is delivered, e.g. through multiple devices.

New media technology such as smartphones and tablets, are also becoming the preferred way people want to consume their media, with smaller but continuous updates throughout the day, rather than fixed newspapers and TV coverage.

This changing way consumers access news was reflected with the launch of Apple News which is a news app that collects digital news media from 14 UK newspaper and magazine publishers.

Use of New Media

The new media are beginning to overtake the traditional media as a means of mass communication.

Internet use across Europe is now 14 hours a week per person compared to TV viewing which is 12 hours.

Many national newspapers and TV stations have their own websites, enabling them to reach more people than their printed papers or TV channels do.

Advertising

Advertisers now spend more on internet than traditional media advertising.

The importance of advertising income means websites increasingly have to appeal to mass audiences to attract advertisers.

Spam (unasked for electronic bulk messages via texting or email) is becoming a cheap means for advertisers to reach masses of people.

Stratification in the New Media

Users of the new media are not a homogeneous group. New media users are differentiated by social class, gender, age and location.

Dutton and Blank found 91% of those with higher education had used the internet, compared to 34% of those with no formal qualifications.

Poorer families, the unemployed, people who are physically and socially isolated, the elderly, disabled people, those living in remote areas and those with health problems are also less likely to use the internet.

Social class differences/inequalities

Broadly, the middle and upper classes are the biggest users of the new media as they can more easily afford it. Those in the poorest social classes have the least access to the internet and other new media at home. These individuals are **digitally excluded**.

There is evidence, then, of a **digital divide** which is the gap between those with effective access to digital information and new media, and those without this access.

Helsper showed a **digital underclass** was forming in Britain. These are people who tend to be unemployed, living in poverty and/or less well educated who are disadvantaged in comparison to those who have full access to digital and new media. Even when these groups gain access to this technology, they lack the confidence and skills to make the most of the opportunities it offers.

The internet is now such a normal part of life that those who lack access or the skills to use it experience a form of social exclusion.

The class difference extends across all new media. The middle class are more likely to have more advanced smartphones, whilst the middle class tend to use social networks such as LinkedIn.

Age differences

There is a substantial generation gap in access to and use of the new media.

This is not surprising since, as Boyle points out, younger people have grown up with the latest developments in the new media and are therefore much more able to use new media than older generations.

Younger people are more likely to use a range of new media formats, e.g. watching TV on their mobiles or tablets rather than just on a TV set.

Those aged 16-24 are over 10 times more likely to go online via a mobile than those aged 55+.

Ofcom found young people (16-24), compared to older people:

- Are greater internet users and spend more time online.
- Are more likely to own and use a smartphone.
- Are more attached to, aware of and confident in using new media technology.
- Tend to use new media as a form of leisure and entertainment.
- Are more likely to get the news on mobile devices than via traditional media formats.

Gender differences

There are some significant differences between males and females in the way they use new media. Ofcom found:

- Games consoles and tablets are more popular among males.
- E-readers are more popular among women for reading.
- Males are more likely to use a smartphone.
- Females are more likely to report high addiction to their mobile phones.
- Females are more likely to use their mobiles to make calls and for texting.
- Females are slightly more likely to use social networking sites.

Li and Kirkup suggested there are two global gender-based cultures in internet use. They found significant gender differences in internet experience, attitudes, usage and self-confidence. Men are more likely to be positive about the internet, spend more time on it and are more confident in their use of it.

Women, however, were more likely to underestimate their ability to use the internet and used it more for studying. Women, therefore, see the internet more as a tool than as a toy.

Location differences

The most significant digital divide in terms of location is between information-rich and information-poor countries and this has led to a global digital underclass.

New media is used most heavily in the Western world with many people living in poorer countries lacking access due to poverty.

The poorest countries lack the resources to build the digital networks required, and private businesses won't provide them as there aren't enough customers willing or able to pay enough for them to make a profit.

Language and culture can also cause problems as about 85% of websites are in English.

General Features

The **media gaze** means representations of social class are filtered through the eyes of upper class owners and middle class professionals. This results in:

- More favourable stereotypes of the upper and middle class.
- Overrepresentation of the upper and middle classes and underrepresentation of others.
- The working class being portrayed in a restricted range of roles.

Class is presented as a lifestyle choice rather than something influenced by income and occupation. People's lives are portrayed as being shaped by their individual consumption tastes rather than inequality in society, e.g. the portrayals of the underclass as chavs.

News values means news about the rich and famous are more likely to be reported than similar stories about working class people.

Representations of the Working Class

The working class and poor are generally underrepresented in the media, but when they are represented they tend to be stereotyped in negative ways.

There are four main media stereotypes of the working class, which often overlap:

1) As dumb and stupid buffoons

Butsch, in a study of US TV programmes, argues there is a persistent image of the working class as buffoons or figures of fun: people who are well intentioned but flawed individuals, who are immature, irresponsible etc. One example is 'The Royle Family' in the UK. Butsch argues this reinforces the dominant ideology in popular culture and justifies existing patterns of inequality as the middle classes are seen as needing to have more power to supervise the working class.

2) As a source of trouble and conflict

Working class people are often presented as a source of trouble. They tend to be presented as welfare scroungers etc who cannot cope with their uncontrollable, delinquent children etc. Neo Marxists see this as the media acting against groups who challenge the dominant ideology. One example is 'Shameless'.

3) As living in idealised/romanticised working class communities.

This is when the working class tend to be portrayed positively as respectable and hardworking who struggle to overcome adversity in their lives. One example is 'EastEnders'. This portrays close knit communities and hegemonic masculinity. However, these representations are not realistic as working class communities like this have largely disappeared with the decline of traditional industries.

With the decline of these communities there has been a change to a more negative representation of the working class.

4) As white trash/chavs

This is known as the demonization of the working class. This media stereotype is of an underclass in which the working class and poor are merged.

This is the most demeaning and hostile stereotype of the working class in which they are represented as threatening and as having bad taste. It has been suggested this is done to

devalue working class taste and culture. Examples include 'The Jeremy Kyle Show' and 'Benefits Street'.

Shildrick points out that the media explains these features of the working class as being due to their own personal failings rather than structural inequalities, e.g. focus on single parent families. The Neo Marxists would argue this reinforces the hegemony of the dominant class.

Lawler argues the term 'chav' is used to stigmatise the underclass and removes any public concern or sympathy for the working class and poor.

Criticisms

There have been some positive portrayals of the working class, e.g. 'The Full Monty' and 'Made in Dagenham'. These have been supportive and even commented on inequality.

Representations of the Middle Class

Overrepresented

The middle class is overrepresented. There is more coverage of middle class lifestyles in proportion to the percentage of the population they make up.

Positive portrayals

The middle class is generally presented in a positive light as educated and successful and middle class lifestyle is presented as the norm to which everyone should aspire.

Jones suggests the media give the impression, "we're all middle class now", with the values and lifestyles of the middle class as the norm, to which everyone should aspire.

Media gaze

These representations, as well as working class representations, are the product of the **media gaze** of a media industry that is dominated by the middle class. These representations promote the hegemonic ideology of the middle class life as being normal and help to legitimise class inequality.

Representations of the Upper Class

Representations of the monarchy

The most obvious and extensive representation of the upper class is through coverage of the monarchy. The monarchy is generally presented in a positive light in the media, though there are some exceptions to this.

Mass media representations of the Queen are also aimed at reinforcing a sense of national identity. As a result, royal events, e.g. weddings, are national events to be celebrated.

Positive representations

The upper class is generally presented as being cultured and superior. Sometimes they may be presented as being a bit eccentric but overall mainly decent.

There is increased focus on celebrity lifestyles and those of the nouveau riche. Newman argues the media focus heavily on consumer items such as luxury cars, that only the wealthy can afford.

Romanticised portrayals

The upper class is often represented in a romanticized way in costume/period dramas, such as 'Downton Abbey' which suggest that somehow life was once better, even for the poor who worked for the upper class.

Theoretical Explanations

Marxism

Marxists argue media representations reflect the interests of the dominant class. There is little media content discussing class inequality and conflicts between classes are concealed or seen as irrelevant.

This maintains false class consciousness and justifies the advantages of the ruling class and the disadvantages of the working class.

Neo Marxists

Would argue positive representations of the middle class and negative representations of the working class are due to:

- 1) Media organisations being dominated by the middle class resulting in a middle class **media gaze**.
- 2) Most journalists and editors are middle class and have therefore been socialised into the dominant ideology. This means they have a negative view of the working class.

Jones argues that many middle class journalists suffer from a liberal bigotry, where they assume that all working class people are incompetent, sexually promiscuous, racists.

Hostile representations of the working class are to present individuals who challenge the system in a negative light. By representing this group negatively it also reinforces the hegemony of the dominant ideology because these representations reinforce the 'common sense' ideas of the ruling class.

Neo Marxists see representations of the upper class as a celebration of hierarchy which encourages admiration by other social classes who aspire to it. This promotes the dominant ideology and legitimises class inequality. Reiner and Young argue the media promotes the idea of meritocracy through its portrayals of the upper class, e.g. shows like the Apprentice.

Pluralism

Pluralists see coverage of the upper class as providing what media audiences want.

They also argue the media view the UK as a meritocracy and media portrayals of the upper class are representative of this idea. These representations may also motivate people to work hard.

These representations also fit the **news values** of what is newsworthy.

If working class individuals didn't like these representations then they wouldn't buy media content that shows these portrayals.

Representations of Ethnicity

Ethnic minorities are underrepresented in senior management of media companies and in producing programmes. Neo Marxists point out representations of minority ethnic group are therefore filtered through the **media gaze** of a predominantly white media.

Symbolic annihilation

In 2014 it was found just over 1 in 7 roles was filled on TV by a person from an ethnic minority group. Black African Caribbeans were overrepresented and South Asians were underrepresented. Ethnic minorities tended to be more likely to be found in certain types of programmes, such as entertainment.

Ethnic minority interests and representations are **ghettoized** in the mainstream media. This means they are marginalised and featured mostly in specialised programmes on minority group issues, e.g. stereotyping.

Limited roles

Malik found African Caribbeans were less likely to be found in roles such as political commentators or experts, or in subjects of a serious nature, e.g. politics. They were also less likely to be in major roles in big budget British films. The GMG found black and Asian people were more likely to appear in supporting roles or as temporary guests than as hosts of shows. Whilst there was an increase in representation of black people and Asians, these were not in prime time television and were more in the margins of TV, e.g. children's TV.

In advertising the GMG also found black people were less likely to be shown in professional roles and more likely to appear as musicians, sportspeople and in exotic dress. White actors were more likely to be given speaking roles.

There are narrow representations of black women in the media. There is an underrepresentation of black women in the advertising industry.

Tokenism

Minority ethnic viewers, especially Asian viewers, rarely see the reality of their lives or the issues that concern them reflect on TV channels. Asians also though they were stereotyped as all the same, with the cultural and religious differences between, for example, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Indian Asian groups not being recognised in the media. They also complained about negative stereotyping, simplistic portrayals of their community, negative images of their countries of origin, and **tokenism** (including Asian or black actors only because programme makers thought they should to avoid accusations of discrimination).

Stereotypes of Ethnicity

A number of researchers, including Van Dijk, have shown that black and Asian minority ethnic groups are often represented in limited, negative stereotypes and as scapegoats for society's problems.

1) As deviants and law breakers

Minority ethnic groups are frequently represented as taking part in drug dealing, terrorism, welfare fraud, mugging and gang culture. Hargrave found black people were more than twice as likely as white people to be portrayed on terrestrial TV as criminals. This is particularly the case for black boys and black men who are portrayed as threatening and dangerous.

Black people committing crime are far more likely to be reported on than black people who are the victims of crime, e.g. racist attacks. This fits the news values of the media.

Hall's study on mugging in the 1970s can be applied here.

2) As posing a threat

This presents minorities as possessing a culture which is seen as alien and a threat to British culture. Immigration, for example, is presented as a threat to the British way of life and the jobs of white British workers. Media reports of forced marriages and honour killings give a misleading impression of all ethnic minority groups. This conforms to the news values of journalists.

3) As causing social problems, conflict and trouble

These include representations linked to racial problems, riots, disruption in schools, illegal immigrants, welfare scroungers, lone parents etc. These are often presented as due to individual failings rather than as people with social problems generated by things like poverty, discrimination etc.

Asylum seekers are often represented as bogus, as really economic migrants seeking to work illegally, rather than as people escaping from persecution.

Back argues the reporting of inner city race disturbances are often stereotyped as riots which makes them appear irrational and criminal. This ignores the fact that these disturbances can often be caused by legitimate grievances, e.g. police and workplace racism.

Periodically the media generate moral panics around immigration, refugees and Muslims, e.g. in 2003 the 'Sun' dedicated the front page to a story entitled 'Swan Bake' with a similar story in 2011, claiming asylum seekers were eating swans from ponds and lakes in London.

4) As having limited talents and skills

Minority groups are often shown in low paid work, e.g. cleaning, or as educational failures. They may be shown as people who do well in sport and music but are rarely portrayed as academic or professionals.

5) As having problems internationally

Developing countries are often portrayed as being run chaotically, suffering from AIDS epidemics, using children as soldiers and labourers, living in famine conditions, always having tribal conflicts, civil wars, military coups etc, and that need white Western populations to help solve their problems for them, such as through aid agencies.

The GMG found disasters and terrorism were the main categories of news story on developing countries but little explanation was given to the story which led to audiences seeing the developing world as not much more than a series of catastrophes.

The stereotypes above have, in recent years, also been applied to white people from Eastern Europe. These groups have been blamed for virtually every problem in Britain and for things that either aren't true or aren't their fault. Immigrants have been blamed for being benefit scroungers, stealing unwanted clothes and many more absurd, untrue or exaggerated media stories. However, these stories may have had a negative effect on audiences, creating and reinforcing the public's racial prejudices.

Islamophobia and the Media

Nahdi because of the decline in journalistic standards with a move towards tabloidization and infotainment, the actions of a minority of Islamic fundamentalists are focused on, resulting in this outlook being associated with all Muslims.

In 2007 a report showed in one week's news coverage, 91% of articles in national newspapers about Muslims were negative.

Muslims have been stereotyped as fundamentalists who threaten British values, for example by oppressing women, such as by forcing them to wear the hijab or burqas. Ameli et al argues this ignores the fact that many women choose to wear the hijab.

Media reporting and representations of Muslims generated a moral panic and has resulted in Muslim becoming a stigmatised identity. It has also contributed to the growth of Islamophobia. Warsi argues there is now fashionable Islamophobia, with Phillips arguing media reporting was such that the very word 'Muslim' conjured up images of terrorism.

Muslims are very concerned about such negative media portrayals and the way only certain aspects of Islam, such as the views of fundamentalists, are depicted. Such media representations bring with them harassment and fear for many British Muslims who have little sympathy with Islamic fundamentalism and whom surveys repeatedly show are moderates who accept the norms of British life and Western democracy.

In contrast, stories about attacks on Muslims and Islamophobia are fairly rare.

Theoretical Explanations

Pluralists

Representations reflect the news values of journalists and provide material media audiences want.

Negative representations reflect real fears of media audiences. If newspapers such as the Sun didn't include these stories, their readers would desert them for other newspapers.

Because there is choice of media products, audiences can choose not to buy these newspapers and buy others that have more positive representations.

Criticisms

Many white people may not have come into contact with ethnic minorities and therefore their only source of information is the media. This can mean the media are actually shaping audiences ideas about ethnic minorities in a racist way.

Marxism

Scapegoating of ethnic minorities for the problems faced by the white working class divides the working class along ethnic lines. This also diverts attention away from class inequality in society and the inequalities faced by many people from all ethnic groups. This protects the interests of the dominant social class. Hall's view on the moral panic around mugging by black males in the 1970s can be applied here.

Criticisms

Newspapers such as the Guardian are very anti-racist and produce reports on racism in society, e.g. institutional racism.

The diversity of the media means it is unlikely that a single ideology is being transmitted.

Neo Marxism

Most owners, editors and journalists are white and therefore have a similar view of society. The majority of the audience are white and representations which reflect white opinion are transmitted to produce as much profit as possible.

This also means white experts and sources are at the top of the **hierarchy of credibility**. Cottle observes that this means media professionals devote little energy to ethnic minority sources.

Cottle also argues the pursuit of profit has led to the tabloidization of news which means complex issues, such as multiculturalism, are less likely to be explained in detail to audiences.

It could therefore be argued that the underrepresentation of ethnic minorities in journalism and media managerial positions results in ethnic minorities being represented in negative ways as well as being underrepresented in media representations.

Changing Stereotypes of Ethnicity?

Media stereotypes of ethnic minority groups do appear to be changing. Appreciation of black culture has grown and there are more major black and Asian figures appearing in the media generally. There have been greater policy commitments in TV to recruit more people from ethnic minorities as presenters and this is most obvious in the areas of children's TV, education and the news.

There are more programmes, TV channels, websites, radio stations, DVDs and magazines being targeted at ethnic minority audiences, e.g. the BBC Asian network, and digital technology is enabling minorities to extend the range of programmes they can receive. These changes are ones traditional media need to bear in mind if they want to retain audiences and advertisers.

Young people from minority ethnic groups are greater users than average of the new media. This enables them to counter negative ethnic stereotypes and reports in mainstream media.

Black and Asian actors are moving more into popular dramas and soaps. Abercrombie shows these are most apparent in soaps where ethnic minority actors are now appearing as routine characters who share the same interests etc as white people.

Representations of Femininity

Symbolic annihilation

Feminist writers suggest the media tend to be patriarchal and spread a patriarchal ideology. This results in the **symbolic annihilation** of women.

Tuchman et al argue women's achievements are often ignored, condemned (criticised) or trivialised (belittled) by the mass media.

In 2012 it was found men accounted for 84% of those mentioned or quoted in lead articles. Globally, men are more likely to be the subject of news stories than women.

Limited roles and stereotyping.

Tunstall argues women are mainly presented as busy housewives, contented mothers, eager consumers and sex objects. These representations ignore the fact that the majority of women work.

In contrast men are portrayed as active and in positions of power, whilst also rarely being sexualised.

When women are interviewed or heard in the news, they appear mainly as ordinary people, whereas men are presented more often as experts.

Older women are underrepresented on TV while older men are overrepresented.

The male gaze

Neo Marxists, Marxist Feminists and radical Feminists argue representations of gender are filtered through the **media gaze** of the predominantly male media industry. This means women are portrayed through what Mulvey called the **male gaze**, where men see women as sexual objects.

Bates argues the music industry sexually objectifies women in lyrics and videos.

According to Kilbourne, the media often present women as mannequins: tall, thin, long legs, perfect teeth, hair and skin. This is used to advertise cosmetics and anything that improves appearance for the benefit of the male gaze.

The media even objectifies women in positions of power. This can be seen by the Sun's headline of 'Legs-it' accompanying a photo of Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon and Prime Minister Theresa May.

The media, particularly in advertising, often promote what Wolf calls the **beauty myth**. This is the idea that women are assessed mainly in terms of their appearance and expected to conform to male ideas of female beauty. This promotes the idea that women's bodies are a project they need to constantly improve.

The underrepresentation of women in the media industry

Women are underrepresented in positions of authority in the media. In UK news companies' women are marginalised in newsrooms and management. Women face a **glass ceiling** which is an invisible barrier to progress in their careers. This is fixed at the junior professional level, where women are important in the gathering of news but not in defining what news should be reported or in shaping company decisions.

60% of senior professional roles are filled by men and in 2011 74% of news journalists on national newspapers were men.

Female Stereotypes

These include:

- 1) *The WAG*: wives and girlfriends of men who are concerned with beauty, love, being a good partner and getting and keeping their men.
- 2) *The Sex Object*: slim, sexually seductive, scantily clad figure typically found in the red top press, e.g. the 'Sun' and in advertising.
- 3) *The Supermum*: the happy home-maker or part-time worker who is mainly concerned with childrearing, housework and family relationships and who keeps the family together.
- 4) *The Angel*: who is 'good', displays little sexuality, is sensitive, is domesticated and supports her man.
- 5) *The Ball Breaker*: who is sexually active, strong, selfish, ambitious, career minded and not dependent on men.
- 6) *The Victim*: as in many films and dramas with men as both the cause of their problems and sometime the solution.

The cult of femininity

Ferguson argued teenage girls' magazine traditionally prepared girls for feminised adult roles and generated a **cult of femininity**. This included themes like getting and keeping a partner, being a good wife/partner, keeping a family happy, what to wear, how to be a good cook etc. This socialised girls into the stereotyped values and roles of femininity and are often reflected in women's magazines.

Representations of Masculinity

Range of roles

Men appear in a much wider range of roles, most often in the public sphere. They are generally portrayed in a wider range of occupations, especially those of higher status.

More positive representations

Male voices are more likely to be used in 'voice overs' on TV and radio, reinforcing the idea of men as authority figures or experts.

The dominant role of men is also shown in media representation in which older men are shown as sexual partners of younger women, with the opposite rarely being depicted.

Reinforcing hegemonic masculinity

The research group Children Now found the following representations of masculinity were dominant in the media:

- Males are violent.
- Males are generally leaders and problem solvers.
- Males are funny, confident, successful and athletic.
- Males rarely cry or show vulnerability.
- Male characters are mostly shown in the workplace.

These representations fail to show the range of different types of masculinity.

Male Stereotypes

The main stereotypes of male characters which reinforce **masks of masculinity** are:

- 1) *The Joker*: uses laughter to avoid displaying seriousness or emotion.
- 2) *The Jock*: shows aggression to demonstrate his power and strength to win the approval of other men and the admiration of women.
- 3) *The Strong Silent Type*: in control, acts decisively, avoids talking about his feelings or showing emotion, and is successful with women.
- 4) *The Big Shot*: economically and socially successful and has high social status with possessions to match.
- 5) *The Action Hero*: strong but not necessarily silent, shows extreme aggression and often violence.
- 6) *The Buffoon*: well intentioned and light hearted but is completely hopeless when it comes to parenting or domestic matters.

Theoretical Explanations

Pluralists

They suggest stereotyping occurs because it is what audiences want. Media organisations are driven by the need to attract audiences to make money. Stereotypes provide a simple and effective way of satisfying the wishes of both audiences and media organisations. If audiences didn't like the representations, they wouldn't buy those media products.

They also argue Marxists and feminists ignore the ability of women and men to see through gender stereotyping and that these stereotypes do not affect behaviour.

Liberal Feminists

They see media representations as a product of the underrepresentation of women in the media industry, e.g. chief executives, journalists. This encourages a male view of the world. This will change as women gain more power and equal opportunities in media organisations.

Mills argues the newsroom is a very male culture that can be off-putting to females.

Lauzen found women are more likely to be employed in costume design and make up which have less status and are less well paid than male areas such as camera and sound.

Marxists and Marxist Feminists

They see media representations as rooted in the need to make profits. Media owners and producers need to attract advertisers and advertisers need stereotypes to promote sales of various products. Audiences need to be persuaded to be concerned about things like cosmetics and fashion in order for advertisers to make profit.

In addition, media companies are afraid of using non-traditional stereotypes because it may put audiences off resulting in lower viewing figures and therefore less advertisers.

The importance of attracting advertisers can be shown by the experiences of Cyndi Tebbel. In 1997 she was the editor of a women's magazine and featured a size 16 model on the cover. This was well received by readers but a major advertiser, which was a cosmetics company, withdrew its advertising. Tebbel was forced to change the woman she put on the cover of the magazine.

Marxist Feminists agree with radical Feminists that gender representations are driven by patriarchal ideology but they emphasise that this ideology is linked to class inequality. Media images project a lifestyle which working class women are least likely to be able to afford to

participate in. This makes them feel inadequate and reasserts the hegemony of male dominated middle class and upper class lifestyles.

In addition, by presenting these **false needs** based around beauty etc, it means women will continue to invest in various cosmetic products, therefore guaranteeing profit for capitalist companies.

Radical Feminists

They see media representations as due to the necessity to reproduce patriarchy. The media world is a man's world, which seeks to keep women in a narrow range of stereotyped roles. Stereotypes of femininity discourage women from threatening male dominance in society.

Wolf's argument about the **beauty myth** can be applied here too. Because women are told to focus on their appearance this distracts them and prevents them from making the most of opportunities that might challenge male dominance.

Postmodernists

Gauntlett argues women and men no longer get uniform messages that suggest there is only one idea type of masculinity and femininity.

He argues girl power icons have challenged most of the traditional representations of women, and there is a new emphasis in men's media on men's emotions and problems

Changing Media Stereotypes

Changing Representations of Females

There is more emphasis on independence and sexual freedom for women and there is a growing diversity of media images of women.

McRobbie argues a new form of popular feminism has emerged, shown in young women's magazines. These promote female assertiveness and being in control and encourage their readers to be more self-aware, self-confident, ambitious and independent. This is embedded in modern **girly culture** with 'girl power' now part of popular culture.

Inness studied female roles in TV dramas and films and showed women are being presented more as powerful tough girls, confronting danger and taking on roles that were usually adopted by men, e.g. Katniss Everdeen in 'The Hunger Games' books and films.

Green and Singleton argue the new media empowers women. For example, women can use Twitter and websites such as everydaysexism.com to challenge negative media representations of women.

Criticisms

Knight points out that these portrayals also include traditional femininity. Women who take on these roles are nearly always attractive and glamorous, e.g. Angelina Jolie. They therefore conform to the **male gaze** and **beauty myth** and pose no threat to a patriarchal society.

Women who use new media experience sexism in the form of trolling and threats. For example, women's rights campaigner Caroline Criado-Perez was subjected to 50 rape and death threats every hour for 2 days. Other female figures of authority and celebrities have reported of similar experiences, particularly when commenting on women's rights.

Changing Representations of Males

Gauntlett suggests media portrayals of men are also changing with a wider range of representations of masculinity, e.g. **metrosexuality**.

Men's lifestyle magazines are offering new ways of thinking about masculinity. Whilst they still contain macho content, they encourage men to understand women and be considerate and caring.

A further change is the transformation of male bodies into sex objects in advertising.

Explaining Changing Representations

A lot of this is linked to advertisers and the need to attract media audiences.

Advertisers have found ways of tapping into a men's market for cosmetic products etc.

Women are becoming more successful and have more power in society. As a result traditional stereotypes have less appeal or relevance to them and so media representations need to reflect this in order to attract female audiences.

In addition, if traditional media don't change, women will opt out of the traditional media and discuss their concerns through new media where they may challenge media stereotypes.

Despite all this, gender stereotypes continue to thrive in the media.

Representations of Age

The **media gaze** is filtered through the eyes of young to middle aged adults and this influences the representation of children, youth and older people.

Overall, older people are underrepresented and youth are overrepresented.

Representations of Children

Stereotypes

'Children's Express', monitored national newspaper output for one week in 1998. They found seven stereotypes of children, which are listed in order of frequency:

- 1) *Victims*: children portrayed as good children led astray by bad influences, or as victims of crimes.
- 2) *Cute*: providing the feel good factor in advertising and other stories.
- 3) *Little devils*: evil children and young hooligans, often in comedies and drama.
- 4) *Brilliant*: exceptional children who excel in some way, e.g. getting into Oxbridge at age 10 or donating their pocket money to the Third World.
- 5) *Accessories*: children are used to enhance their parents' image, e.g. celebrities' children.
- 6) *Kids these days!*: stories which show adults' nostalgia for the past, with young people knowing much more than their parents used to, e.g. being corrupted by computers.
- 7) *Little angels*: children who can do no wrong, e.g. endure terrible illnesses or risk their lives to save someone.

Positive portrayals

Heintz-Knowles found children are often portrayed as motivated primarily by peer relationships, sports and romance, and least often, by community, school related or religious issues.

However, most representations are positive and show them engaged in actions such as telling the truth.

Consumers

Children are represented in advertisements as consumers. Evans and Chandler argues this has led to **pester power**, which is the ability of children to manipulate their parents to buy consumer products for them.

Representations of Youth

Lifestyle and identity

A large section of the media industry portrays youth as about lifestyle and identity. Magazines, record companies, mobile telephone companies and radio stations all target and attempt to shape the interests of young people.

This portrays youth as being about consumption and leisure.

Negative portrayals

However, youth are often the subject of negative stereotyping. They are frequently portrayed as a rebellious and selfish problem group in society: as troublemakers, layabouts and vandals, fuelled by drugs and alcohol, and depicted in the context of crime and anti-social behaviour. These images are particularly associated with working class males.

In 2005 a study showed 57% of stories about young people were negative, with 40% of articles about young people focused on crime, vandalism and anti-social behaviour.

In 2009 a survey found teenage boys most frequently appeared in the media in stories about crime and were most commonly described using terms like 'yobs', 'thugs' etc.

These representations are driven by media **news values** as exciting stories which exaggerate the occasional deviant behaviour of a few young people to help attract audiences.

For many people, the media provide the only source of information about events, and therefore distort people's attitudes towards young people. Older people, who tend to be more home-based, are more likely to believe these stereotypes.

Cohen argues young people are relatively powerless and easy to identify as being responsible for society's problems. This is particularly the case for young African-Caribbean males.

Moral panics

Young people are portrayed as **folk devils** who pose a threat to society and the media unites the public and encourages them to support tough action against them. As a result of these **moral panics**, all young people may be labelled as potentially troublesome.

This can be seen with portrayals of youth subcultures such as teddy boys in the 1950s and recent portrayals of youth as 'hoodies'.

Representations of Old Age

The invisible elderly

Older people (in their late 50s onwards) are often largely invisible in the media (**the invisible elderly**) or presented in negative ways.

Cuddy and Fiske showed that, in the US, TV portrayed just 1.5% of its characters as elderly, with most of them in minor roles. They were also more likely to appear in television and film as figures of fun.

Negative portrayals

Old age is generally represented as undesirable. Age Concern identified the following key stereotypes of old age which they regard as **ageist**:

- **Grumpy**: elderly women are portrayed as busybodies and males as grumpy. They spend their time reminiscing about the past and complaining about young people and the modern world. This portrays them as conservative, stubborn and resistant to social change.
- **Mentally challenged**: forgetful, senile or confused. This suggests growing old involves the decline or loss of people's mental functions.
- **A burden**: an economic burden on society in terms of pensions and health care costs and/or a physical burden on younger members of their families.

Influence of gender

There are sometimes different stereotypes for men and women. It is not uncommon to see older men presented in a positive light, e.g. as partners of younger women in films, as distinguished and wise, such as political leaders, and as knowledgeable media journalists and commentators.

By contrast, there are few positive images of older women, who are often symbolically annihilated because there are not many positive roles for them as they grow older.

Female film and television stars are often relegated to character parts once their looks are perceived to be declining, but male actors continue to play leading roles, e.g. Clint Eastwood, Harrison Ford.

In the news older males are often paired with attractive young females. This implies that older males have authority. Older female newsreaders are often exiled to radio.

Influence of class

Newman notes that upper class and middle class elderly people, usually men, are often portrayed in TV and film in high status roles, e.g. politicians.

Devalued

Old age is devalued by the media. The media emphasises youth and beauty, e.g. cosmetic adverts for anti-ageing creams, which implies ageing should be avoided.

Szmigin and Carrigan found in a study of advertising executives that they were wary of using models in their advertisements that they thought might alienate younger audiences.

Changing Representations of Age

Youth

Brake argues there is a more positive representation of youth and children in the media which challenges the negative stereotypes, which is of youth and childhood as respectable, e.g. Pride of Britain Awards, Masterchef for children and youths.

Because young people are the major users of new media it means they can combat media stereotyping through citizen journalism. This may force mainstream media to change their representations over time.

Old Age

The growing numbers of older people with disposable income (**the grey pound**) mean the media need to change their representations of the elderly. Lee et al found that whilst the elderly are still underrepresented in advertisements, when elderly people did appear they were likely to be portrayed positively, e.g. the Dove Pro-Age campaign.

Stereotypes of old age have also been challenged in the media by differing representations and older celebrities, e.g. Dame Helen Mirren. This is known as **active ageing**.

Criticisms

These representations of the elderly might still be unrealistic as they don't portray the diversity of experience, e.g. the experience of older people living in poverty.

Theoretical Explanations

Pluralists

Media representations reflect reality: young people commit more crime and deviance than any other social group.

Criminal behaviour is also newsworthy and therefore attracts audiences.

Functionalism

Media representations of young people are a form of **boundary maintenance**. They remind people of the boundaries between correct and incorrect behaviour. This helps counteract the

influence of some peer groups which may encourage young people to engage in criminal and deviant behaviour.

Interactionism

The labelling of young people as a threat is done by older generations in society. These representations and moral panics are attempts at social control.

Neo Marxism

Most media sources which are at the top of the **hierarchy of credibility** are older. As a result the reporting of youth is set by older people and as a result is negative.

Postmodernism

Negative portrayals are only a small aspect of media representations. There are diverse representations in the media.

Young people can use the new media to challenge negative representations and construct positive representations.

Representations of Sexuality

Media representations of sexuality in the UK are overwhelmingly heterosexual.

Representations of Heterosexuality

Representations of heterosexual females

Sexuality has always been a central part of hegemonic femininity as in Britain women have been largely defined by their physical attractiveness. They have long been subject to the **male gaze**, particular in the mass media.

Batchelor et al also found:

- Contraception was represented as a female responsibility, e.g. in letters to problem pages about girls' worries about getting/being pregnant.
- Female characters discussed sex with their friends whereas males boasted about their sexual prowess.
- Girls were portrayed as more interested in emotions while males were more interested in sex.

Representations of heterosexual males

Increasingly men are also becoming represented as sexual objects. This is reflected in the growth of men's magazines focused on fashion and health, as well as their growing use of cosmetics. There is a new male stereotype in the media which is that of the metrosexual.

Men's bodies are increasingly sexualised in advertising and McRobbie argues women have become **active viewers**.

Representations of Homosexuality

The media are controlled primarily by heterosexual men, so the media view of homosexuality is formed through a heterosexual **media gaze**.

The fear of loss of profits if audiences and advertisers are offended has meant that homosexuality has traditionally been treated by the media as deviant.

The symbolic annihilation of homosexuality

Homosexuals have traditionally been ignored or made fun of in the media. Stonewall found in 2010 in a study of TV programmes most popular with young people, that homosexual and bisexual people were portrayed in less than 5% of all programmes studied and 36% of portrayals were negative.

Homosexual life is most likely to appear in entertainment programmes and rarely features in factual programmes such as documentaries.

Limited representations and stereotypes

Dyer argues that if someone is homosexual, this is not visible/obvious. Therefore the media make the invisible, visible with signs and symbols of homosexuality, e.g. speech patterns and stances.

Craig identifies three common media representations of homosexuality:

- 1) **Camp**: one of the most widely used gay representations, especially in entertainment media. Characters are generally regarded as flamboyant and audiences see them as non-threatening.

- 2) Macho: this relies on exaggerating masculinity. It is also openly sexual, transforming practical male clothing into erotic symbols. This is regarded as threatening by men because it subverts traditional ideas of masculinity.
- 3) Deviant: may be portrayed as evil or devious. In many cases, gay characters are completely defined by their sexuality.

These portrayals often match up with news values to attract audiences. This therefore means the media tended to present distorted views of homosexuality and occasionally generated moral panics, e.g. the AIDS epidemic in the 1980s.

When homosexual characters appear in the media, they are usually defined in terms of their sexual orientation, rather than being characters who just happen to be homosexual. This happens even in sympathetic portrayals of homosexuality, e.g. 'Brokeback Mountain'.

The sanitization of gay sexuality

It has been pointed out that homosexual men are rarely portrayed in a sexualised way, e.g. kissing. They appear mainly as stylish and attractive figures in adverts designed to appeal to women, not other homosexual men. This is done to avoid offending heterosexual audiences or put off advertisers.

The opposite applies for homosexual women who rarely appear in advertising or the media as anything other than highly sexualised. These representations:

- Appeal to the gay and lesbian market.
- Avoid offending heterosexual audiences and advertisers.
- Don't challenge heterosexual ideology, but help maintain its hegemony as the norm.

Changing Representations of Homosexuality

The pink pound

Media companies have realised the homosexual consumer market (**the pink pound**) is large and affluent. As the pluralist approach would suggest, they are now beginning to respond to what the homosexual audience wants through advertising and provision of media products.

Representations of transgender characters

There has been an increase in representations of transgender individuals in the media and many of these have been positive, e.g. the TV series 'Transparency'. In 2015, the UK's first transsexual character appeared on BBC2 in the series 'Boy Meets Girl'.

The new media

Because much of the content on new media is user generated, representations of LGBT individuals are much more positive, e.g. Facebook's Celebrate Pride rainbow filter.

However, this also means homophobic comments can be made on new media.

Representations of Disability

Most of us learn about disability through socialisation, rather than direct personal experience. Popular views of those with impairments are often formed through media stereotyping.

Those who work in the media are predominantly able bodied and this is the perspective the **media gaze** is formed from. This nearly always represents disability as something that is a problem for the individuals themselves, not something that is created by society.

Representations of Disability

Symbolic Annihilation

Around 25% of all adults over the age of 16 in the UK were classed as disabled in 2011 according to definitions in UK law. However, disabled individuals are seriously underrepresented among those who work in the media and in representations in media content.

It was found that just 2.5% of people in the most popular TV programmes between 2013 and 2014 were portrayed as disabled. In the majority of cases the impairment was the main aspect of their character, rather than them simply playing a character who happened to be disabled. Ofcom found that in 42% of appearances disabled people were in programmes about issues of prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination.

Negative representations

The GMG found in a study of newspapers between 2010-11 compared to 2004-5 that there was a reduction in the amount of articles describing disabled people in deserving terms, particularly those with mental health disabilities. The quantity of articles linking disability to benefit fraud had more than doubled in 5 years and nearly 1 in 5 articles described disability using terms like 'scrounger' etc. This promotes the idea that life on benefits had become a lifestyle choice for some disabled people.

In a study of TV drama and entertainment they also found nearly half of all peak time programmes with mental illness storylines portrayed them as a threat to others and 63% of references to mental health were negative.

Stereotypes

Barnes identified 10 stereotypes the media use to portray disabled people:

- 1) *As pitiable or pathetic*: characters that encourage pity in audiences and programmes that treat disabled people as objects of charity, e.g. 'Children in Need'. Roper argues telethons like this keep the disabled in their place as dependent recipients of charity.
- 2) *As an element of atmosphere or object of curiosity*: they are sometimes included in storylines to enhance a certain atmosphere, e.g. menace or mystery, to add character to the visual impact of a production.
- 3) *As an object of violence*: as victims, for example bullying.
- 4) *As sinister or evil*: this is one of the most persistent stereotypes, portrayed in characters like Frankenstein or criminals in James Bond films. The tabloid press frequently carry exaggerated stories of the alleged dangers of the mentally ill.
- 5) *As the super cripple*: the disabled person is seen as brave and courageous, living with and overcoming their disability, or is portrayed as superhuman, e.g. Channel 4's coverage of the Paralympics where they used the tag line 'Meet the Superhumans'. Ross notes that for disability issues to be reported, they have to be unexpected or heroic.
- 6) *As laughable or an object of ridicule*: they are portrayed as a fool, the village idiot etc.

- 7) *As his/her own worst enemy*: as individuals who could overcome their difficulties if they weren't so full of self-pity and started thinking more positively.
- 8) *As a burden*: the view of disabled people as helpless and having to be cared for.
- 9) *As non-sexual*: disabled people are sexually dead and therefore their lives are not worth living. The exception to this, is the stereotype of the mentally ill sex pervert.
- 10) *As unable to participate in daily life*: this stereotype is mainly one of omission, as disabled people are rarely shown as anything other than disabled people. They are seldom represented as a perfectly normal part of everyday life, e.g. workers.

Theoretical Explanations

Pluralism

Argue representations reflect the dominant medical view that disability is dysfunctional for both the individual and society.

Representations also reflect society's admiration of the courage shown by some disabled individuals.

Pluralists therefore argue representations portray the reality of the everyday lives of the disabled and their carers.

Social constructionists

Sociologists who argue disability is socially constructed argue that the reaction of society to people with impairments, produces disability.

Oliver and Barnes & Mercer argue there are 3 main reasons for the representations of disability in the media:

- 1) Medical professionals are at the top of the **hierarchy of credibility** and they take the medical view of disability.
- 2) Representations reflect the prejudice that able-bodied people feel towards the disabled. This prejudice is the result of fear because the disabled represent everything the able bodied dread: personal tragedy etc.
- 3) The disabled are rarely consulted by journalists. These representations therefore reflect the low status, exclusion and inequality experienced by the disabled.

Postmodernism

The dominant medical view is fragmenting. This is because the disabled are organising themselves politically, making themselves heard and constructing their own identities.

This means there are more positive representations, such as in sport.

The Social Construction of the News

The Glasgow Media Group has shown the selection and presentation of news stories is not a neutral process but the news is influenced by the dominant ideology of society.

The media obviously cannot report all the news that is happening in the world. As a result what counts as the news is information that has been selected due to a range of factors.

The Influence of the Owners

Sometimes private owners of the media will impose their own views on their editors directly or indirectly. The political views of the majority of media owners are conservative. They may:

- Occasionally give direct instructions to news editors.
- The owners, via editors, influence the resources available to cover news stories, e.g. whether journalists are given equipment to pursue a story.
- Journalists and editors' careers depend on not upsetting the owners. This may lead to them adopting **self-censorship** where they avoid reporting some events or report them in ways they think owners would approve of.
- Owners are concerned with making profits. This, and competition with other media companies, means news and information may be turned into infotainment which can result in unethical journalistic practices, e.g. phone hacking, bribery.

Making a Profit

The mainstream media are predominately run by large businesses with the aim of making money. Much of this profit comes from advertising. This is why the media is so concerned about ratings for TV programmes, circulation figures for newspapers and the number of hits on websites.

Bagdikian suggests the importance of advertising means news reports will be present in a way to avoid offending advertisers, or will be ignored altogether. In order to attract as large an audience as possible it becomes important to appeal to everyone and this leads to conservatism in the media. This often means minority views often go unrepresented in the media and helps maintain the hegemony of certain ideas in society.

This pressure to attract audiences can also lead to dumbing down or tabloidization of news coverage with serious journalism being replaced by this and infotainment.

Globalisation, New Technology and Citizen Journalism

The mainstream news media can no longer rely on the attention of audiences as people are now tweeting, texting and surfing the web for news that interests them.

In a global market, news providers need to compete to survive. They therefore need to be up to date and tailor their media and news to their market. For example, they may choose short stories on celebrities using the latest gadgets in order to retain their audiences.

New media technology has created greater opportunities for citizen journalism. Videos shot on mobile phones and uploaded to YouTube, Twitter or Facebook, mean ordinary individuals rather than professional journalists and media companies, are more involved in collecting, reporting and spreading news.

These grassroots sources of news can help to overcome suppression of stories or biased news reports in established media. For example, the GMG found many British TV reports on Palestinians were overly reliant on official Israeli perspectives. Members of Machsom Watch were able to offer an alternative view by posting their own reports, videos and photos on their website.

Citizen journalism and online criticism of mainstream news output are transforming traditional journalism. These have been used to expose offensive, illegal or corrupt activities by politicians etc which may not have been covered by the traditional media.

When news related videos are uploaded to the internet, they can go viral and attract large audiences. This can make it very difficult for mainstream media not to cover news stories they might have once chosen to ignore. Increasingly the reports and media of citizen journalists are being included in mainstream media, for example, during the Arab spring. Citizen journalism can also benefit mainstream media as it allows them to obtain news and supporting items at little cost.

Organisational Constraints

People's habits in the way they consume the news have changed with less use of newspapers and TV, and more use of social media. People now expect to access up to date news at all times.

Social networking sites are increasingly used to release and spread news stories on a global scale.

The intensity of news has changed with news reporting becoming rolling 'breaking news' with digital news programmes and websites running constantly changing bulletins all day long, e.g. BBC News 24 channel or the BBC website.

This means journalists and media companies have to respond. Journalists increasingly write stories for the web first rather than for newspapers or TV. Competition means organisations have to work within tight time schedules to meet shortening deadlines. There may be greater emphasis on getting a news story before anyone else rather than on getting it right.

Agenda Setting

People can only discuss things that they know about, and in most cases it is the media who provide this information. This may mean the public never discuss some subjects because they aren't informed about them.

The media's influence in selecting the subjects for public discussion is known as agenda setting and is mainly associated with the Glasgow Media Group. This is the idea that while the news media may be unsuccessful in telling people *what* to think, they are successful in telling people what to think *about*.

The GMG suggest the main media organisations and their journalists work within a framework of the dominant ideology which influences the subjects that the public are encouraged to think about and so audiences have little real choice of the news they receive.

Gatekeeping

The media's power to refuse to cover some issues and to cover others is called gatekeeping. The GMG suggested owners, editors and journalists construct the news by acting as gatekeepers, influencing what knowledge the public gains access to. These issues may be those that are most damaging to the dominant social class.

Sometimes issues aren't covered because journalists and editors think audiences are not interested in them or because they see them as too offensive or controversial. For example, strikes are widely reported whereas workplace illnesses and diseases aren't. This leads to more public concern with stopping strikes than improving health and safety laws.

Norm Setting

This describes the way the media emphasise conformity to social norms and seek to isolate those who do not via unfavourable news reports.

This is achieved in two main ways:

- 1) *Encouraging conformist behaviour*: e.g. not going on strike. Advertising, for example, often reinforces traditional gender roles.
- 2) *Discouraging non-conformist behaviour*: the media often give extensive and sensationalist treatment to serious crimes etc. These stories, by emphasising the serious consequences for those who break norms, are giving 'lessons' in how people are expected not to behave.

This norm setting is achieved through media representations which we will look at later.

Agenda setting, gatekeeping and norm setting act as forms of social control.

The Presentation of the News

The way news items are presented may influence how people are encouraged to see a story. For example, the position of a news story in a newspaper, the order of importance in news bulletins, the choice of headlines, whether there is accompanying video/pictures, the camera angles used etc will all influence the attention given to particular issues.

Some issues may not be covered at all if journalists or camera crews aren't available.

A story may be considered to be so important as to require a 'newsflash'.

The images used in news films may have a hidden bias. For example, the GMG has shown how in the reporting of industrial disputes, employers are often filmed in the quiet of their offices whilst workers are seen shouting on picket lines. This passes on messages about employers and workers.

The media can create biased impressions by the language used. **Emotive language** (language which stirs up emotions) may be used to liven up a story and grab the audiences interest, e.g. words like 'pointless', 'troublemakers'.

Inaccurate Reporting and Moral Panics

Other sources of bias may be in inaccurate reporting where important details of a story may be incorrect. This may be due to organisational pressures but also to make a story more attractive to audiences.

False reporting in the media can sometimes create a moral panic. Moral panics show the media's power to define what is normal and what is deviant and to reinforce a consensus around the dominant ideology, while at the same time making money by attracting audiences.

Media generated moral panics often arise due to the pressures to attract audiences and other pressures.

However, it has been suggested that new media and citizen journalism has made moral panics less common. This is because there are more sources of information, as pluralists and postmodernists would argue, and there is increased scepticism of mainstream media interpretations. Also most events that might once have generated a moral panic now don't maintain audience interest for long enough to cause a moral panic.

News Values and Newsworthiness

The gatekeeping and filtering process involves journalists and editors deciding what is newsworthy. Research has shown that journalists operate with values and assumptions (news values) which guide them in choosing which events are newsworthy. Therefore the news is socially constructed by journalists.

Galtung and Ruge suggest newsworthy items include some of the news values included in the following table.

News Value	Features
Composition	Events that fit the style of a paper or channel, the type of news they focus on, its political slant and the values of the journalists.
Continuity	Events that are likely to have a continuing impact.
Elite nations or people	Stories which involve what journalists and media customers perceive as important are seen as more newsworthy.
Frequency	Events that fit the newspaper or programme's broadcasting/publishing cycles are more likely to be covered. Events that occur unexpectedly and don't last long fit schedules better.
Meaningfulness	Events which, it is assumed, will have meaning and be of interest to the audience. This involves giving the audience what journalists think they want.
Negativity	Bad news is nearly always rated above positive stories.
Personalization	Event that can be linked to individuals in some way and given a human interest angle, with some human drama attached to them.
Proximity	News stories are more likely to be included if they relate to the nation where the audience is, e.g. what happens to British citizens at home and abroad is seen as newsworthy.
Threshold	The larger and more significant an event, the more likely it is to be newsworthy.
Unambiguity/clarity	Events that are easily understood and not too complicated without the need for lots of background explanation.
Unexpectedness	Events that are out of the ordinary.

Stories that contain these news values are more likely to be reported on. This is partly because they are seen as enabling media companies to attract audiences and therefore profit.

Immediacy

Stories are also more likely to be reported if the media can combine news values with the impression of **immediacy**. This is being present at events as they unfold. This is helped by live coverage of events and citizen journalism. This was evident during the Japanese earthquake and tsunami of 2011.

The Activities of Journalists and Churnalism

The GMG emphasises the importance of the assumptions of journalists in forming media content. This links to the dominant ideology approach to the media. The GMG emphasise a number of features that affect the content of the news:

- 1) Journalists operate within what Becker called a **hierarchy of credibility**. This means they attach the greatest importance to the views of powerful individuals and groups. Hall et al suggest these people are **primary definers** whose positions of power give them greater access to the media and therefore enables them to influence how journalists define the news. For example, journalists are likely to consult the police and Home Office for comments on crime policy. The views of primary definers are seen as more reasonable by journalists than those of the least powerful who may have views that journalists see as extreme. Primary definers are a way of reporting the news cheaply and quickly as they are eager to influence the media.
- 2) Journalists tend to be moderate in terms of politics and so ignore what they see as radical views.
- 3) The GMG has pointed out that journalists tend to be mainly white, male and middle class and they broadly share the interests and values of the dominant ideology. This influences the opinions they seek, the issues they see as important and how they think issues should be explained to audiences. This often favours the dominant groups in society.
- 4) Journalists like to keep their work as simple as possible. To reduce time and costs they often produce articles based on information provided by news agencies, government press releases, spin doctors, public relations consultants etc, without checking facts or finding the news themselves. This has been described as **churnalism**. This means primary definers are more likely to be able to influence journalists.

Churnalism

This describes the trend whereby journalists produce news articles based on pre-packaged material from press releases and other sources without doing further research and checking facts.

Davies found that 80% of stories in the main UK daily newspapers were wholly, mainly or partially constructed from second hand material. He found this mainly originated from information provided by news agencies like the Press Association and public relations advisors.

Advertorials are increasingly appearing on online news websites of major newspapers where content promoting products (advertising) is portrayed as a news article. For example, headline such as "Watch it here first! M&S unveil magical Christmas ad." This blurs advertising, information, news and entertainment and enables what is presented as news to be manipulated.

Churnalism has increased due to the desire of owners to cut costs, attract audiences and time pressures on journalists due to 24/7 reporting.

Key Concepts

Traditional media	Citizen journalism
New media	Purchasing power
Social media	News values
Vertical integration	Pick and mix approach
Horizontal integration/cross media ownership	Infotainment
Global ownership	Tabloidization
Conglomeration	Hyperreality
Diversification	Simulacra
Global conglomeration	Patriarchal ideology
Synergy	Media gaze
Technological convergence	Global village
Laws of libel	Popular culture
Official Secrets Act	Mass culture
DSMA Notices	Low culture
Racial and Religious Hatred Act	High culture
Equality Act	Globalisation
Obscene Publications Act	Global popular culture
Contempt of Court	Culture-ideology of consumerism
Ofcom	Cultural homogenisation
BBC Trust	Cultural/media imperialism
IPSO	Cocacolonization
Manipulative/ instrumentalist approach	Hybridization
Dominant ideology	Social construction of news
Ideological state apparatus	Self-censorship
False class consciousness	Norm setting
Agent of ideological control	Emotive language
Commodity fetishism	Moral panic
Hegemonic approach	Immediacy
Hegemony	Threshold
Agenda setting	Clarity
Gatekeeping	Proximity
Pluralism	Hierarchy of credibility
Heterogeneous	Primary definers

Churnalism	Decoding
Advertorials	Preferred/dominant reading
Media representations	Negotiated reading
Symbolic annihilation	Oppositional reading
Folk devils	Selective filtering
Grey pound	Selective exposure
Active ageing	Selective perception
Ghettoized	Selective retention
Tokenism	Uses and gratifications model
Islamophobia	Diversion
Glass ceiling	Personal relationships
Beauty myth	Personal identity
Cult of femininity	Surveillance
Masks of masculinity	Background wallpaper
Popular feminism	Copypatting/imitation
Girly culture	Catharsis
Active viewers	Desensitisation
Pink pound	Sensitisation
Sanitization of gay sexuality	Backwards law
Demonization of the working class	Cultural convergence
Romanticized portrayals	Digitality
Media text	Interactivity
Polysemic	Web 2.0
Passive audience models	Participatory culture
Hypodermic syringe model	Collective intelligence
Homogeneous audience	Hypertextuality
Ecological validity	Dispersal
Two step flow model	Blogosphere
Opinion leaders	Virtuality
Mediated messages	Digitally excluded
Cultural effects model	Digital divide
Drip drip effect	Digital underclass
Reception analysis	News flow cycles
Encoding	Cultural chaos

Cultural optimists/neophiliacs

Cultural pessimists

Sovereigns of cyberspace

Power without responsibility

Commercialization

Social capital

10 Mark Questions

Ownership and Control of the Media

- ...explain/analyse two differences between Marxist and pluralist views on how ownership of the media affects media content
- ...explain/analyse two ways in which media owners might influence the content of the media
- ...explain/analyse two differences between the traditional and new media
- ...explain/analyse two controls placed on the media
- ...explain/analyse two ways the government can control media companies
- ...explain/analyse two features of media ownership
- ...explain/analyse two ways media ownership has changed
- ...explain/analyse two features of the manipulative/instrumentalist/dominant ideology/hegemonic/pluralist/postmodernist view of the media
- ...explain/analyse two problems with the manipulative/instrumentalist/dominant ideology/hegemonic/pluralist/postmodernist view of the media
- ...explain/analyse two reasons media owners might not influence the content of the media
- ... explain/analyse two criticisms that Marxists might make of changes in the ownership and control of the media

Globalisation and Popular Culture

- ...explain/analyse two ways in which the media may contribute to the creation of a single global popular culture
- ...explain/analyse two differences between postmodernist and Marxist approaches to the relationship between the media, globalization and popular culture
- ...explain/analyse two ways the distinction between high and popular culture is changing
- ...explain/analyse two differences between high and popular culture
- ...explain/analyse two reasons it could be argued there is a global popular culture
- ...explain/analyse two effects of the growth of a global popular culture
- ...explain/analyse two reasons the growth of a global popular culture could be seen negatively/positively
- ...explain/analyse features of the postmodernist/Marxist view of popular culture
- ...explain/analyse two effects of the media on popular and high culture
- ...explain/analyse two ways in which the mass media may contribute to cultural/media imperialism
- ...explain/analyse two effects of cultural/media imperialism
- ...explain/analyse two effects of globalisation on the mass media

The Social Construction of the News

- ...explain/analyse two ways in which the news values held by journalists might influence the selection and presentation of the news
- ...explain/analyse two ways in which the news media may influence the subjects people think about and how they perceive those subjects
- ...explain/analyse two factors that influence the content of the news
- ...explain/analyse two reasons the news can be seen as being socially constructed
- ...explain/analyse two ways that the need for media companies to make a profit has influenced the content of the news

- ... explain/analyse two ways in which the new media have affected the selection and presentation of the news
- ... explain/analyse two ways in which journalists/owners may affect the selection and presentation of the news

Representations in the Media

- ...explain/analyse two ways in which media representations of some social groups may give a biased impression of those groups
- ...explain/analyse two differences between media representations of the disabled compared with those who are not disabled
- ...explain/analyse two features of the representation of some social groups in the media
- ...explain/analyse two features of the representation of age/class/ethnic/gender/sexuality/disability in the media
- ...explain/analyse two features of the representation of children/youth/old age/working class/middle class/upper class/ethnic minorities/men/women/heterosexuality/homosexuality/the disabled in the media
- ...explain/analyse two explanations for the representation of the working class/middle class/upper class/ethnic minorities/women in the media
- ...explain/analyse two ways in which representations of ethnicity/gender in the media are changing
- ...explain/analyse two ways in which traditional representations of different groups in the media are changing
- ...explain/analyse two examples of the media creating stigmatized identities
- ...explain/analyse two ways in which some social groups suffer from underrepresentation/symbolic annihilation in the media
- ...explain/analyse two ways in which some social groups suffer from underrepresentation/symbolic annihilation in the media
- ...explain/analyse two ways in which women in the mass media are disadvantaged

Media Effects

- ...explain/analyse two difficulties sociologists may face in assessing whether the media have an effect on audiences
- ...explain/analyse two differences between passive audience and active audience approaches to the effects of the media on people's attitudes and behaviour
- ...explain/analyse two features of passive/active audience approaches to the effects of the media on people's attitudes and behaviour
- ...explain/analyse two problems with passive/active audience approaches to the effects of the media on people's attitudes and behaviour
- ...explain/analyse two features of the hypodermic syringe/two step flow/cultural effects/uses and gratifications model on the effects of the media on people's attitudes and behaviour
- ...explain/analyse two ways audiences decode media messages
- ...explain/analyse two ways audiences filter media messages
- ...explain/analyse two ways sociologists see the media as having a limited/significant effect on audiences
- ...explain/analyse two ways sociologists see the media as affecting the behaviour of audiences
- ...explain/analyse two ways audiences may use the media that may impact on how it affects them
- ...explain/analyse two views of sociologists about the effects of the media on audiences
- ...explain/analyse two ways violence in the media may impact on individual behaviour
- ...explain/analyse two reasons it is problematic to research whether media violence influences individual behaviour

The New Media

- ...explain/analyse two ways in which the new media have affected traditional newspapers and broadcast media
- ...explain/analyse two ways in which the new media may have taken control of media content away from owners and editors, and placed it in the hands of media users
- ...explain/analyse two ways in which the new media differ from the traditional media
- ...explain/analyse two differences in patterns of new media consumption
- ...explain/analyse two reasons sociologists see the new media as a positive/negative development
- ... explain/analyse two ways in which the new media have affected the selection and presentation of the news

20 Mark Questions

Ownership and Control of the Media

- ... evaluate the view that the output of the media mainly reflects the interests of wealth, powerful and influential groups in society
- ... evaluate the manipulative/instrumentalist/dominant ideology/hegemonic/pluralist/postmodernist view of media ownership
- ... evaluate the view that media owners cannot and do not completely control media content
- ... evaluate the amount of control media owners have over media content
- ... evaluate the amount of control the government have over media content
- ... evaluate the view that consumers control the media

Globalisation and Popular Culture

- ... evaluate the view that media or cultural imperialism is a threat to the cultural identities of many countries
- ... evaluate the view that popular culture is a form of social control
- ... evaluate the impact of globalisation on the mass media
- ... evaluate the view that the media are helping to create a single global popular culture

The Social Construction of the News

- ... evaluate the view that 'the news' is a socially constructed, manufactured product mainly concerned with protecting the interests of the most powerful groups in society
- ... evaluate the view that competition for profits and advertisers influences the content of the news
- ... evaluate the view that the news is socially constructed
- ... evaluate the view that the news reflects the attitudes of those who write the news
- ... evaluate sociological views of the presentation and selection of the news
- ... evaluate the view that the news is always biased

Representations in the Media

- ... evaluate the view that media representations of different social groups may promote a dominant ideology that justifies existing patterns of social inequality
- ... evaluate feminist/Marxist/pluralist/Neo Marxist explanations of representations of different genders/ethnicities/social classes/social groups in the media
- ... evaluate the view that females/youth/the elderly/ethnic minorities/the disabled/homosexuals/the working class are negatively represented in the media
- ... evaluate the view that media representations of gender/ethnicity are changing
- ... evaluate the view that traditional representations of social groups in the media are changing

Media Effects

- ... evaluate the view that exposure to media violence may make people behave in a more violent way and create more real life violence in society
- ... evaluate the view that the media has little influence on people's behaviour and attitudes
- ... evaluate the view that the media is less influential on people's behaviours and attitudes due to audiences being able to choose what they consume and how they interpret the media they consume
- ... evaluate sociological explanations of media effects on audiences
- ... evaluate the view that the mass media may not make people violent but may make people believe we live in a violent society

The New Media

- ... evaluate the impact of the new media on contemporary society
- ... evaluate the view that the new media has been a positive/negative development for society
- ... evaluate the view that the new media has given more power to audiences