exposes. The news, as Hamilton (2004) remarks, is an "information good," a thing to be sold to advertisers and audiences. Although major corporate scandals get news coverage when they break, news organizations do not invest heavily in investigating private-sector actions (→ Investigative Reporting). News organizations and journalists do not so much promote corporate power as they ignore it, allowing business leaders wide leeway in their dealings, thus helping to maintain a distinction between marketplace power and governing power.

SEE ALSO: ▶ Bias in the News ▶ Conflict as Media Content ▶ Framing of the News ▶ Horse Race Coverage ▶ Instrumental Actualization ▶ Investigative Reporting ▶ Journalists' Role Perceptions ▶ News Ideologies ▶ Partisan Press ▶ Party–Press Parallelism ▶ Political News ▶ Professionalization of Journalism ▶ Quality of the News ▶ Standards of News

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Media Production and Content

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Research in the sub-field of media production and content seeks to describe and explain the symbolic world of the media with reference to a variety of contributing societal, institutional, organizational, and normative factors. It draws boundaries around a large and diverse body of research efforts, predominantly social science, but also including more interpretive cultural analysis. If much of the communication field has concerned itself with the effects of media, and the process by which they are produced (→ Media

Effects; Exposure to Communication Content), this more recently emerging area has treated the media map of the world itself as problematic, something to be understood and predicted through an awareness of underlying forces. These forces provide the context of "media production," which is examined for its systematic ties to "content." Understanding these "messages" that constitute the symbolic environment is an ambitious task, given the multitude of factors influencing the media. But locating these questions within such a conceptual framework has begun to allow the field of communication to devote the same sustained research to the creation, control, and shape of the mediated environment as it has to the effects on audiences of that environment. The same research tools used so extensively to examine media effects can be turned on those media and their links with the culture of other organizations and institutions (→ Research Methods).

MAPPING THE FIELD OF RESEARCH

Of course, in such a contentious domain, examining what "is" takes place within the context of what "should be" or what "could be." The highly normative and politicized questions of media operation, bias, and control have moved to the center of the public arena, with an increasing number of media-literate citizens developing and promoting their own views (→ Media Literacy). Thus, these scholarly research questions are closely related to press criticism that circulates among activists, policy elites, and media professionals themselves. Questions of empirical social science are guided by political, legal, and ethical concerns to yield results with direct implications for social policy (→ Communication and Law; Media Policy). Systematic scholarly research helps at least to provide a solid factual basis for the contending interests.

The *Glasgow Media Group* is a model in many ways for this style of research, diligently collecting since the mid-1970s media transcripts and broadcasts, carefully examining their messages regarding issues of labor, war, and other controversies, and linking them to media and social structures (Glasgow Media Group 1976, 1980). Although such research has become more commonplace, government and media professionals reacted at the time with strong criticism, sensitive to the claim that they played a role in shaping the news. Such scholarly work has helped make the point that media content can be structured and framed in ways that support certain interests, without any one person or group intending or conspiring to do so. This area of the field takes seriously the proposal advanced by Thompson (1990) that in order to understand media in modern culture, we must examine media in specific social-historical contexts, consider the relevant cultural objects, and then interpret how they are connected (→ Content Analysis, Qualitative; Content Analysis, Quantitative).

This research area is also often broadly referred to as "*media sociology*" (reviewed in Berkowitz 1997; Schudson 2001, 2003). Certainly, many of the participant observation ethnographies of newsrooms and other media are so labeled, particularly given their use of traditional sociological fieldwork methods (e.g., Tuchman 1978; Gans 1979; Fishman 1980; → Ethnography of Communication). But the area also encompasses the more psychological studies of individual media workers, and how their personal traits affect their decisions (e.g., Weaver & Wilhoit 2006; → Journalism; News Workers). Many media critics lodge the blame for press bias (→ Bias in the News) squarely with individual

journalists, or find fault with the entertainment industry because of "out-of-touch" Hollywood producers. But the most important explanation for these communication products lies in structural bias, not individual prejudice.

Indeed, as the production of communication messages has become a huge financial enterprise, it is now a natural step to begin applying the same explanatory models we would use to understand other industrial production. Although media organizations – including those supported by the state – employ many creative professionals, the work of those individuals is routinized and structured to yield a predictable product (Bantz et al. 1981). Even the news, which should by definition be the unexpected, must be controlled, anticipated, and packaged to allow the organization to manage its task effectively: in Tuchman's (1978) phrase, "routinizing the unexpected" (→ News Routines). Outside of the US fieldwork tradition, media sociology has been used in other international contexts – particularly Europe and Latin America – to refer to the entire context of media production and performance, the entire social structural context (McNair 2006). That is the sense in which it is used here.

ANALYZING THE BASIS OF MEDIA POWER

In an influential article critical of the media sociology of the time, Gitlin (1978) took the field to task for overemphasizing the short-run, marketing-oriented, attitudinal, and behavioral responses of the media audiences (→ Attitudes, Values, and Beliefs, Media Effects on). The result of this relatively micro-, individual level definition of influence was to conceptually render the media powerless (and thus not a social problem of great concern), with audiences relatively resistant to persuasion (→ Media Effects, Strength of; Media Effects, History of). Casting the media effect of "reinforcement" as a profound one rather than an indication of impotence, Gitlin argued, opened up important terrain for research: what effects do the very presence and structure itself of media have for what gets defined as normal and legitimate? This version of media power is perhaps best exemplified by Herman and Chomsky (2002) in their propaganda model writings, in which they argue that media content is the result of a number of filters, such as → advertising, ownership, sourcing of news to elites (→ Ownership in the Media; News Sources). These filters yield only that material serviceable to the status quo and create a double standard of portrayal for "us" versus our "enemies." The questions in the area of media production and content, then, take a perspective somewhere between the two extremes. Media are neither unproblematic and benign, a mere forum for messages from which the audience can choose, nor are they simply tools of the corporate state for producing serviceable propaganda. Media have their own logic and must be examined within the context of their own relative autonomy (→ Media Logic).

Historically, studies proliferated in the early post-World War II communication field, continuing to the present, describing various features of news and media content, but often these have been largely unconnected and lacking a consistent conceptual framework (e.g., Tamborini et al. 2000). Beginning in the 1950s Warren Breed (1955) and David Manning White (1950) were among the first scholars to examine the influences on content in a more direct way, with their examinations of social control in the newsroom and the story selections of an editor, described as the news "gatekeeper" (→ Gatekeeping).

But others did not follow their lead in communication until much later, a peculiar thing considering the subversive insight that news is, in White's terms, "what the gatekeeper says it is," and bearing in mind Breed's finding that organizational policy was used to screen out certain happenings from getting into the newspaper.

Reese and Ballinger (2001) took a closer look at these forerunner studies and their reception by other scholars to explain why they did not generate more follow-up research. The reason, they suggested, lay in how the findings were interpreted within the field at that time: the gatekeepers were deemed to be representatives of the larger culture, and news policies were assumed to help identify as news those events of interest to the community – rendering the production and control issues unthreatening to the public interest and, as a result, of less interest to researchers. Eventually, however, these questions returned to the fore, particularly given growing public skepticism about the performance of media and awareness of their corporate and technological constraints (→ Communication as a Field and Discipline).

The traditional mass communication field was associated with → surveys and controlled experiments (→ Experiment, Laboratory), isolating an effect of interest within the audience, whereas the media production and content domain is much more diverse and ranges across many levels of analysis and research traditions, making it more difficult for any coherent overall "theory" to emerge. Not all questions of media content and control can be reduced to such straightforward linear relationships as those between message and receiver (→ Linear and Nonlinear Models of Causal Analysis). Many such questions are qualitative, interpretive, and naturally resistant to being described in more quantitative, variable-analytic terminology. But at least conceptualizing them together helps us to assemble previously disparate strands of research and serves to connect, within a consistent style of explanation, the audience-and-effects side of the field with the shaping and control of content. From the intuitively appealing idea of media agenda-setting, for example, it is an easy rhetorical step to ask "what sets the media's agenda?" (→ Agenda-Setting Effects). Just by asking such a question within the framework of communication research gives it a certain legitimacy (see Reese 1991).

LEVELS OF ANALYSIS

In understanding how the symbolic environment is shaped, or "constructed," it is useful to have a way to classify the many kinds of forces at work. The *hierarchy of influences model* describes the multiple levels of influences that impinge on media simultaneously and suggests how influence at one level may interact with that at another (Shoemaker & Reese 1996). Within the realm of newsmaking, for example, the personal bias of individual journalists may affect their reporting (→ Instrumental Actualization), but journalists of a particular leaning often self-select into organizations because of their pre-existing policies, history, and organizational culture. The news organization and its employees, in turn, must function within other institutional relationships and ideological boundaries set by the larger society. Thus, the individual functions within a web of organizational and ideological constraints. This model organizes various theoretical perspectives on the shaping of media content, including the suggested categories of Gans (1979) and Gitlin (1980), set out below.

Content is influenced by media workers' socialization and attitudes. This is a communicator-centered approach, emphasizing the psychological factors impinging on an individual's work: professional, personal, and political.

Content is influenced by media organizations and routines. This approach argues that content emerges directly from the nature of how media work is organized. The organizational routines within which an individual operates form a structure, constraining action while also enabling it.

Content is influenced by other social institutions and forces. This approach finds the major impact on content located external to organizations and the communicator: economic, political, and cultural forces. Audience pressures can be found in the "market" explanation of "giving the public what it wants" (→ Media Economics; Media Events and Pseudo-Events; Spin Doctor).

Content is a function of ideological positions and maintains the status quo. The so-called hegemony approach defines the major influence on media content as the pressures to support the status quo, i.e., to support the interests of those in power in society (→ News Ideologies).

Refining these perspectives, the hierarchy of influences model sets out *five levels of influence*: individual, routines, organizational, extra-media (institutional), and ideological (socio-cultural). As a guide to research, it helps explicate key concepts on which research is based and unpacks those multiple levels of meaning (Reese 2001). Particularly for journalism, such a model helps to untangle many of the criticisms of press performance (→ Quality of the News), identifies their implicit normative and theoretical assumptions, and suggests appropriate kinds of evidence. For example, conservative media critics have located the source of bias with the individual journalist, calling for more balance in hiring practices and regularly scolding specific news anchors. Left-leaning critics, on the other hand, find fault more with the structure and ownership of the commercial media system, arguing for more public control and protections from the corruption of big advertisers. The irony is that journalists give respectability to attacks from their right flank, which even if targeting them as individuals at least attribute to them the professional latitude to create bias in the first place. By relegating journalists to mere tools of a larger corporate system, the left critique is less professionally satisfying. Both critiques can be more easily understood when we know from which level they are mainly conceived.

With this rough outline of the field in mind, the entries that are associated with it can be sorted into some key categories. They describe research exploring the media–reality connection and the specific shape of the media map. This leads to a set of normative questions concerning what that map *ought* to look like (→ Media Performance). Beyond those questions, in turn, are those entries concerning how that map is produced in practice – and in the various kinds of media, with their different professional routines and organizational dimensions. Many researchers come to these questions with a particular medium of interest: whether television, radio, or the most recent technological innovation. Others are concerned with a particular practice or genre of content that cuts across media forms, such as crime, violence, tabloid news, soap operas, or news. In either case, the media forms and their practices are closely interrelated.

THE SYMBOLIC ENVIRONMENT

The compelling *point of departure for this sub-field* is the idea that media content provides a map of the world that differs from the way that world really is, making the research task one of explaining those discrepancies. Concepts such as "accuracy," "balance," and "bias" all imply some assessment of the success with which media adequately portray the subjects at issue. Elements of "truth" and "credibility" further underscore the benchmarking of media against some external standard of reality. Because of its social importance to the political system, news and public affairs content has been given special emphasis in this regard and raises a host of normative issues. Concepts, such as "neutrality," signal the desirability that media not intrude into what would otherwise be freely expressed "reality" within a community (→ Neutrality). In political science, for example, some studies (e.g., Patterson 1993) implicitly assume that media professionals should not interfere with the ability of political actors to communicate with the electorate (→ Political Communication; Political Journalists). If, contrary to this neutrality, these professionals intrude to shape the symbolic environment, then we may question along what lines they do so. Is there enough information provided for citizens to act effectively in a democracy? Are they given content that is degrading to the culture? Are media portrayals for good or ill with respect to the overall health of the society?

   Historically, there have been different expectations for news and entertainment, but the current mix of news, entertainment, and reality shows blurs these normative categories. Nevertheless, similar questions can be asked and examined across the entire array of media content. Although by definition not seeking to correspond directly with an object in reality, fictional accounts speak to larger truths, the human condition, archetypes grounded in reality – even if they are not bound by the same expectations we have of nonfiction, news accounts, and other documentary media portrayals (→ Fictional Media Content). Both forms constitute a map of the social world, and they possess certain regularities and typical features that can be empirically described. These media forms both speak to what matters, who is important, and where the action is. They both tell stories to the culture, with the fictional being no less "truthful" just because it did not actually "happen." That is why, conceptually, this area of the field often speaks to a larger media symbolic environment, using similar language and models to describe how a picture of the world, a "manufactured reality," is created across the media spectrum.

   The problematic issue of media content has become not only a basic scholarly premise but an article of faith among the many media watchdog groups that monitor press performance – and who fault those media for not adequately representing the "reality" they have in mind. In both scholarly and popular discussions of media content, particularly news content, there is a tendency to ask how "objectively" it reflects reality. The "*mirror*" *hypothesis* – the expectation that media reflect social reality with little distortion – is no longer taken seriously, although this lack of distortion may be vigorously defended in self-serving attempts by media professionals to argue the accuracy of their work, in holding up a "mirror to society." Historically, the neutral, objective journalist model favored in the US gave implicit support to this idea, although it now seems rather quaint and self-evidently untrue. In a more subtle version, media are rendered neutral or "objective," by reflecting the self-regulating and balancing compromises between those

who sell information to the media and those who buy it (→ Objectivity in Reporting; Extra-Media Data). A concise statement of a related view was expressed in the British context by the Committee of Inquiry on the Future of Broadcasting in 1977 (although the same view is still to be heard from defensive media executives there and elsewhere): "What protects the public against manipulation of news reporting is not the centralisation of editorial decisions. It is the variety of news outlets and of editorial judgments, both in broadcasting and in the press, which is maintained in the nation" (Annan 1977, 17.30; → Journalism: Normative Theories).

THE MEDIA–REALITY RELATIONSHIP

To better understand the different research approaches in this field, it is helpful to grasp some key philosophical ideas concerning the media–reality relationship. The idea itself of a "reality" out there with which to compare media is problematic, and different research styles take such an epistemological issue as a point of departure. An empirical approach assumes that media representations have their correspondence to objects in the real world. The notion of bias itself, used by many press watchdog groups, suggests that media deviate in some measurable way from a desirable standard that can be independently known (Hackett 1984; → Postmodernism and Communication). Traditional measures have involved assessing the relative balance of news accounts, including the time and space devoted to different candidates in electoral races. This assumes that the ideal pattern is evenly split between (in the US context) the two major parties, with any deviation a function of political bias. Research has often designated some other reality benchmark to determine how media accounts deviate from it (e.g., violent crime is over-represented in news and media accounts, compared to its actual statistical occurrence; → Violence as Media Content).

Viewed another way, media content is fundamentally a *construction* (→ Constructivism), and, as such, can never find its analog in some external benchmark, a "mirror" of reality. Media-constructed reality has taken its place alongside other social constructions, whether mental illness, criminality, sexuality, gender, race, and other identities no longer considered self-evidently "natural." If content is a construction, understanding its special quality requires understanding of the construction process (→ Construction of Reality through the News). That assigns greater importance to the research in this sub-field, which takes as its basic premise that the media necessarily exert their own unique shaping power to the symbolic environment, a shaping that is open to explanation using various theoretical perspectives. The constructionist perspective assumes that "reality" is made in the process of our attempts to apprehend it, cannot be separated apart from those efforts. Journalists, for example, "see" things because their "news net" is set up to allow them to be seen (Tuchman 1978; Fishman 1980). Expressed another way, news does not reside somewhere in the environment waiting to be discovered; news does not become news until sources promote "occurrences" into "events" (Molotch & Lester 1974).

A number of concepts imply the relationship media do or ought to have with reality. *Studies of bias*, as mentioned, have targeted news media for deviating from some appropriate standard, whether some evenly balanced distribution of partisan attention or reflection of the demographic distribution of various ethnic and racial groups. Coverage

of electoral politics in the US has typically been found to hew close to a balanced approach, at least with regard to time and attention, especially given the tight watch the political parties keep over it (D'Alessio & Allen 2000). Media are not monolithic, of course; newspapers, for example, vary in their stance on issues, including such polarizing subjects as the Israeli/Palestinian question (Zelizer et al. 2002), and bias does intrude in more subtle ways. Fictional portrayals, particularly on television, have also been examined to determine if they privilege, exclude, or stereotype certain groups. The cultural indicators studies of → Gerbner and colleagues, for example, have involved extensive research into prime-time television to show what behaviors and groups are over- or underrepresented – all with implicit external benchmarks (Gerbner et al. 1978; → Cultivation Theory; Cultivation Effects).

PATTERNS OF MEDIATED "REALITIES"

Gerbner and other scholars have been influential in articulating a coherent map of the world that cuts across specific programs and networks. As a result, it is possible to make a number of generalizations about the shape of the overall media *symbolic environment*.

In general, media accounts – whether news or entertainment – do give more prominent attention to *groups with greatest privilege*: whites, men, urban dwellers, and professionals. In his often-cited work on national news, Gans (1979) refers to these as the "knowns." They are known for being known, and their fame underscores the appropriateness of their further visibility. When less powerful groups, the "unknowns," enter the symbolic arena, they do so via deviant behavior, whereas the "knowns" are present by the mere routine performance of their official duties. Thus, media police the boundaries of the culture with a dialectic interplay between the normal and the abnormal (e.g., Hall et al. 1978; Ericson et al. 1987). In his cultural indicators project, Gerbner and colleagues focused on prime-time television to show who is allowed to exert their will over others, with violence being the symbolic act of power. Men, for example, are shown more often as the perpetrators of violence and women the victims (Gerbner et al. 1994). In news accounts, Entman (1990) shows that blacks are more often portrayed in a negative context. Compared to whites charged with similar crimes, they are more likely to be shown in the grasp of the police, unidentified, unmoving in the visual image – all suggesting a less "human" image. Thus, representations through media are deeply rooted in the prevailing social order (→ Media and Group Representations; Stereotyping and the Media; Crime Reporting).

Beyond this "benchmarking"-type research, analysis has turned to *how stories are framed*, or structured, based on certain organizing principles guiding journalists. The framing approach to content is more likely to take a constructionist view – everything is framed in some aspect. Framing more usefully expands upon the bias concept to emphasize the organizing principles underlying media representations that work to bring coherence to media accounts, both in the minds of media professionals and, as a result, in the audience exposed to such frames (→ Framing of the News; Framing Effects). Moving toward framing and away from bias directs attention away from some impossible goal of perfect representation and toward the more complex shared cultural understandings that media professionals develop as a function of their work and share with others in society (→ News as Discourse).

On a practical level, regardless of philosophical perspective, researchers find it useful to *compare "media reality" with "social reality"* – that is, that view of the world that is socially derived, what society knows about itself. And to the extent that media reality differs in systematic ways from these other forms of social self-knowledge, we can draw important conclusions about the structures underpinning these differences. Research is concerned with the systematic patterns of those mediated realities, and the extent to which they have real consequences for citizens and media consumers (→ Perceived Reality: Meta-Analyses).

NORMATIVE ISSUES FOR THE MEDIA MAP

Given their important societal role, the performance of media has been a central normative issue within this field. In a democratic society, the media are expected to be accountable, relatively free of undue intrusion from the state, and provide an opportunity for various members and groups to be reflected fairly (→ Accountability of the Media). In much of the developed world, this accountability is closely tied to market forces. Media products must find markets, consumers willing to pay directly through subscriptions or indirectly via their attention to advertising (→ Commercialization: Impact on Media Content). Internal normative guidelines are also upheld by professional and ethical imperatives followed by practitioners. External to the media, the state acts on behalf of citizens to regulate media and oversee them, as in the case of state-run or publicly owned media. In terms of Habermas's (1989) → public sphere, the media serve as a surrogate for that idealized place where discourse on public issues can occur on the basis of reason without being unduly influenced by either the state or the market. Thus, it concerns us if only those with economic resources are allowed to have a voice, or only those who already occupy positions of state authority. The evidence used to support claims should be clearly available, transparent, and uncorrupted by conflicts of interest. The extent to which media contribute to this ideal functioning of the public sphere is a normatively guided question for research. The tools of social science are engaged, along with the more humanities-based methods of media criticism and legal and ethical analysis.

The North American tradition of objective journalism and commercial media has located the responsibility primarily within the media themselves (Hallin 1996). In exchange for relative freedom from government intrusion, they are expected to be socially responsible, fair, and unbiased in news accounts, and the professionals within those media are expected to adhere to guidelines for taste, morality, and avoid undue sensationalism. With the *proliferation of media* through satellite, Internet, and other technologies, the key gatekeepers are no longer so easy to identify among a handful of important media organizations (→ Satellite Communication, Global; Internet; Internet News). In that respect, performance and accountability issues are more challenging for scholars given the wide array of content. It was easier in the past to describe the media map, taking as a surrogate measure, for example, the front page of the *New York Times* or the prime-time programs on the three traditional US television networks. "Taste" and responsibility issues are still relevant mainly for those broadcasters who are still obliged to please the government oversight agencies (→ Morality and Taste in Media Content).

Fining a broadcaster for an inadvertent display of a performer's breast during a US Superbowl broadcast seems quaint now considering the graphic sex and violent content

easily available over the Internet. Although what are thought of as "the media" operate largely within large organizations, the rise of the *blogosphere and other Internet-based zones of communication* have, it is argued, strengthened the public sphere and the discourse that flows outside of large institutional structures (→ Blogger; Citizen Journalism). It has also increased the capacity for public monitoring of media decision-making, cross-checking news reports, and the overall transparency of the media production process. The ability of ordinary citizens to express their own critique of media performance adds to the ability to hold violators of important norms of truthfulness and fairness up for public scrutiny (Reese et al. 2007).

Other research takes a more external perspective on media performance, considering whether the media system itself is *functioning to the benefit of society*. While the commercial media are taken for granted in the US as the natural way of supporting media content, state-funded public media are more highly regarded in Europe and elsewhere. The relative merits of these systems have been a topic of concern. A critical perspective emphasizes the extent to which the media reinforce the definitions of the powerful, marginalizing and rendering invisible those voices that threaten the status quo. In spite of the seemingly vast array of television channels and publications, research into the political economy of media has examined the extent to which ownership of these outlets is still concentrated in a handful of corporations (Bagdikian 2000; → Political Economy of the Media).

MEDIA EXPLANATORY FACTORS

On a "routines" level, research has often considered the general problems associated with producing a certain kind of message, such as news. For example, in order to solve the problem of "what is news," journalists have found it useful to assume news is what officials say it is (Sigal 1973), even as technology allows for more event-driven news (Livingston & Bennett 2003). Understandings of these general tendencies are based largely on the media sociology carried out in the US and the UK, with a significant body of research in Germany, especially concerning → news values (→ News Factors). Given the wide variation among media round the world, however, generalizations about production and content must be made with caution.

Now that more → comparative research has begun to emerge, it is easier to distinguish between those practices common across countries and those peculiar to one or the other. Esser (1999), for example, compared newspapers in the UK and Germany on the basis of their → "tabloidization," the tendency to lower journalistic standards in favor of sex, scandal, and sensationalism (→ Scandalization in the News; Sensationalism). British papers are more prone to tabloidization given their greater competitive environment, weaker legal protections for personal privacy, and lesser support for journalistic standards. Rather than claim that one country has a tabloid press and another does not, this kind of comparative research helps find general features of media production, ascertains the extent to which they are found in certain settings, and explains why they differ from place to place.

Although there are broad generalizations to be made concerning the symbolic map of the media, there are also important *differences across the various media*. These more

"organizational" issues involve the technological imperatives, audience considerations, economic and other dictates, as well as the regulatory environment that they each face. Each medium, whether radio, television, newspapers, or magazines, has its own unique problems to solve in providing a product to a reader, viewer, or listener. Each has its own historical and technological evolution within the host society. As the newest entry to the media environment, the Internet subsumes within it all of the previous media: audio, visual, and verbal. Its business model, qualities of scope, relative speed, and reach impose their own stamp on the nature of Internet news, entertainment, and other content.

INTERNATIONAL AND COMPARATIVE ISSUES

Media production and content presents challenges in attempting to summarize research internationally, given the great variety of media operations and cultural norms. The highest level of the hierarchy of influences model, the ideological or socio-cultural, considers how the media function within a society, by virtue of there being a certain kind of system – which necessarily binds them to the prevailing social order usually associated with nation-states. These considerations often require a more interpretive analysis given the difficulty in statistically manipulating the presence or absence of a certain kind of system. Such an ideological analysis may consider how the media reinforce the definitions of the powerful, with this dynamic being common to a variety of national contexts, even if manifesting itself in different ways. Definitions of the situation are naturalized within news texts (Hall et al. 1978), which can be linked to media production practices that support them. More empirical comparisons can be made of comparable cases, treated differently by news accounts because of ideological state interests, as Entman (1991) showed in differing news coverage of the shooting down of airliners by the Soviets and the US.

A *macro-level of analysis* directs attention to cross-national comparisons of media production, where important patterns can be found. Shoemaker and Cohen (2006), for example, have successfully shown that news has a number of common patterns across nations, rooted, as they argue, in socio-biological needs. As media seek global markets, certain stories and programs travel more easily than others (Herman & McChesney 1997), and as news is coordinated across national boundaries, certain stories are consistently preferred for practical reasons (Cohen et al. 1996).

News has a certain consistent set of topics and actors featured across a variety of countries, even if these are filtered through specific national cultures (→ International News Reporting). *Global changes* in media ownership, new ways of carrying out gatekeeping across national boundaries, and emerging shared norms of professionalism all give greater emphasis to this perspective (→ Globalization Theories). Given the international reach of the current media, "global events" are increasingly the subject of research (→ Globalization of the Media). When globally significant events take place, such as the handover of Hong Kong from the British to the Chinese, they are nevertheless filtered through the national prisms of various news organizations (Lee et al. 2002) or locations where the world's journalists converge to cover the same event or institution. So, under the continuing processes of globalization, this area of research faces the challenge of identifying the universal aspects of media and social representation, the enduring particularities of individual national contexts, and the increasing interactions between these levels.

SEE ALSO: ▶ Accountability of the Media ▶ Advertising ▶ Agenda-Setting Effects
▶ Attitudes, Values, and Beliefs, Media Effects on ▶ Bias in the News ▶ Blogger
▶ Citizen Journalism ▶ Commercialization: Impact on Media Content ▶ Communication
as a Field and Discipline ▶ Communication and Law ▶ Comparative Research
▶ Construction of Reality through the News ▶ Constructivism ▶ Content Analysis,
Qualitative ▶ Content Analysis, Quantitative ▶ Crime Reporting ▶ Cultivation Effects
▶ Cultivation Theory ▶ Ethnography of Communication ▶ Experiment, Laboratory
▶ Exposure to Communication Content ▶ Extra-Media Data ▶ Fictional Media
Content ▶ Framing Effects ▶ Framing of the News ▶ Gatekeeping ▶ Gerbner, George
▶ Globalization of the Media ▶ Globalization Theories ▶ Instrumental Actualization
▶ International News Reporting ▶ Internet ▶ Internet News ▶ Journalism ▶ Journ-
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Economics ▶ Media Effects ▶ Media Effects, History of ▶ Media Effects, Strength of
▶ Media Events and Pseudo-Events ▶ Media and Group Representations ▶ Media
Literacy ▶ Media Logic ▶ Media Performance ▶ Media Policy ▶ Morality and Taste in
Media Content ▶ Neutrality ▶ News as Discourse ▶ News Factors ▶ News Ideologies
▶ News Routines ▶ News Sources ▶ News Values ▶ News Workers ▶ Objectivity in
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Reality ▶ Research Methods ▶ Satellite Communication, Global ▶ Scandalization in
the News ▶ Sensationalism ▶ Spin Doctor ▶ Stereotyping and the Media ▶ Survey
▶ Tabloidization ▶ Violence as Media Content

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