

GLOSSARY

Active Audience: The term refers to the agency or creativity of media audiences. Audiences are seen to be active interpreters of media texts.

Agency: By agency we mean the capacity that human beings have for creativity and critical self-reflection in the face of structures or constraints. (See also structure.)

Asymmetrical Relations of Power: Unequal relationships of power in the social world with particular reference to how inequality manifests itself in terms of people's position in the social structure of modern capitalist societies based upon one's class, ethnicity or gender in one or other combination.

Blue Collar: See working class.

Class: The categorization of members of a society according to socio-economic status. Class is one of three key variables (the others being ethnicity and gender) used to understand inequality and social stratification in modern societies. (See also working class.)

Conglomerate: Large-scale corporations that operate at national and transnational levels. Conglomerates are made up of a range of corporations that have strong monopolistic tendencies and are either vertically or horizontally integrated in terms of their ownership structure. Media corporations may be part of larger media conglomerates or conglomerates of a more general nature who have economic interests outside of the media industry. (See also integration, vertical and horizontal.)

Constructionist: Researchers interested in media audiences use the term 'constructionist' to describe the discursive and reflexive activities of media audiences.

Content Analysis: Traditionally, content analysis referred to a research method used to count the occurrence of specific phenomena – e.g. particular kinds of representations – within media texts. More recently content analysis has come to refer to either quantitative or qualitative analysis of media texts. Qualitative content analysis can involve a close critical reading of a media text – focusing for

example on its discursive dimensions – rather than an attempt to count the occurrence of specific phenomena within a text.

Convergence: As used in this textbook the term convergence means the coming together or merging of media technologies and media organizations. Media organizations, for example, concerned with ‘old media’ and ‘new media’ converge through the process of conglomeration. Recent developments with the mobile or cell phone allowing video-streaming or photography are an example of how a range of media technologies can converge.

Core, Peripheral and Semi-Peripheral Societies: World System Theory sees the world as being divided into core, peripheral and semi-peripheral societies. The labour forces and raw materials of peripheral and semi-peripheral societies are exploited in order to create goods and services for the core societies in the western capitalist world. (See also developing and developed world and third world.)

Counterhegemonic: See hegemony and ideology.

Deserving Poor: The poor or socially excluded who are deemed to be worthy of assistance or help. The deserving poor are believed to be poor through no fault of their own and are deserving of state or other forms of support or assistance. The deserving poor are sometimes referred to as ‘God’s Poor’. (See also undeserving poor.)

Developing and Developed World: Both of these concepts are problematic, particularly the former. The term ‘developing world’ seems to imply that the poorer regions of the globe are (slowly) catching up with the more prosperous parts. The notion of the developed world is also troublesome in that it masks the existence of poverty and inequality in the northern hemisphere. (See also third world; core, peripheral and semi-peripheral societies.)

Digital Divide: A concept used to highlight the gap between the information rich and information poor. While the digital divide is most apparent between northern and southern hemispheres, the concept may also be used to understand information inequalities in the ‘developed world’. The concept of the digital divide warns us to be sceptical about the widely used concepts such as the global village and the information society.

Discourse: A form of knowledge.

Discourse Analysis: A method of research focused on the analysis of text and talk, discourse analysis is concerned with the use of language in a social context and the relationship between language use and (unequal) power relationships.

Dominant Ideology: See ideology.

Effects: The effects model of media analysis stresses the power of media content over media audiences. The latter are usually constructed as being passive in the face of powerful media messages. The metaphor of the hypodermic syringe injecting its contents into the minds of audience members has long been used as a way of conceptualizing the media effects paradigm.

Empirical: That which is observable.

Epistemological: Epistemology is a branch of philosophy concerned with truth or knowledge.

Ethnicity: Within sociology the term ethnicity has come to replace the problematic concept of race. By ethnicity we mean the shared common cultural heritage of a group. Membership of an ethnic group (and not always a minority ethnic group) can have a strong bearing on one's life-chances and opportunities. Ethnicity is one of three key variables (along with class and gender) used to understand inequality in modern societies. There is an important body of content analysis-based media research on how ethnic groups are problematized in a media setting.

Ethnography, Ethnographic: A research method that has its roots in social anthropology, ethnography seeks to understand and describe social behaviour in its natural everyday setting. The ethnographic approach uses a wide range of qualitative research methodologies such as participant observation, observation and interviews as a source of data. Traditionally, doing ethnographic work meant engaging in fieldwork for long periods of time, but a marked feature of recent ethnographic work within media analysis is the truncated nature of the fieldwork. (See also participant OBSERVATION.)

E-zines: Internet-based magazines or newsletters. These are often aimed at specific interest groups.

Focus Groups: A research method using unstructured or semi-structured group interviews. The groups in question might be selected on the basis of gender, age or occupation. Focus groups may be used either as a sole or supplementary research method.

Feminist: The feminist perspective is concerned with gender inequalities in modern and post-modern societies. Inequalities are seen to stem from the patriarchal character of these social systems.

Frame Analysis: Influenced by the work of the sociologist Erving Goffman, frame analysis in a media setting examines the use of interpretative frames in constructing media content. Media professionals resort to using interpretative frames in telling stories about the social world. The agenda-setting perspective would suggest that the selective framing of news stories, for example, has an important bearing on public beliefs about matters of social, economic and political importance.

Genre: In a media studies context genre means distinct types or categories of media content such as punk rock or heavy metal music; television soap operas or news programming, action movies or romantic dramas. (See also *intertextual*.)

Gender: One's gender is not the same as one's biological sex. The categories male and female are social constructs. Through the process of socialization individuals are taught that particular sets of values, behaviours and roles are 'natural' to their biological sex. The mass media play a hugely significant role in this process.

Globalization: The term globalization is at once both multi-faceted and ambiguous. As a process globalization refers to a number of things – the restructuring of economic activities on global lines; the apparent 'shrinkage' of time and space as a result of new information and communications technologies; the increased awareness of the global in everyday life; cultural homogenization and the intensification of local identities. The media industries (and conglomerates especially) have globalized in terms of both their reach and their presence in a range of core, peripheral and semi-peripheral societies. Media globalization has resulted in the wider circulation of media texts and has given rise to new kinds of concerns and questions for audience researchers in particular. (See also *GLOCALIZATION*.)

Globalization: Occurs when media audiences appropriate, localize and hybridize globally circulated media texts. In interpreting such texts audiences 'make their own' of them.

Hegemony: The dominance of one social group over another. Hegemony may be achieved through either force or consent. Hegemonic ideologies are those ideologies that facilitate or enable domination to take place. Counterhegemonic ideologies are ideas that run counter to those expressed within the dominant ideology.

Hermeneutic: Interpretative.

Homogenization: Refers to the sameness evident in the world as a result of economic and cultural globalization. McDonaldization is one of the more obvious examples of homogenization.

Hybrid: The term can have two key meanings. Hybrid media texts may be created when their producers or creators mix the ingredients from more than one media genre. Hybridization also occurs when globally circulated media texts are appropriated by audiences and are localized.

Hyperreality: According to Baudrillard, in the media saturated post-modern world it is no longer a question of us having to examine how the media represent 'reality'. Media 'reality' has become the (hyper) reality for most members of society.

Ideology: At its most basic ideology means the 'Science of Ideas'. In media analysis the emphasis is on examining how the mass media construct and disseminate

ideas that are of benefit to the dominant class or other social group. We usually differentiate between dominant or hegemonic ideologies about class, ethnic or gender relations and other counter-hegemonic ideologies evident in media content.

Information Rich, Information Poor: See digital divide.

Infotainment: The merging of information and entertainment usually in a news setting. It may also refer to the increasing tendency within more serious media content of entertainment masquerading as information.

Integration, Horizontal and Vertical: The terms 'vertical' and 'horizontal' integration refer to two contrasting styles of media ownership structure. With vertical integration a media company (usually a conglomerate) owns and controls all aspects of the production, marketing, distribution and selling of a media product. Media companies that are horizontally integrated own and control a range of media companies involved in different kinds of activities such as printing, broadcasting and ICT.

Intertextuality: The tendency for media texts to make reference to or make use of some of the component parts of other kinds of media texts or genres that audiences are likely to be familiar with. A television advert for soap powder making use of some of the ingredients of a James Bond movie would be an example.

Localization: The term 'localization' is used in two ways in this textbook. A key facet of the globalization process is the tendency for local identities to intensify. Globally circulated media texts may be appropriated by local audiences to fit local conditions. Global media conglomerates also engage in localization in that they will create media products to suit the characteristics of the local market in order to ensure greater market penetration and domination.

Marxist Perspective: The Marxist perspective is concerned with explaining the inequalities (and contradictions) inherent in capitalist society, in terms of media analysis, the focus is on media companies as examples par excellence of capitalist organizations and more particularly on how the mass media facilitate the continuation of capitalism (and globalization) by representing it as being inevitable and desirable.

Mass Media: Media industries and technologies capable of communicating with large numbers of people in diverse social situations.

Media Moguls: Powerful individuals who have a controlling interest in multi-media conglomerates. In addition to their economic power, media moguls are believed to wield considerable political influence in the shaping of state policy about media and other matters of economic and political importance.

Methodology/Methods: The means by which research is undertaken. Researchers may use quantitative or qualitative research methods. In recognition of the

complexity of the social world, and the fact that no one research method is trouble free, a growing number of researchers make use of a combination of research methods in order to more fully understand their particular research question.

Modernity: Increasingly a contentious term modernity refers to the era in which societies became industrialized, secular and urban. The contention arises from whether or not modernity has given way to postmodernity. (See also postmodern, postmodernity.)

Narrative Analysis: A research method concerned with the narrative structure of media texts. How do individual media texts such as reports broadcast on television news programmes tell or narrate stories about the social world? What conventions are employed in explaining 'Terrorism' for example?

Oligopolies: Powerful media conglomerates who dominate and control the global media industry.

Participant Observation: A research method most associated with the ethnographic approach. The individual researcher immerses herself in the society, community or organization under study, usually for a long period of time. Participant observation may be covert or overt. It may be used as the sole method of data collection or as a precursor to other forms of data collection such as interviews. (See also ethnographic approach.)

Patriarchy: The control and domination of women by men. Patriarchal ideologies are ones that legitimize the continuation of male dominance in positions of influence and power.

Political Economy Perspective: A theoretical perspective concerned with understanding how the capitalist class promote and ensure their dominant position in capitalist society.

Postmodern, Postmodernity: A lively debate has ensued in recent years as to whether the era of modernity has come to pass. Postmodernists argue that modernity has been replaced by a postmodern era characterized by cultural and economic globalization; homogenization; increased fragmentation of local identities and media saturation. Proponents of postmodern theory treat the certainties inherent in more traditional sociological approaches towards understanding the social world in general and the mass media in particular with some scepticism. The postmodern perspective celebrates what it sees as the fragmented nature of postmodernity. Media reality has become hyper reality or more real than reality itself. A key criticism of postmodernism is the lack of empirical evidence to support the many arguments which state that we have moved on from the era of modernity. (See also modern, modernity.)

Power: The term 'power' is used in two key ways in this textbook. First, in terms of the power of media texts to shape audience understandings of the social world and second in terms of unequal power relationships based upon class, ethnicity, gender or geographical location.

Public Service Broadcasting: Traditionally dominant in Western Europe, Public Service Broadcasting refers to publicly owned media companies engaged in the production and broadcast of radio and television programmes. In the face of increased competition from privately owned (and increasingly transnational) media companies, Public Service Broadcasting organizations have re-iterated their public sphere function.

Public Sphere: A space allowing discourse and debate of political importance. The public sphere is seen as an essential element in the democratization of modern societies and ideally the mass media should facilitate such a space. The processes of privatization, homogenization, 'dumbing down' and the rise of infotainment all militate against the mass media providing a public sphere for media audiences.

Qualitative: Researchers who are interested in questions about meaning and interpretation tend to make use of non-quantitative or qualitative research methods. Key qualitative methods include interviewing, participant observation and semiotic analysis.

Quantitative: The term 'quantitative' refers to research methods such as content analysis or surveys that seek to count the occurrences of specific phenomena e.g. racist ideologies within media content such as newspaper editorials or the measurement of public attitudes and beliefs about welfare recipients.

Reception/Reception Analysis: A model of media analysis concerned primarily with the interpretative work engaged in by audiences in their engagement with media texts.

Reflexivity: The concept of reflexivity refers to the capacity of social actors for reflection, criticism and self-awareness.

Representation: This form of media analysis is primarily concerned with how media texts represent the social world.

Resistance: The ways in which audience members may reject the preferred or intended readings or meanings in a media text. The term is often used to describe how audience members reject the dominant or hegemonic codes evident within a media text. Audience members are said to be 'reading against the grain' in rejecting or subverting dominant or hegemonic ideology.

Semiotic(s): A method of analysis concerned with the functioning of signs and symbols within a text.

Socialization: Socialization theory examines how we learn to become members of society. Agents of socialization include the family, peer group, the education system and the mass media. We learn from each of these agencies about norms, beliefs, values, rules and ideologies.

Structure(s): Constraints that determine or shape human behaviour. In doing media work, for example, media professionals may be constrained by rules imposed by an employer, by the laws governing broadcasting or print journalism and by audience expectations.

Third World: The poorer and dependent parts of the world especially in the southern hemisphere. (See also developed & developing worlds.)

Texts: The increased concentration within media analysis on the agency or creativity of audience members came hand in hand with an emphasis upon seeing media content as texts rather than messages. Implicit in the notion of audience members 'reading' media texts is the process of active, interpretative work in the creation of meaning.

Transnational: As used in this textbook the term 'transnational' refers to both media companies or organizations and media texts. Many media texts are increasingly transnational because they are circulated globally. Transnational media conglomerates are media companies that operate in several countries.

Undeserving Poor: The undeserving poor are those categories of poor or socially excluded who are demonized and who are personally blamed for their poverty and exclusion. They are sometimes termed the 'Devil's Poor.' (See also deserving poor.)

Working Class: The term working class is more and more difficult owing in small measure to the restructuring of work itself. Broadly speaking the term refers to those engaged in manual work. The working class may be further sub-divided into skilled manual workers; semi-skilled manual workers and unskilled manual workers. The term blue-collar is used in North America to refer to the working class.