

Stanley J. Baran
Dennis K. Davis

Third Edition

3

Mass Communication Theory

Foundations, Ferment, and Future

CONTENTS

Preface xiii

Section One Introduction to Mass Communication Theory 1

Chapter 1 Introduction 2

- Three Questions About Media 7
- Defining and Redefining Mass Communication 10
- Five Eras of Media Theory 11
- The Era of Mass Society and Mass Culture 12
- Emergence of a Scientific Perspective on Mass Communication 14
- The Limited Effects Paradigm Emerges 15
- Cultural Criticism: A Challenge to the Limited Effects Paradigm 16
- Emergence of a Moderate Effects Perspective 18
- Ongoing Debate over Issues 20
- Exploring Mass Communication Theory 21
- Critical Thinking Questions 22
- Significant People and Their Writing 23

Chapter 2 Mass Communication Theory 24

- Overview 25
- Science and Human Behavior 25
- Schizophrenic Social Science 30
- Defining Theory 31
- Mass Communication and Theory 34
- Summary 35
- Exploring Mass Communication Theory 35
- Critical Thinking Questions 36
- Significant People and Their Writing 37

Section Two Era of Mass Society and Mass Culture 38

Chapter 3 The Rise of Media Industries and Mass Society Theory 40

- Overview 41
- The Beginnings 42
- The Rise of Yellow Journalism 43
- Cycles of Mass Media Development and Decline 44
- Mass Society Critics and the Great Debate over Media 47
- Mass Society Theory Assumptions 48
- Rise of the Great Debate over Media 56
- Early Examples of Mass Society Theory 57
- Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft 58
- Mechanical and Organic Solidarity 59
- Mass Society Theory in Contemporary Times 60
- Summary 63
- Exploring Mass Communication Theory 64
- Critical Thinking Questions 66
- Significant People and Their Writing 67

Chapter 4 The Rise of Media Theory in the Age of Propaganda 68

- Overview 70
- The Origin of Propaganda 71
- Propaganda Comes to the United States 74
- Behaviorism 76
- Freudianism 76
- Magic Bullet Theory 77
- Lasswell's Propaganda Theory 78
- Lippmann's Theory of Public Opinion Formation 80
- Reaction Against Early Propaganda Theory 81
- Modern Propaganda Theory 82
- Libertarianism Reborn 86
- Summary 86
- Exploring Mass Communication Theory 87
- Critical Thinking Questions 88
- Significant People and Their Writing 90

Chapter 5 Normative Theories of Mass Communication 91

- Overview 93
- The Origin of Normative Theories of Media 95
- The Origin of Libertarian Thought 96
- The Marketplace of Ideas: A New Form of Radical Libertarianism 99

| | |
|---|-----|
| Government Regulation of Media—The Federal Radio Commission | 102 |
| Professionalization of Journalism | 105 |
| Limitations of Professionalization | 106 |
| Social Responsibility Theory of the Press: A Postwar Compromise | 108 |
| The Cold War Tests Social Responsibility Theory | 110 |
| Using Social Responsibility Theory to Guide Professional Practice | 111 |
| Is There Still a Role for Social Responsibility Theory? | 113 |
| Civic Journalism | 116 |
| Other Normative Theories | 117 |
| Summary | 119 |
| Exploring Mass Communication Theory | 120 |
| Critical Thinking Questions | 122 |
| Significant People and Their Writing | 122 |

Section Three The Rise and Fall of Limited Effects 124

Chapter 6 Limited Effects Theory Emerges 126

| | |
|---|-----|
| Overview | 127 |
| Paradigm Shifts | 129 |
| The Paradigm Shift in Mass Communication Theory | 130 |
| The Two-Step Flow of Information and Influence | 133 |
| Limitations in the Lazarsfeld Model | 136 |
| Limited Effects Theory | 138 |
| Attitude Change Theories | 139 |
| Carl Hovland and the Experimental Section | 140 |
| The Communication Research Program | 142 |
| Emergence of the Media Effects Focus | 144 |
| The Selective Processes | 145 |
| The Hovland-Lazarsfeld Legacy | 149 |
| Limitations of the Experimental Persuasion Research | 150 |
| Summary | 153 |
| Exploring Mass Communication Theory | 154 |
| Critical Thinking Questions | 154 |
| Significant People and Their Writing | 155 |

Chapter 7 Middle-Range Theory and the Consolidation of the Limited Effects Paradigm 156

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-----|
| Overview | 159 |
| Building a Paradigm | 160 |
| Robert Merton: Master Paradigm Maker | 161 |
| The Functional Analysis Approach | 163 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| Information Flow Theory | 166 |
| Information Diffusion Theory | 168 |
| Klapper's Phenomenistic Theory | 171 |
| An Apology for Mass Entertainment | 172 |
| Elite Pluralism | 175 |
| C. Wright Mills and <i>The Power Elite</i> | 177 |
| Assumptions of the Limited Effects Paradigm | 178 |
| Drawbacks of the Limited Effects Paradigm | 179 |
| Contributions of the Limited Effects Paradigm | 180 |
| Summary | 181 |
| Exploring Mass Communication Theory | 182 |
| Critical Thinking Questions | 183 |
| Significant People and Their Writing | 184 |

Chapter 8 Challenging the Dominant Paradigm: Children, Systems, and Effects 185

| | |
|--|-----|
| Overview | 185 |
| Focus on Children and Violence | 186 |
| Television Violence Theories | 190 |
| Catharsis | 190 |
| Social Learning | 192 |
| Social Cognition from Mass Media | 193 |
| Aggressive Cues | 196 |
| The Context of Mediated Violence | 197 |
| Active Theory of Television Viewing | 198 |
| The Developmental Perspective | 199 |
| Media and Children's Socialization | 200 |
| Systems Theories of Communication Processes | 202 |
| The Rise of Systems Theories | 203 |
| Mathematical Theory of Communication | 204 |
| Modeling Systems | 205 |
| A Simple Systems Model | 206 |
| Applying Systems Models to Human Communication | 206 |
| Adoption of Systems Models by Mass Communication Theorists | 207 |
| Closed versus Open Systems | 209 |
| The Utility of Systems Models | 210 |
| Estimating Causality | 211 |
| A Focus on Structure and Function | 212 |
| Summary | 214 |
| Exploring Mass Communication Theory | 215 |
| Critical Thinking Questions | 216 |
| Significant People and Their Writing | 217 |

Section Four Contemporary Mass Communication Theory— Searching for Consensus and Confronting Challenges 218

Chapter 9 Emergence of Critical and Cultural Theories of Mass Communication 220

- Overview 221
- Changing Times 222
- The Cultural Turn in Media Research 223
- Macroscopic versus Microscopic Theories 224
- Critical Theory 224
- Comparing Cultural Theories with Those Based on Empirical Research 226
- Rise of Cultural Theories in Europe 227
- Marxist Theory 228
- Neomarxism 229
- Textual Analysis and Literary Criticism 230
- The Frankfurt School 230
- Development of Neomarxist Theory in Britain 231
- Political Economy Theory 234
- The Debate Between Cultural Studies and Political Economy Theorists 236
- Cultural Studies: Transmissional versus Ritual Perspectives 236
- Symbolic Interaction 238
- Social Construction of Reality 244
- Research on Popular Culture in the United States 247
- Summary 249
- Exploring Mass Communication Theory 250
- Critical Thinking Questions 251
- Significant People and Their Writing 252

Chapter 10 Media and Audiences: Theories About the Role of Media in Everyday Life 253

- Overview 255
- Audience Theories: From Source-Dominated to Active Audience Perspectives 256
- Limitations of Early Audience-Centered Research 257
- Confusion of Media Functions and Media Uses 259
- Revival of the Uses and Gratifications Approach 261
- The Active Audience Revisited 264
- Uses and Gratifications and Effects 267
- Development of Reception Studies: Decoding and Sensemaking 269
- Feminist Reception Studies 272
- Framing and Frame Analysis 273
- Information Processing Theory 279
- An Information Processing Model 282

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-----|
| Processing Television News | 283 |
| Some Final Words to Clear the Mist | 284 |
| Summary | 287 |
| Exploring Mass Communication Theory | 288 |
| Critical Thinking Questions | 289 |
| Significant People and Their Writing | 289 |

Chapter 11 Theories of Media, Culture, and Society 291

| | |
|---|-----|
| Overview | 293 |
| Marshall McLuhan: The Medium Is the Message and Massage | 294 |
| Harold Innis: The Bias of Communication | 298 |
| McLuhan: Understanding Media | 299 |
| Social Marketing Theory | 302 |
| The Knowledge Gap | 308 |
| Agenda-Setting | 311 |
| The Spiral of Silence | 315 |
| Media System Dependency Theory | 320 |
| Cultivation Analysis | 322 |
| The Controversy | 325 |
| The Products of Cultivation Analysis | 327 |
| The Mean World Index | 328 |
| A Final Note on Cultivation | 329 |
| Media as Culture Industries: The Commodification of Culture | 331 |
| Advertising: The Ultimate Cultural Commodity | 334 |
| News Production Research | 335 |
| Media Intrusion Theory | 338 |
| Summary | 342 |
| Exploring Mass Communication Theory | 343 |
| Critical Thinking Questions | 344 |
| Significant People and Their Writing | 345 |

Chapter 12 Trends in Mass Communication Theory: Seeking Consensus, Facing Challenges 346

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-----|
| Overview | 347 |
| Communication Science | 348 |
| Two Views of Communication Science | 349 |
| An Example of Communication Science | 352 |
| Social Semiotics Theory | 354 |
| The Communications Revolution | 358 |
| The End of Mass Communication | 361 |
| Globalization and Media | 362 |
| Globalization Problems | 363 |
| Role of Media in Globalization | 364 |

| | |
|---|------------|
| Postmodern Criticism of Modernity | 366 |
| Avoiding the Dreams of Modernity | 368 |
| Challenges from Cognitive Psychology and Biological Science | 370 |
| The Media Literacy Movement | 374 |
| Two Views of Media Literacy | 376 |
| Summary | 377 |
| Exploring Mass Communication Theory | 378 |
| Critical Thinking Questions | 380 |
| Significant People and Their Writing | 381 |
| References | 383 |
| Index | 401 |