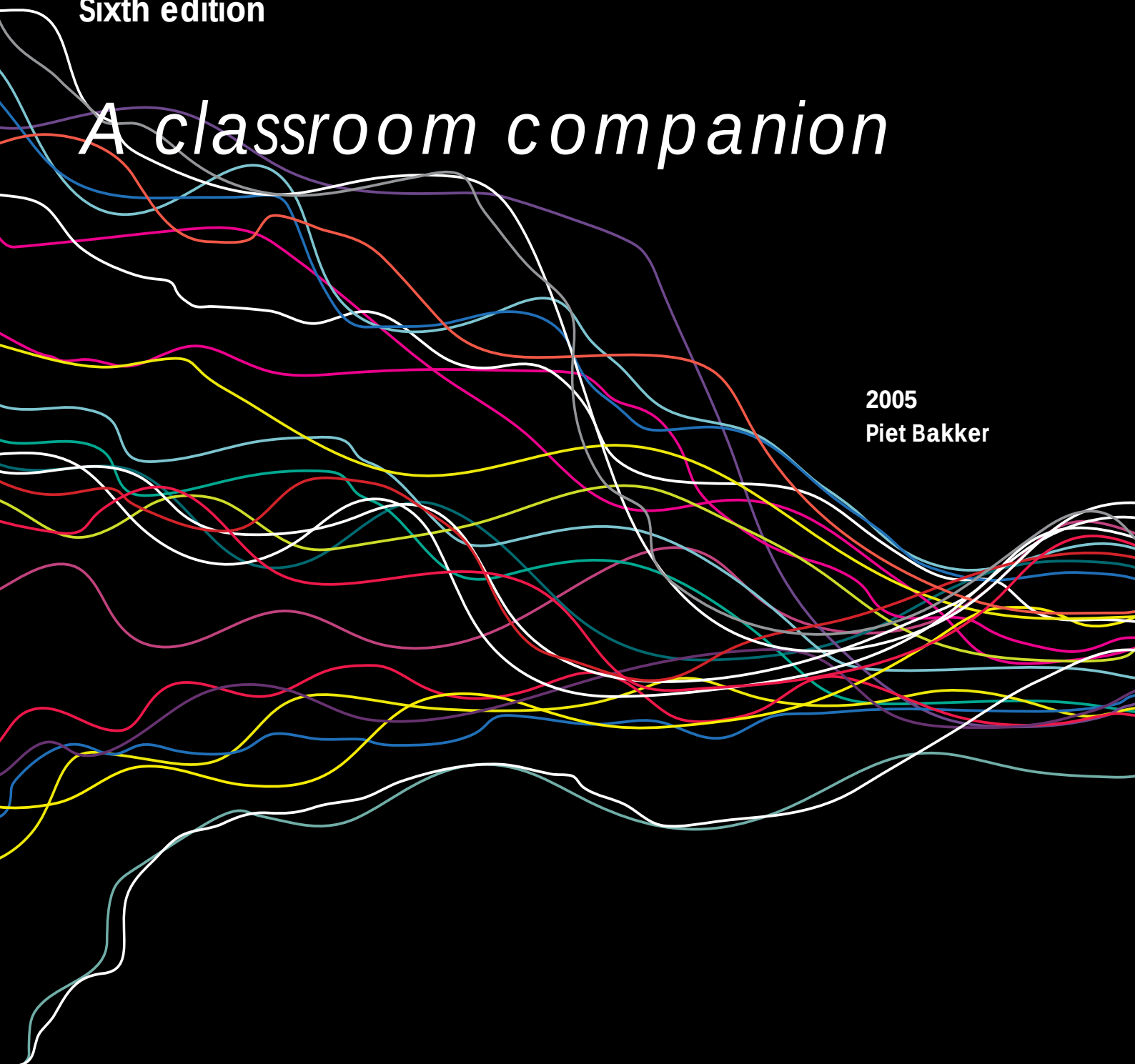
Reading McQuail's Mass Communication Theory

Sixth edition

A classroom companion



2005
Piet Bakker

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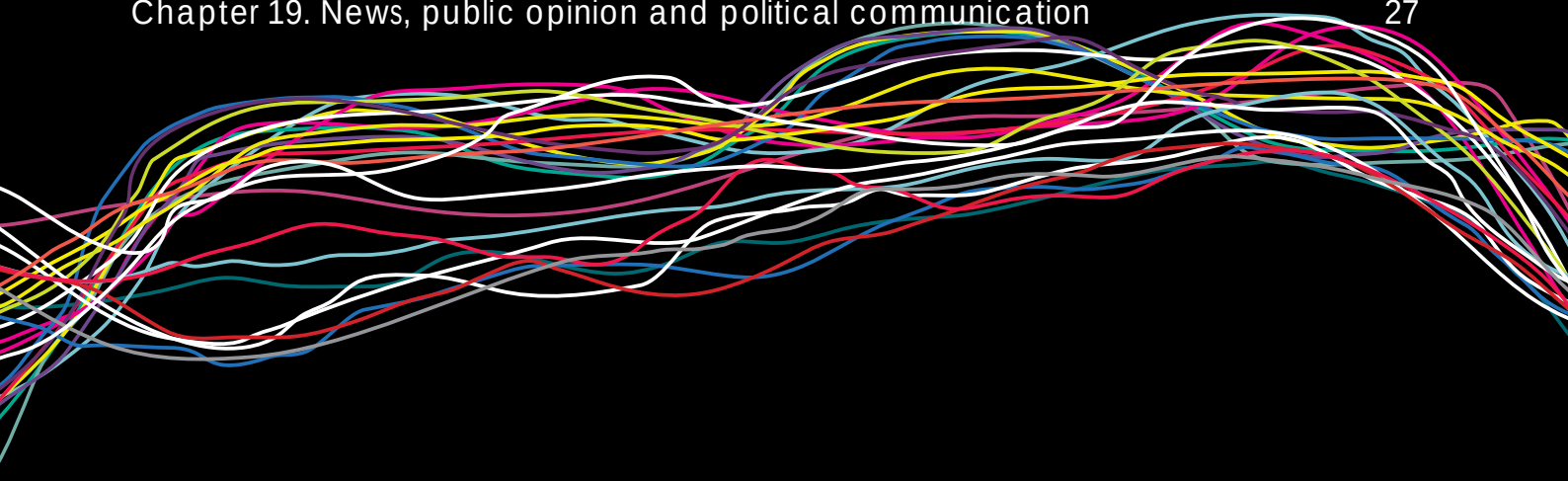

McQuail's Mass Communication Theory is a very comprehensive book. It is a seminal book for scholars and a classic in its genre. Not only does it cover all kinds of aspects of the mass communication process and the theories involved, it also tries to compare different viewpoints and gives an historic analysis of different theories.

In *Reading McQuail's Mass Communication Theory*[1] we try to make reading and understanding the book somewhat easier. Each chapter is introduced by identifying the main topics and there are usually no more than three or four central issues in each chapter. Every topic is briefly introduced, and covered by questions about theories, differences between theories, viewpoints, history, empirical support for theories, possible critique on theories etc.

This is best used as a classroom companion, it can serve as a starting point for discussions and practical work on the basis on the book.

Following the first and second introductory chapters on the rise of the mass media, the book covers six central themes:

1. *Theories* about mass communication and the media (Chapters 3-7);
2. *Structures*, meaning the relation between the media and their environment (Chapters 8-10);
3. The *Organizations* that produce and distribute communication (Chapters 11-12);
4. The *Content* of mass communication (Chapters 13-14);
5. The *Audience* of mass communication (Chapters 15-16);
6. The *Effects* of mass communication (Chapters 17-19).

In Chapter 20 (*Epilogue*) an agenda for future research is presented. After this concluding chapter a *Glossary* can be found with many different concepts from the theories presented.

[1] The first version of the classroom companion was written in 2001 by Mi Hee Haring with Piet Bakker, Tibor van Bekkum, Susanne Broekhuizen, Joyce Heisen, Marije Schoeber and Eva Wolf. They worked as teachers at the department of mass communication at the University of Amsterdam, where Denis McQuail worked for more than 25 years. Later versions were revised by Piet Bakker and Mark Deuze. Piet Bakker (associate professor of communication), was responsible for the fifth edition version, now revised by the author for the sixth edition.

Part 1: Preliminaries

In the first two chapters the structure of the book is made clear, and some basic elements of the study of mass communication are explained. Also it contains a short media history.

- In Chapter 1 the basic question 'Why should we study mass communication?' is covered, as well as different traditions of studying mass communication and different kinds of theory. The structure of the book is also explained.
- Chapter 2 contains a historic overview of different media.

Chapter 1: Introduction to the book

How is the book *organized*? Why are media so *important*? What kinds of *theories* are used to describe and explain mass communication? What are the different *approaches* in studying mass communication? How can we *define* mass communication?

The importance of mass media

- Why are mass media important as a political and cultural factor and for everyday social life?
- What can be said about the economic significance of the media?

The structure of the book

- What is meant by a theory, a concept and a model?
- What is the difference between 'society' and 'culture'?

Themes and issues

- In what sense are time, place and power important?
- What is the difference between 'social reality' and 'meaning'?
- Explain why 'mediation' can be seen as an alternative to the causal model?

Limitation of coverage and perspectives

- What is meant by the possible Western 'bias' of the book?
- Explain what is meant by leftist and conservative media theory?
- What is the difference between media-centric and society-centric approaches?
- What is the difference between the culturalist and the materialist approach?
- Explain the four perspectives (Figure. 1.1) that are used to describe the relation between media and society.
- Why are there four perspectives and not just one?
- What perspective do you find the most plausible?

Theories

- What kind of theories can be found in the field of mass communication?
- What kind of theories will be dominant in this book and why?

Communication science and mass communication

- Why does McQuail think the definition of 'communication science' by Berger and Chaffee is inadequate?
- Between what 'levels of communication' can we differentiate?

Chapter 2: The rise of mass media

What are the specific characteristics of different media; and what are the main differences between media?

Media characteristics

- Newspapers become 'commodities'; why is this so important?
- What is the difference between the three sorts of newspapers?
- Why did the newspaper press flourish in the second half of the 19th century?
- What is meant by 'thinly concealed ideological and implicitly propagandist elements in many entertainment films' and why are films 'more subject to conformist pressures' (p. 32)?
- Why do radio and television have a 'high degree of regulation' compared to the written press?
- What is meant by the 'significant radical and creative strands despite increased commercialization' in music?
- Why could the 'communications revolution' be seen as a revolt against 'mass communication'?

Differences

- Why is it not so easy to distinguish between different media?
- Explain what is meant by the four sorts of media control and the four 'favourable' conditions for control.
- In what way is control of new media (internet, games, mobile phones) different from traditional media control?

Part 2: Theories

These five chapters have *Theories* as a common theme:

- Chapter 3 focuses on the concept 'mass' and on different approaches of the study of mass communication.
- The relation between media and society (what influences what?) is covered in Chapter 4.
- The meaning of media for what we know of the world and how we see it, is central in Chapter 5.
- Chapter 6 is devoted to new media.
- In Chapter 7 a specific sort of theory, namely normative theory, is covered.

Chapter 3: Concepts and models for mass communication

What early *perspectives* on the relation between media and society can be distinguished; and what is the meaning of *mass* in mass communication and mass culture?

How do we see mass communication and what consequences does this viewpoint have for the way we study mass communication (*paradigms*)? What *models* can we use to study mass communication?

Early perspectives

- What 'sets of ideas' on the relation between media and society can be distinguished and what sort of empirical proof was presented to support these perspectives?

The Mass Concept

- How does the 'social outlook' influence one's optimistic or pessimistic view on integration?
- Explain why mass can have positive and negative connotations.
- What are the main characteristics of mass communication?
- What is meant by an 'a-symmetric' power relation?
- Why is there a 'calculative relation' between the media and the public?
- Why and how is mass culture explained in terms of what it is *not*?
- What is the relation between taste (mass culture) and class according to Bourdieu?

Paradigms

- What is the social and political worldview of the dominant paradigm?
- What are the three theoretical 'pillars' of the dominant paradigm?
- Explain what Rogers (1986) means with the 'intellectual cul-de-sac' of the

transmission model.
- What are the main differences between the alternative and the dominant paradigm?
- Why is a political standpoint or worldview so important in these paradigms?

Models

- Explain the main characteristics of the four models in terms of senders and receivers.
- Why are there four models and not just one?
- What is the relation between the models and the paradigms?

Chapter 4: Theory of media and society

Theories on the relation between media and society, with a focus on society.

Introduction / Media, society and culture

- What does McQuail mean by the difference between *society* (Chapter 4) and *culture* (Chapter 5)?
- Rosengren developed a model (Figure. 4.1) to clarify the relation between social structures and culture. Explain the four different relations given.

Mediation

- What is meant by *mediation*?
- What sixth different metaphors does McQuail use to describe the possible roles media can play? How feasible are these different metaphors?

Media and Society

- Three different types of theory are described in the part about theories on the relation between media and society; what are the main differences between these theories?
- What are the main themes that have 'shaped debate' on media–society relations?
- Two models of thinking about media power are distinguished – explain those models.
- Explain what is meant by the possible centripetal and the centrifugal societal effects of the media and the four possible effects.

Theories

- McQuail distinguishes between six theoretical approaches on the relation between media and society; give a short summary of each of these theories.
- Try to group these theories in one of the two paradigms of Chapter 3 and also in Figure 4.4 of this chapter.

Chapter 5: Mass communication and culture

The focus here is on texts and meanings: the cultural elements of mass communication. What is meant by culture and what are the most important theoretical approaches? Why are concepts like technology, commercialism and globalization important?

The culturalist approach

- Explain the difference between the culturalist and the social scientific approach.

Communication and culture

- What is the ritual approach that Carey introduced? Give an example of a research question that could be answered with this approach.
- Culture is hard to define but what elements are probably important?
- What are the most important themes in media-cultural theory?

Beginnings

- When and how does cultural theory begin?
- What is meant by 'the redemption of the popular'?

Gender

- What are important themes in the gender-approach?
- How does oppositional reading explain the popularity of 'overtly patriarchal messages'?

Commercialization

- Why does the term commercialization have a negative connotation? Do you think this critique is to the point?
- What is meant by tabloidization?

Technology and cultivation

- Explain the approaches of McLuhan and Gerbner.
- What is post-modern culture?
- What is meant by the concept 'simulacrum'?

Chapter 6: New media – new theory?

If new media are indeed very much different in use and possibilities from old media, a new theoretical approach is needed. If not, existing theories can be applied.

Introduction

- When is a new theoretical approach to new media really needed?
- Why is there a focus on the Internet and not on other new technologies?

What is new

- What is meant by *digitalization* and *convergence?*
- Explain the 5 points mentioned in Box 6.1.
- The Internet has different implications for authors, publishers and the audience; explain the main differences.

Main Themes and Theory

- Apply the main themes from Chapter 4 to the new media. What are the main differences?
- What sorts of new media can be distinguished? Give an example of each of these sorts.
- Apply the key characteristics of the new media to the sorts mentioned above and your examples.
- How can interactivity be interpreted and measured?

Patterns of information traffic

- What patterns of information traffic can be distinguished?
- What is the main trend in the development of these patterns of information traffic when media are concerned?

CMC

- What is 'computer-mediated community formation'?
- What is a 'virtual community'?

Participation

- New media have been welcomed as a possible new way for political participation. Dahlberg describes three basic models in this respect. How plausible are these models according to you?
- Is the internet a 'technology of freedom'?
- Explain what is meant by the Equalizer / Divider metaphor.

Chapter 7: Normative theory of media and society

How can the media contribute to the 'public interest' and can these responsibilities be put to practical use?

Introduction / Sources of normative obligation

- What is a normative theory?
- Why are media obligations problematic in most western societies?
- Give practical examples of the seven influences on 'normative expectations'.

Early approaches

- Explain why John Stuart Mill is defending 'wrong opinions'.
- Explain the difference between the American and the Dutch press freedom laws.

Social responsibility

- What were the four central tasks of the press according to the Hutchins Commission in 1947?
- The *social responsibility theory* has, according to McQuail, five main principles (Box 7.4). Are all the principles realized in your country?

Professionalism

- What principles can be found in almost every (European) journalism code?
- What is meant by the 'gap' between theory and practise when it comes to journalistic professional standards?

Four Theories of the Press

- The four press theories have received considerable criticism, and there have been some attempts to add theories as well. Explain the critique and the additions.

Public service broadcasting

- Explain the differences and similarities between the goals for public service broadcasting and the elements found in most European press council codes.
- McQuail mentions three sorts of tensions that might affect public broadcasting; explain these tensions.

Public sphere

- What is meant by 'public sphere'?
- How can *public journalism* be a solution to a decreasing public sphere?

Alternative visions

- What is meant by the emancipatory media theory and the communitarian theory?
- McQuail mentions at the end of the chapter four alternative models. How do these models safeguard the public sphere?

Part 3: Structures

These three chapters have *Structures* as a common theme, meaning the relation the media have with other organizations and institutions.

- Chapter 8 begins where Chapter 7 ends: expectations we have of the media; in this chapter it is explained how these expectations can be enforced in practise.
- Chapter 9 discusses the complex character of media: they are businesses as well as institutions with a specific task in society.
- In Chapter 10 the growing international character of the media and its consequences are discussed.

Chapter 8: Media structure and performance: principles and accountability

The ideas from Chapter 7 (normative theory) are discussed in more practical terms: how do media perform and how can they be held accountable?

Introduction

- What six basic values for media content can be distinguished?
- What is meant by the distinction between structure, conduct and performance?

Freedom

- Explain the difference between structure and performance with the concepts used in Figure 8.1.

Equality

- How can equality be realized in structure and in performance?

Diversity

- Explain the differences between the two variants of 'diversity-as-equal-treatment'.

Truth and information quality

- Explain the different elements of the concept of objectivity.
- Westertahl developed a model whereby objectivity could be measured. Explain this model and try to come up with practical examples for each element.
- Objectivity also has its limits; explain the four limits mentioned (p. 202-3).

Social and cultural order

- The support of social order is perhaps the most problematic of the normative

criteria mentioned. Why is that?
- What kinds of cultural quality can be distinguished?

Accountability

- What is *accountability* and why can it also be explained as 'naming, blaming and claiming'?
- Explain the distinction between *accountability* and *responsibility* in practical terms.
- What are the two models of *accountability?* Give an example of each of these models.
- Four different *frames* of accountability are given. What are the advantages and disadvantages of these different *frames*?

Chapter 9: Media economics and governance

Media are institutions with a responsibility to society as well as businesses that want to make profits. Consequences of this hybrid character are discussed in this chapter.

Not just any other business

- Explain the four different perspectives from which the media can be studied.
- Give practical examples of the three main forces (Figure. 9.1) that influence media.
- McQuail mentions three economic trends that affect media. Explain why concentration, internationalization and technology are so important, and give recent examples of these trends.

Basics of media structure

- What is the 'media system' in your country?
- McQuail mentions media sectors and media firms. Explain the difference between the two with examples from your own country.

Economic principles

- Why is it important to distinguish between the advertising and the consumer market?
- What are the possible relations between the importance of the consumer market for media and diversity?
- What is meant by the 'first copy cost'? Explain why this concept is important for different media.

Ownership and control

- Explain Altschull's second law of journalism.

Competition and concentration

- Explain horizontal and vertical concentration, cross media ownership and

synergy with examples from your own country.

Media governance and regulation

- What is governance and why is it different from just media law?
- Explain the differences between the three models of regulation.
- Why and how is the Internet different when it comes to regulation?

Media policy paradigms

- What is meant by the three phases of communication policy (Figure 9.5)?

Chapter 10: Global mass communication

Globalization is one of the most important trends in mass communication. The meaning of globalization and the consequences of this development are discussed in this chapter.

Origins

- Why are the mass media 'object and agent' of the globalising process?

Technology and money

- Explain the role of different technologies in the globalisation of media content.
- The brakes in the globalization process have been 'cultural' according to McQuail. Why is that?
- Explain the economic drives behind globalisation.

Multinational ownership

- Why are 'one-off' media more often subject to international ownership than 'cash-flow' media? Are there also exceptions to that rule?

Varieties of global mass media

- What sorts of global mass communication can be distinguished? Give examples of these forms.

International media dependency

- Has the expansion of old and the rise of new media helped to reduce media dependency?

Cultural imperialism

- After the Second World War there was a very 'ethnocentric' way of looking at international communication according to McQuail. What does he mean by that?
- What is the difference between the old international propaganda and the new 'media imperialism'?

- What is meant by cultural imperialism and what are the main arguments of the criticizers? And what are the alternative views on cultural imperialism?
- What is the difference between the *dependency* and the *free-flow* paradigms?

Transnationalization

- Give examples of national, bilateral and multilateral flows of television content and possible effects.

International news

- What is meant by the *bias* in international news, why is it there, and is the critique on this bias justified?

Global trade in media culture

- Although nationally produced TV-content is the most popular in almost every country, foreign (mostly American) material is the most visible. Why is that?
- Explain why MTV Europe is mentioned as an example of the limitations of globalization.

National and cultural identity

- According to McQuail national identity is more questionable than cultural identity and the notion of European identity is even more suspect. Why is that?

Part 4: Organizations

These chapters are about Organizations – meaning the media and their environment – how they work, what influences them and how they produce output.

- Chapter 11 focuses on the organization and the relations with other organizations as well as internal relations.
- Chapter 12 is devoted to the content production of the media.

Chapter 11: The media organization: pressures and demands

The influences on the media and the demands from society, pressure and interest groups, and the audience, as well as internal pressures, are discussed in this chapter.

Research methods and perspectives

- Define the key terms *structure*, *conduct* and *performance*.
- What is *participant observation*?

The main issues

- Explain the two main issues McQuail mentions with empirical examples.
- There are five hypotheses about 'factors influencing content' (Box 11.1). What hypotheses will be covered in this chapter and why?

The media organization in a field of social forces

- Explain the differences between Figures 11.1 and 11.2.
- Different 'work cultures' in a media organization may lead to tensions according to McQuail. Explain this in practical terms.

Relations with society

- What is meant by the 'ambiguity' of goals of media organizations?

Relations with owners and clients

- Why is there only a limited autonomy when it comes to the role of the proprietor?
- When the influence of advertisers is concerned, McQuail mentions that there is – apart from incidental efforts to influence media content – also a 'normal'

influence. What does he mean by that?

Relations with the audience

- Explain the problematic relation between journalists and their audience and try to come up with practical examples of this problematic relation.

Aspects of internal structure and dynamics

- Internal tensions may arise from the fact that media are 'hybrid organizations'. Explain this with examples from different sorts of media.

The influence of personal characteristics of 'mass communicators'

- That personal characteristics are important in the production of media content is part of what McQuail calls the 'mythology' of the media themselves. Explain this.

Chapter 12: The production of media culture

What is happening in a media-organization and how is cultural content produced?

Gatekeeping and selection

- Explain *gatekeeping* and the weaknesses of the concept in practical terms.
- What is the difference between the classic gatekeeping concept and the organizational and ideological approaches?

Influences on news selection

- Explain the difference between the idea of news as a 'naturally occurring product' and the 'creation of news' approach.
- Why are people, location and time important in the news selection process?
- Explain the importance of routine news (Molotch and Lester).

The struggle over access between media and society

- McQuail writes that 'access is bound to be a site of struggle'; what does that mean?
- Why is 'reality television' a misleading title?

The influence of sources on news

- How important are sources in the process of news selection and processing?
- How and why is news 'planned'?
- What is a 'pseudo event' and can you find examples of such events?
- Explain what is meant by 'assimilation' in the relation between journalists and sources.

Processing and presentation

- Explain the difference between selection on the one hand and processing and presentation on the other.
- What is *bias* and how can it be the result of internal processing?

Part 5: Content

Media content is the central theme of this part: why and how do we study content and how is content produced? Also the main sorts of content are discussed.

- Chapter 13 focuses on the question of how content is studied in communication science.
- In Chapter 14 media genres and media texts (categories of content) are discussed.

Chapter 13: Media content: issues, concepts and methods of analysis

What are the main reasons for studying media content and what are the most important traditions in content analysis?

Why study media content?

- Why is it important to distinguish message from meaning?
- McQuail lists nine different motives that have guided the study of content. Give practical examples of these different motives and of the sort of content that would be studied in each case.

Critical perspectives on content

- Explain the different 'schools of criticism' when media content is concerned.

Structuralism and semiology

- What is meant by the concepts *sign*, *signifier* and *signified* and how do these relate to 'meaning'?
- Explain the difference between connotation and denotation with a practical example.
- Visual images are, according to McQuail, 'polysemic' but have sometimes greater 'denotative power' than spoken words. Explain this.

Media content as information

- Why is this approach linked to the 'transmission model' according to McQuail?
- How can information be 'measured' in practical terms?

Media performance discourse

- Explain why this approach is linked to normative theory and what kinds of norms are studied in this respect.

Objectivity and its measurement

- What are the main elements of the objectivity concept and how can these be measured?
- Why can the reality–reflection norm be criticized?

Questions of research method

- Explain why meaning can be found in three different 'locations'.

Traditional content analysis

- Explain what is meant by the 'two main assumptions' of traditional content analysis and why these assumptions are often criticized.

Quantitative and qualitative analysis compared

- What are the main differences between quantitative and qualitative methods?

Chapter 14: Media genres and texts

The concept genre is used to distinguish between different sorts of media texts. The news-genre, violence and the relation between text and meaning are discussed in detail.

Questions of genre

- Explain the characteristics of genres with practical examples.
- What is meant by media logic and media format?

The news genre

- What does Lippmann mean by the statement 'news is not a mirror'?
- Try to give some examples of the 'stretching of a genre'.

The structure of news: bias and framing

- What is meant by 'framing'?

News as narrative

- What is meant by 'news as narrative'; how does the concept of *storytelling* fit in this concept and why is it different from 'factual reporting'?

Television violence

- Explain how the different 'contextual factors' of violence in the media can contribute to the alleged harmful effects.

The cultural text and its meanings

- The concept of media text is used in different ways. Explain this and explain also why this approach (text and meaning) is different from the approach in the part on television violence.
- Give some examples of closed and open texts.
- What is a *gendered text*?

Part 6: Audiences

What is 'the audience', how is the audience analysed, and what does the audience do with media?

- Chapter 15 focuses on the question 'What is the audience?' and on audience research traditions.
- In Chapter 16 the formation and the behaviour of the public is discussed.

Chapter 15: Audience theory and research traditions

One of the problems of the audience is that it often is invisible. The main topic of the chapter is to define what an audience actually is and how audience research can be conducted.

The audience concept

- How can the concept 'audience' be defined or characterized?

From mass to market

- What are the main characteristics of the audience as a mass-market? Explain this in terms of different media.

Critical perspectives

- What is the main discussion in the part 'critical perspectives'?

Goals of audience research

- Give examples of the different goals of audience research.

Alternative traditions of research

- Describe the three different research traditions.

Types of audience

- McQuail states that there are four main audience types. Explain these types with recent examples.

Activity and selectivity

- Explain ritualized and instrumental media use in practical terms.

Chapter 16: Audience formation and experience

How does the public use the media and in what way is that related to the shaping of the audience?

The 'why' of media use

- Explain how the three different 'research schools' approach (pp. 404-6) media use behaviour.
- Although a 'good deal' is known about audience formation, other developments are still a 'mystery' according to McQuail (p. 420); what does he mean by that?
- Explain the three variables that influence media use with examples of your own media use (p. 421).

The uses and gratifications approach

- Explain the basic assumptions and the media-person interactions of the *Uses and Gratifications* approach.
- What are the weaknesses of this approach?
- How does the distinction between expectation and satisfaction explain changes in media use behaviour?

An integrated model of audience choice

- What two sorts of factors play a role in media use? Give examples for each of these factors.
- Why is this 'integrated' model *behavioural* and the 'media orientation model' *structural*?

Public and private spheres of media use

- What can be meant by the term 'public' in media use?

Subculture and audience

- Why is the relation between subculture and media so important?

Life-style

- Why is the life-style approach different from the idea that media use is related to social class?

Gendered audiences

- What is the essence of the gendered audience according to McQuail? Give some practical examples (with different genders).

Sociability and uses of the media

- Why can it be satisfying to see a 'bad' movie?
- Explain why media use can be seen as social isolation but also as a social event.

Normative framing of media use

- Why is there a tendency to see heavy media use as a 'bad' thing?
- Explain why media use can be associated with feelings of duty and guilt as well.

The view from the audience

- What is meant by *affective direction* and *para-social interaction*?

Media fandom

- What is the difference between attachment, identification, capture and fandom?

The end of the audience?

- How do terms like segmentation and fragmentation relate to 'the end of the audience'?
- What are the four stages of fragmentation?

The 'escape' of the audience

- What are the possible consequences of the overabundance or overload of media supply?

The future of the audience

- Why is a fundamental change of the audience (as predicted by some) perhaps not really possible?

Part 7: Effects

What sorts of effects can we expect from the media and how can these different sort of effects be categorized?

- Chapter 17 is devoted to the history of thinking about media effects and to the question of what sort of effects we can expect.
- In Chapter 18 social cultural effects, mostly unintended, are discussed.
- In Chapter 19 the focus is on news genre with its possible consequences for public opinion.

Chapter 17: Processes and models of media effects

How much power do the media have? There have been different answers to this question in the history of communication science. And effects can also be categorized in different ways.

The premise of media effect

- Explain the effect-paradox that McQuail is talking about.

The natural history of media effect research and theory: four phases

- Four phases in the thinking about media effects can be distinguished. What are these phases and what are the most important characteristics of each of these phases?
- How does James Carey explain this shift in thinking about media effects?

Types of communicative power

- Explain the difference between the behavioural model of effects and the sociological model.
- What is 'symbolic power' and what is, according to McQuail, the most successful way to exercise such power?

Levels and kinds of effects

- Explain the difference between cognitive, affective and behavioural effects.

Processes of media effect: a typology

- Effects can be mapped (Figure 17.2) in a model with two axes. Explain how the model works and what sort of effects are mapped.

Individual response and reaction: the SR model

- Discuss the advantages and shortcomings of the stimulus-response model.

Mediating conditions of effects

- What kind of conditions mediate media effects and what do we know about the effectiveness of these different conditions?

Source-receiver relations

- Explain how different relations between source and receiver can influence media effects.

The campaign

- When talking about the possible effects of campaigns McQuail introduces the concept of filters. How do these influence possible outcomes of the campaign?

Chapter 18: Social–cultural effects

In this chapter unintended effects, that may have social and cultural consequences, are discussed. These are the sort of effects that are referred to in discussions about the sometimes possible harmful societal effects of the media.

A model of behavioural effect

- Explain the elaborated stimulus-response model.

The media, violence and crime

- What are the three basic assumptions when the relations between violent TV-content and children are concerned? Explain the three theoretical models on TV-effects.
- The actual evidence for media-effects concerning TV-violence is, however, contested. Explain this discussion.
- How can media content be related to *fright* and *crime* and are these hypotheses supported by evidence?

Collective reaction effects

- What kind of 'unintended' effects on social groups can be distinguished and what is the role of the media in these outcomes?

Diffusion of innovations and development

- Explain the information diffusion model.
- How can the knowledge gap be defined and under what circumstances can the media close this gap?

Social learning theory

- How can the social learning theory be applied to media use?

Socialization

- Explain why evidence of socialization effects is not very clear.

Social control and consciousness formation

- How does the propaganda model of Chomsky and Herman work?
- McQuail mentions the concept of *media omission*; explain what he means by that and why it is important.

Cultivation

- Cultivation is, according to McQuail, the best documented and investigated media effect theory. Explain how this theory works and if there is ample evidence to support the theory (p. 494-7)

Entertainment effects

- What is *escapism* and why is this concept 'inadequate' according to McQuail.

Chapter 19: News, public opinion and political communication

Possible consequences and effects of news and information are discussed in this chapter; how is public opinion affected by various forms of political communication?

Learning from news

- What factors influence the likelihood that someone learns from news and is it possible to differentiate between media?
- How do framing and exemplification work in learning from news?

Trust and credibility

- Why would people with outspoken views tend to read news more in a hegemonic way than people with moderate views?
- Explain why different media have different credibility.

News diffusion

- Explain the difference between the J- and S-shape forms of news diffusion.

Framing effects

- Explain how media frames and audience frames can be the result of four different 'framing processes'.
- What is the difference between the *cognitive* and the *constructionist* model of framing?

Agenda-setting

- Why is priming a specific aspect of agenda-setting?

Effects on public opinion and attitudes

- Explain why attitudes and opinions are hard to measure.
- What is cognitive dissonance?

The elaboration-likelihood model (ELM) of influence

- Explain the two ways of processing information in the ELM-model.

The spiral of silence

- Explain this theory and the problems that arise when the theory is tested.
- Why is this theory 'a close neighbour to mass society theory'?
- What is the third party effect?

Structuring reality and unwitting bias

- Explain how long-term media effects can be brought about unintentionally and what sorts of effects these are.
- What is meant by unwitting bias and pseudo-events?

Risk communication

- How can the relation between real crime, crime reporting and public fear of crime be explained?

Political communication effects in democracies

- There are three ways of seeing the role of the media in society (p. 523-4). Explain these three different views.
- What do we know about media and election campaigns?

Effects on political institutions and processes

- What is meant by the 'triumph of media logic over political logic'?

Event outcomes

- How plausible is the CNN-effect?

Propaganda and war

- Originally propaganda was a neutral term – explain with some examples why it has mainly negative connotations now.
- What factors contribute to 'successful' war propaganda?