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Propaganda and Persuasion Examined

An 80-year history of social science research has yielded much valuable insight into propaganda and persuasion. Researchers began to investigate propaganda after World War I, and by World War II, major studies were being conducted in attitude research. Recent research has included new insights into attitude formation, attitude accessibility, and the study of behavior. It is believed that effects are highly conditional, depending on individual differences, the context in which propaganda and persuasion take place, and a variety of contingent third variables.

THE MODERN STUDY OF PROPAGANDA AND PERSUASION

Studies of propaganda in the early part of the 20th century were antecedents to the social scientific study of persuasion. After World War II, researchers stopped referring to their subject of study as "propaganda" and started investigating various constructs of "persuasion," which has become a highly developed subject in communication and social psychology. Today, the research tradition that started in the 1920s continues with various analyses of mass-mediated information about politics, international issues, and trends in news coverage, as well as studies of media content that were

related to public concerns. Although many books date the modern study of propaganda and persuasion in the 1930s and 1940s with the beginnings of the scientific study of persuasion, interest in the use of propaganda in World War I prompted earlier investigation.

Propaganda in World War I

The period during World War I was the first time that populations of entire nations were actively involved in a global struggle. The citizens of Europe and America were asked to forego their own pleasures for the sake of the war effort. Money had to be collected; material comforts had to be sacrificed; families lost their loved ones. All-out public cooperation was essential. To accomplish these ends, attempts were made to arouse hatred and fear of the enemy and to bolster the morale of the people. Mass media were used in ways they had never been used before to propagandize entire populations to new heights of patriotism, commitment to the war effort, and hatred of the enemy. Carefully designed propaganda messages were communicated through news stories, films, photographic records, speeches, books, sermons, posters, rumors, billboard advertisements, and handbills to the general public. "Wireless" radio transmission was considered to be the new medium for shaping public attitudes. It was believed that radio propaganda could weld the masses into an amalgamation of "hate and will and hope" (Lasswell, 1927, p. 221).

Nationwide industrial efforts were mounted with great haste, and the support of civilians who worked in industry was enlisted. Propaganda was developed and used to bring about cooperation between the industrialized society and the fighting armed forces. Posters depicting workers and soldiers arm-in-arm were plastered over walls in factories throughout America. The Committee on Public Information (CPI), under the direction of George Creel, was commissioned to "sell the war to America." Creel established a Division of Labor Publications, with former labor organizer Robert Maisel as its head. Maisel's task was to produce and distribute literature to American workers. Another organization, the American Alliance for Labor and Democracy, was formed under the leadership of Samuel Gompers of the American Federation of Labor (AFL) to maintain peace and harmony in the unions in connection with the war effort.

The CPI sponsored a National Speakers Bureau on behalf of Liberty Bond sales drives and distributed more than 100 million posters and pamphlets. Wartime propaganda in America and abroad turned out to be very skillful and highly coordinated and was considered by its audiences to be quite powerful.

Although much of the propaganda was factual and accurate, some of it was deceptive and exaggerated. Both the Allies and the Germans circulated false atrocity stories. The Allies told the story of Germans boiling down corpses of their soldiers to be used for fats. The story's inventors deliberately mistranslated *kadaver* as *corpse* instead of *animal* and circulated the story of a "corpse factory" worldwide in an effort to destroy pro-German sentiments. They knew that the German word *kadaver,* which literally means "a corpse," is used in German to refer only to the body of an animal and never to that of a human, but the non-German-speaking audience did not know this. The story, invented in 1917, was not exposed as false until 1925 during a debate in the British House of Commons (Qualter, 1962, p. 66). Atrocity stories, along with other, more tasteful propaganda efforts, were considered to be quite effective.

The Aftermath of World War I and the Growing Concern About Propaganda

After the armistice, in the early 1920s, the experts involved in the development of wartime propaganda began to have second thoughts about their manipulation of the public. Some of them experienced guilt over the lies and deceptions they had helped spread.

George Creel recounted his experiences with the CPI in *How We Advertised America: The First Telling of the Amazing Story of the Committee on Public Information, 1917-1919,* published in 1920. In his book, Creel tells of the congressional attempt to suppress his report of the CPI's propaganda activities. Creel, who was proud of his activities, discussed in detail the history of the CPI's domestic and foreign activities.

Concern about the power of the developing forms of mass media was widespread, for some people believed that the mass media had extensive, direct, and powerful effects on attitude and behavior change. The belief that the media could sway public opinion and the masses toward almost

any point of view was stated by Harold Lasswell (1927) in grandiose language:

> But when all allowances have been made, and all extravagant estimates pared to the bone, the fact remains that propaganda is one of the most powerful instrumentalities in the modern world. It has arisen to its present eminence in response to a complex of changed circumstances which have altered the nature of society.
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> . . . A newer and subtler instrument must weld thousands and even millions of human beings into one amalgamated mass of hate and will and hope. A new flame must burn out the canker of dissent and temper the steel of bellicose enthusiasm. The name of this new hammer and anvil of social solidarity is propaganda. (pp. 220-221)

Lasswell's awe of propaganda was expressed in his pioneer work *Propaganda Technique in the World War* (1927). He noted that the people had been duped and degraded by propaganda during the war. Works such as Lasswell's and Creel's expressed a fear of propaganda, whereas others saw the need to analyze propaganda and its effects. Lasswell based his work on a stimulus-response model rooted in learning theory. Focusing on mass effects, this approach viewed human responses to the media as uniform and immediate. E. D. Martin expressed this approach thusly: "Propaganda offers ready-made opinions for the unthinking herd" (cited in Choukas, 1965, p. 15). Known as the "magic bullet" or "hypodermic needle theory" of direct influence effects, it was not as widely accepted by scholars as many books on mass communication indicate (Hardt, 1989, p. 571; Lang, 1989, p. 374; Sproule, 1991, pp. 227-230). The magic bullet theory was not based on empirical generalizations from research, but rather on assumptions of the time about human nature. People were assumed to be "uniformly controlled by their biologically based 'instincts' and that they react more or less uniformly to whatever 'stimuli' came along" (Lowery & DeFleur, 1995, p. 400).

Research concerning important intervening audience variables—for example, demographic background of the audience, selective perception, and other social and mental states of receivers—disputed the idea of direct influence. Such research led to "limited effects" models that explained the impact of media as a function of the social environment in which they operate. Effects came to be understood as activating and reinforcing preexisting conditions in the audience. Not until the end of the 1920s, however, did human individual modifiability and variability begin to be demonstrable through research.

The Social Sciences and the Study of Propaganda

After World War I, social psychology began to flourish as a research field and an academic discipline. In 1918, Thomas and Znaniecki defined *social psychology* as the study of attitudes. Other social sciences, such as sociology and psychology, were also stimulated by the need to pursue questions about human survival in an age in which social strain grew heavy with concerns about warfare, genocide, economic depression, and human relationships. These questions were about influence, leadership, decision making, and changes in people, institutions, and nations. Such questions were also related to the phenomena of propaganda, public opinion, attitude change, and communication.

Marketing research also began to be developed in the 1920s. Surveys of consumers to analyze their buying habits and the effectiveness of advertising were refined by sampling techniques in the 1930s and were used to poll political as well as consumer preferences. Public opinion research also began to develop. Walter Lippmann's *Public Opinion* (1922) voiced a concern that people were influenced by modern media, especially by the newspapers. In 1937, *Public Opinion Quarterly* began to be published. The Editorial Foreword in the first issue proclaimed,

> For the first time in history, we are confronted nearly everywhere by mass opinion as the final determinant of political and economic action. . . . Scholarship is developing new possibilities of scientific approach as a means of verifying hypotheses and of introducing greater precision of thought and treatment. (p. 3)

The Payne Fund studies, discussed in Chapter 3, assessed the effects of films on children and adolescents in the 1930s with respect to individual

differences such as economic background, education, home life, neighborhood, gender, and age.

In 1933, the President's Research Committee on Recent Social Trends called the fields of research in propaganda analysis, public opinion analysis, social psychology, and marketing research "agencies of mass impression" (Czitrom, 1982, p. 126). The mass media, then, were considered to be a common denominator from which questions of behavior and attitude change were to be studied. The media industries provided funding for research, along with easily quantifiable data to be analyzed. Applied research also became the by-product of industrial and government institutions and centers, institutes, and universities. Rogers (1994) pointed out that "private foundations and the federal government were more eager to support research that was useful to policymakers but did not raise troubling questions about the interests and motives of the persuaders" (pp. 211-212). Simpson (1994) had a somewhat harsher conclusion: "Sponsorship can, however, underwrite the articulation, elaboration, and development of a favored set of preconceptions, and in that way improve its competitive position in ongoing rivalries with alternative constructions of academic reality" (p. 5). Whatever the sponsors' motives, they enabled a substantial body of behavioral and social scientists to turn their attention to communication studies.

RESEARCH IN PERSUASION

The Study of Attitudes

Although the flurry of research following the end of World War I was related to evaluating propaganda messages, much of the subsequent research had to do with persuasion—specifically, the study of attitudes. During the 1920s and 1930s, research in persuasion was attitude research. Emphasis was placed on conceptually defining attitudes and operationally measuring them. Gordon Allport's (1935) definition of attitude was one of the most important: "An attitude is a mental and neural state of readiness organized through experience, and exerting a directive influence upon the

individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related" (p. 798). The concept of *attitudes* was so central to research that Allport said, "Attitude is probably the most distinctive and indispensable concept in contemporary American social psychology" (p. 798).

Bogardus (1925), Thurstone (1929), and Likert (1932) developed three measures of attitudes. The Likert scale has been one of the most widely used attitude-measurement techniques and is still used for voting and other market research and opinion polls. It consists of categories indicating attitude strength with a *strongly approve* answer graduating down to a *strongly disapprove* response on a 5-point linear scale. The Bogardus and Thurstone scales, which weight a series of attitudinal statements of equal intervals, were used in some of the Payne Fund studies. A representative study that used attitude-measuring scales to determine propaganda effects was done by Rosenthal (1934), who found that Russian silent propaganda films changed socioeconomic attitudes of American students. He also found that stereotypes were easier to create than to eradicate.

Another widely used attitude-measurement instrument was developed by Osgood (Osgood, Suci, & Tannenbaum, 1957). The *semantic differential* focuses on the meaning that people give to a word or concept. This procedure allows people to reveal an attitude by rating a concept on a scale of verbal opposites, such as good and bad, with several blank spaces between the poles. The midpoint in the blank spaces can be an indicator of neutrality. The semantic differential reveals the particular dimensions that people use to qualify their experience, the types of concepts that are regarded as similar or different in meaning, and the intensity of meaning given to a particular concept.

The study of attitude and attitude change received more attention than any other topic in social psychology or communication, yet scholars are still far from achieving conclusive links between attitudes and behavior. One early study of behavior and attitudes was done by Richard Lapiere (1934), who toured the United States with a Chinese couple. They stayed at hotels and ate at restaurants, keeping records of how they were treated. After the trip, Lapiere wrote to all the places they had visited and asked whether they accepted or served Chinese persons as guests. A great majority wrote back and said they did not. From this, Lapiere concluded that the

social attitudes of the hotel and restaurant managements had little correspondence with their behavior.

World War II and Research in Communication

After World War II broke out in Europe, researchers turned their attention to studies of propaganda, counterpropaganda, attitudes, and persuasion. Studies conducted during and after the war were primarily undertaken by social psychologists and psychologists who carefully used controls to measure effects. The war caused intense concern about the persuasive powers of the mass media and their potential for directly altering attitudes and behavior. Wartime research was conducted by the U.S. government, which was greatly concerned with the nature of German propaganda, the British communication system in wartime, the means by which the United States Office of War Information bolstered civilian morale, as well as how to make commercial media fare more relevant to the military struggle (Lazarsfeld & Stanton, 1944).

Paul Lazarsfeld, professor of sociology at Columbia University and head of the Bureau of Applied Social Research, along with other behavioral scientists, produced "Research in Communication" in 1940. This memorandum was a review of the "state of the art" of research at that time. A methodologist, Lazarsfeld was concerned with effects research. Lazarsfeld's approach represented European positivism, the scientific approach of the Vienna Circle influenced by Albert Einstein and Ernst Mach. The Frankfurt school of critical theory was represented by Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, who were also in exile in America. These scholars were concerned with the values and ideological images reflected in media content. Less concerned with immediate effects, they addressed the more subtle and long-term implications of the underlying structure and the implicit themes in the media. Adorno was based in the Princeton Office of Radio Research. Lazarsfeld recalled in his memoirs (Fleming & Bailyn, 1969) the hope to "develop a convergence of European theory and American empiricism" (p. 324). Lazarsfeld perceived critical research in opposition to his practice of administrative research; however, as Hardt (1989, pp. 571-572) pointed out, he failed to consider the role of culture

and media in society. Lazarsfeld's focus was on mass media effects that were possibly predictive; thus, his methodology was empirical.

Some wartime research, however, could not measure effects. A study by Speier and Otis, reported in Lazarsfeld and Stanton's (1944, pp. 208-247) *Radio Research, 1942-43,* is representative of the content analyses of newscasts to determine the functions of such newscasts. Speier and Otis (1944) content-analyzed German radio propaganda to France during the Battle of France. They found that the function of propaganda to the enemy in total war is "to realize the aim of war—which is victory—without acts of physical violence, or with less expenditure of physical violence than would otherwise be necessary" (Lazarsfeld & Stanton, 1944, p. 210). They also found that when actual fighting had not yet begun, the propagandist used propaganda as a substitute for physical violence, whereas when actual fighting was going on, propaganda changed into a supplement to physical violence. For example, before fighting began in France, the Germans attempted to terrorize with words, threatening physical violence to get France to negotiate rather than fight. Once fighting actually began, the Germans changed their tactics and chronicled their acts and victories over the radio.

Merton and Lazarsfeld summarized the nature of effect studies in "Studies in Radio and Film Propaganda" (in Merton, 1968, pp. 563-582). These studies used content analysis and response analysis of pamphlets, films, and radio programs. Response analysis was derived through the "focused interview" and a program analyzer, a device that enabled the listener of a radio program to press a button to indicate what she or he liked or disliked. Responses recorded on tape synchronized with the radio program registered approval, disapproval, or neutrality and were plotted into a statistical curve of response. Through response analysis, the researchers were able to determine (a) the effect aspects of the propaganda to which the audience had responded, (b) the many-sided nature of responses, (c) whether the expected responses had occurred, and (d) unanticipated responses. For example, a radio program designed to bolster American morale shortly after the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor contained two dominant themes: The first stressed the power and potentiality of the United States in order to combat defeatism, and the second

emphasized the strength of the enemy in order to combat complacency and overconfidence. Response analysis revealed that the emphasis on the strength of the United States reinforced the complacency of those who were already complacent, and correlatively, references to enemy strength supported defeatism of those who were already defeatist (Merton, 1968, pp. 573-574).

The benchmark for the initiation of sociobehavioral experiments in the area of attitude change, communication, and the acquisition of factual knowledge from instructional media came from studies conducted by a group of distinguished social and behavioral scientists who had been enlisted into service by the U.S. Army. Working within the Information and Educational Division of the War Department, the Research Branch assisted the army with a variety of problems involving psychological measurement and evaluation of programs. Some of their experiments were among the first to determine how specific content affected particular audiences. The best known of these experiments was the research that tested the effects of the army orientation films, a series called *Why We Fight*.

Frank Capra, the well-known Hollywood director, had been commissioned by the army to make a series of training films for recruits. He produced seven films that traced the history of World War II from 1931 to Pearl Harbor and America's mobilization for war. As they trained to fight in the war, hundreds of thousands of Americans saw these films. The army wanted to find out whether the films did an effective job of teaching the recruits factual knowledge about the war and whether the factual knowledge shaped interpretations and opinions in ways necessary to developing an acceptance of military roles and related sacrifices.

The main team that conducted the studies consisted of Frances J. Anderson, John L. Finan, Carl I. Hovland, Irving L. Janis, Arthur A. Lumsdaine, Nathan Macoby, Fred D. Sheffield, and M. Brewster Smith. The results were published by Hovland, Lumsdaine, and Sheffield in 1949 in a work entitled *Experiments on Mass Communication*, which also included other experiments on communication issues. This work touched off considerable interest in the experimental study of persuasion during the postwar years.

Four of the seven *Why We Fight* films were included in the study. Several research procedures were used, including sampling, control groups, matching, pretesting, and measurement. The results showed that the films were not effective in motivating the recruits to serve and fight in the war. The films were also not effective in influencing attitudes related to the army's orientation objectives—for example, deepening resentment toward the enemy, giving greater support to the British, and demanding unconditional surrender. They were somewhat effective, however, in shaping a few attitudes related to the interpretation of the content of the films—for example, that the failure of Germany to invade England during the Battle of Britain was a Nazi defeat. The films were markedly effective, however, in teaching the subjects factual knowledge about the war. In fact, the majority of recruits tested retained the same correct answers when retested 1 week later. Although the films failed to influence the attitudes and motivation of the recruits, they were most successful in presenting information to enhance learning.

Other research on the *Why We Fight* films tested the subjects' attitudes toward the films themselves. Results showed that the recruits liked the films, accepted the information in them as accurate, and did not perceive them as untruthful propaganda (Lowery & DeFleur, 1995, pp. 148-149). Several characteristics of the audience were tested, including intellectual ability and how it related to learning from the films.

Other studies were conducted to determine whether a one-sided argument was more effective than a two-sided argument. After the German surrender, soldiers in training camps listened to radio speeches that attempted to persuade them to continue the war against Japan. Results indicated that the two-sided message produced greater attitude change than the one-sided message, especially among those who initially opposed prolonging the war. In contrast, the one-sided message brought about greater attitude change among those who initially supported prolonging the war. In addition, the better educated respondents were more favorably affected by the two-sided message, whereas the less well-educated were more responsive to the one-sided message.

Results of the research conducted by the Information and Education Division during the war was very important to the development of communication research. No longer were the media considered to be an all-powerful shaper of attitudes because the effects of films and radio

broadcasts were clearly limited. Now, the effects of mass communication were understood to be strongly influenced by individual differences in the audience.

Lasswell developed a 5-question model in 1940 to study effects. It grew out of a 10-month-long Rockefeller Foundation-sponsored seminar that included Lazarsfeld and other social scientists. The model—*Who* says *what* to *whom* in *what channel* with *what effects*?—became the dominant paradigm of American communication research (Rogers, 1994). The model did not include the question *why* and thus focused on effects. Because the model did not concern itself with why those in control of communication made the choices they did to use it for certain functions, it may have steered researchers away from other important topics. Nonetheless, the Rockefeller Communication Seminar was seminal in the development of communication research, for it established networks among communication scholars, and the proceedings volume that came out of it was one of the first books to argue for communication as a field of study (Rogers, 1994). Participants in the seminar moved to Washington, D.C., in 1941 to engage in war-related research. Lasswell's War-Time Communications Project, which used quantitative methods of content analysis of Allied and Axis propaganda, had a neutral observer, thus changing the nature of propaganda research from prewar reformist to objective scientific. "Eventually the value-laden term *propaganda analysis* gave way to *communication research*" (Rogers, 1994, p. 228).

Another research breakthrough occurred during the same era, along with the development of new survey techniques for studying the interrelationship between the media and persuasion in natural settings over time. Lazarsfeld and his associates conducted a panel study during the presidential election of 1940 to determine whether mass media influenced political attitudes. They found instead, as the interviews progressed from month to month, that people were receiving information and influence from other people. Face-to-face discussions were a more important source of political influence than the media. The finding was a serendipitous one that had not been anticipated.

After they discovered what was happening, the researchers revised their plans and gathered as much data as they could about interpersonal communication during the campaign. They discovered that people were actually being influenced by *opinion leaders* who had received their information from the media. From this, they developed the "two-step flow" model of communication effects through discussion with their peers (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet, 1948). This model was later revised to become a "multistep flow" model that has people obtaining ideas and information from the media but seeking out opinion leaders for confirmation of their ideas and forming their attitudes. Later research indicated that a highly variable number of relays can exist among the media, the message receivers, and attitude formation (Rogers & Shoemaker, 1971).

Lazarsfeld and his associates also found that when the political campaign persuaded at all, it served more to activate and reinforce voter predispositions than to change attitudes. Lazarsfeld et al. (1948) concluded, "Exposure is always selective; in other words, a positive relationship exists between people's opinions and what they choose to listen to or read" (p. 166).

Kurt Lewin, psychologist and German expatriate, was instrumental in wartime research on how to persuade Americans to change their food-buying and eating habits to accept eating nutritious organ meats such as liver and kidney in times of meat shortages. His studies showed that discussion among shoppers when followed by a group decision was a more effective strategy to produce change than lectures by experts. This led to Lewin's conceptualization of a *gatekeeper,* someone who controls the flow of information. The concept of *gatekeeping* could be applied to other communication situations, according to Lewin: "This situation holds not only for food channels but also for the traveling of a news item through certain communication channels in a group" (cited in Rogers, 1994, pp. 335-336). The gatekeeping function of the media has since become a significant factor that determines what gets into print or on the air (Lang, 1989, p. 371).

The Yale Studies

After the war, Carl Hovland returned to Yale University, gathered a group of 30 colleagues, and developed what has since become known as the "Yale approach" to persuasion. The Yale group examined attitude change in a variety of experimental contexts. Working from a learning theory perspective based on stimulus-response, they investigated the effects of many

variables in persuasion. They were among the first researchers to examine the effects of source credibility on information processing. They found that source credibility had no effect on immediate comprehension but that it had a substantial, albeit short-lived, effect on attitude change. Kelman and Hovland (1953) found that because people tend to dissociate source and content over time, the effects of source credibility were not as pervasive as they thought. Kelman and Hovland called this a "sleeper effect." After people have forgotten the name and qualifications of a persuader, the influence of source credibility in changing their attitude disappears, leaving the people with the message content that provided the basis for their attitudes. Contemporary researchers call this a "dissociation hypothesis," rather than a true sleeper effect, which would be the case when a persuasive message results in little initial change followed by a delayed increase in impact on attitude or behavior change (Pratkanis & Greenwald, 1985, pp. 158-160).

Other variables that the Yale group investigated were personality traits and susceptibility to persuasion, the ordering of arguments (primacy-recency), explicit versus implicit conclusions, and fear appeals. The results on fear appeals were surprising to the researchers and of great interest to anyone studying propaganda because weak fear appeals turned out to have more influence on subjects than moderate and strong fear appeals did (Hovland, Janis, & Kelly, 1953, p. 80). Over the next 30 years, researchers continued to study the impact of fear appeals on audiences, with paradoxical results. In some instances, strong fear appeals were found to be persuasive; in others, they were not. Boster and Mongeau (1984) conducted a review of fear-arousing messages since 1952, including a meta-analysis of 25 studies on fear appeals and attitude change. They concluded that a positive correlation between fear-arousing messages and attitude change might exist when certain potentially intervening variables are taken into account: age, certain personality traits, and whether the individual voluntarily exposed her- or himself to the message.

More recent research has indicated that when efficacy, the capacity to produce a desired effect, is high, threatening information contained in a fear appeal is more likely to produce message acceptance (Witte, 1992). In other words, effective fear appeals must include information that threatens

the audience but also provides useful action for reducing or eliminating the threat. For example, a health-related message that indicates people as young as 30 are likely to get colon cancer will be more effective if it gives the means of reducing that likelihood (colon cancer screening). Witte introduced a new model, the *extended parallel process model,* which differentiates between the control of fear and danger to determine a person's reaction to a fear appeal. Her model indicates that when a message creates a strong threat and perceived efficacy, danger control becomes dominant, whereas when perceived efficacy remains low, fear control prevails. When danger control dominates, people will respond to the danger and not to the fear and are likely to accept the recommendation of the message. When fear control is stronger, people are more likely to respond to their fear and to reject the message recommendation.

The Yale group had wanted to discover the governing laws of persuasion in laboratory settings. Many of the "laws" did not hold up over time, but their work led to a greater understanding of persuasion and stimulated subsequent research in persuasion for years to come.

Consistency Theories

One major grouping of research results that came out of the Yale group's research is known as *consistency theory.* Consistency theorists view the desire or drive for consistency as a central motivator in attitude formation and behavior. *Cognitive consistency* is the mental agreement between a person's notions about some object or event. The underlying assumption is that when new information is contradictory or inconsistent with a person's attitudes, it will lead to some confusion and tension. This tension motivates a person to alter or adjust her or his behaviors. For example, most people, including those who smoke, have a positive attitude toward good health and longevity. Information about smoking and secondhand smoke as a cause of disease and death can create tension in smokers. When the tension as a result of inconsistency between attitude and behavior is no longer tolerable, smokers may adjust their behaviors by giving up cigarettes. The same inconsistency has produced new laws and ordinances about smoking in public places, at work, and on airplanes to protect nonsmokers.

All consistency theories are based on the belief that people need to be consistent, or at least to perceive themselves as consistent. The human tendency is toward balance, often called "homeostasis." When there is imbalance in the human cognitive system, attitude and behavior change tend to result. Most consistency theories (Heider's balance theory [1946]; Osgood & Tannenbaum's congruity principle [1955]) attempt to predict the nature and degree of change that occurs under conditions of inconsistency. The best known of the consistency theories is Festinger's theory of cognitive dissonance.

In 1957, Leon Festinger published his *Theory of Cognitive Dissonance,* which generated a great deal of research, speculation, and argument over the long term. Festinger said that once a person has made an important decision, she or he is in a committed state. If alternatives are presented, the person is susceptible to cognitive dissonance or psychological discomfort. This is based on the need to have consistency among one's cognitive elements. For example, if a person was committed to working for a large corporation and was forced to make a negative speech about it, that person would be put into a state of cognitive dissonance because of the inconsistency. Dissonance can be alleviated in several ways, including rationalization, avoidance, and seeking new support. The person could say that "it's only a job," or not think about the speech after it is given, or look for stronger reasons to support the commitment to the company. If the discrepancy between the commitment and the inconsistent act is high, change will occur. Festinger would say, in the case of wide discrepancy, that the person would change the commitment to the corporation after making a negative speech about it to bring attitude in line with behavior. This theory accounts for the practice of forced behavior producing attitude change.

Recent cognitive dissonance research reveals that people are also driven by interpersonal concerns, such as being perceived as consistent and making a good impression; others are driven by choice and self-perceived responsibility (Tesser, 1995, p. 74). Cognitive dissonance theory influenced Daryl Bem's (1970) theory of self-perception, which states that an individual relies on external cues to infer internal states. Bem used the example of the question "Why do you like brown bread?" with its response "Because I eat it." This is an example of a self-attribution theory, discussed later in this chapter.

Theory of Exposure Learning

Social psychologists have amassed considerable evidence that affirms a truism about propaganda—that is, the more people are exposed to an idea, the more they are apt to accept to it. Robert Zajonc (1968) conducted a series of studies in which stimuli were exposed to viewers. Regardless of whether the stimuli were meaningful or not (Chinese characters, nonsense words), subjects who saw them more often liked them better. Zajonc (1980) suggested there is comfort in familiarity. Zimbardo and Leippe (1991) extended this idea with their review of studies of subject exposure to stimuli that were previously liked or disliked. Frequent exposure intensified previous positive and negative attitudes. This "buildup" of attitude intensity is a factor in polarization of attitudes with repeated exposure.

Social Judgment Theory

Intensity is a key feature of *social judgment theory,* for it not only develops the concept of the direction of an attitude (like-dislike) but also examines the level of ego involvement. *Ego involvement* is the degree of involvement of a person in, and how the person's life is affected by, an issue. A linear scale is used to determine a subject's latitude of acceptance, rejection, or noncommitment. If a subject's perception of a message falls within the latitude of acceptance, she or he tends to perceive the message closer to her or his position than it actually is, which results in an assimilation effect. If the message lies in the latitude of rejection, it will be perceived much farther from the person's position than it actually is, which produces contrast effects. The intensity of ego involvement produces a wide latitude of rejection. Social judgment theory is used to predict attitudes on the basis of latitude of acceptance and ego involvement and has been widely used to predict political election outcomes.

Resistance to Persuasion

Most research of the 1950s and 1960s was based on attempts of a persuader to change attitudes in an audience, but William J. McGuire (1964) investigated factors that induced resistance to persuasion, producing work that changed the focus of persuasion research. Using some novel techniques to involve people in creating their own defenses against persua-

sion, McGuire developed *inoculation theory,* which focuses on a strategy analogous to physical immunization against disease. He used what he called "cultural truisms"—that is, beliefs one holds that are so ingrained within the cultural milieu that they have never been attacked. First, a cultural truism would be mildly attacked. Because the subject had never dealt with such an attack, she or he needed help in developing a defense against it. Pretreatment in the form of supportive statements and refutational arguments was given by an instructor. If the pretreatment was assimilated, the subject could then provide counterarguments and defenses against subsequent attacks.

McGuire's Model of Persuasion

McGuire (1968) also developed a *model of persuasion* that emphasized its processes: attention, comprehension, yielding, retention, and action. The model was based on Hovland's work, which took a learning theory approach to persuasion; that is, a message is more likely to change an attitude if by adopting the position advocated in the message the person receives positive reinforcement. Attention and comprehension were considered to be receptivity and learning factors, and yielding equaled acceptance of the message purpose or attitude change. Most laboratory studies up to this point stopped there. McGuire extended the idea that persuasion stopped with attitude change by recognizing that, to achieve persuadee action at a later time, retention of the message was necessary. Also, in testing receptivity, McGuire found that receivers with high self-esteem were receptive to persuasive messages because they had confidence in their initial positions. Yet, they were resistant to yielding because they were satisfied with their existing attitudes. He also found that receivers with high intelligence were receptive to a message because they had longer attention spans and were better able to comprehend arguments. Yet, they, too, resisted change because of confidence in existing attitudes. This demonstrated opposite effects on receptivity and yielding in a curvilinear relationship between the variables. This also led him to conclude that receivers with moderate levels of self-esteem and intelligence are more affected by persuasive messages.

Philip Zimbardo and Michael Leippe (1991, p. 136) added steps to the model: exposure at the beginning and, replacing action, translation of attitude to behavior at the end. Exposure precedes attention because people cannot attend a message until they are exposed to it. This is particularly appropriate with advertising on multichannels on television. Although advertisers put their messages on television, there is no guarantee that the right consumers will be exposed to them. Television ratings are important because the more people who watch a program, the more people are exposed to the commercials. Zimbardo and Leippe changed McGuire's "action" to "translation of attitude to behavior" because it recognizes the strength of attitude-consistent behavior. In other words, if a message influences behavior, the new attitude formed by the message must guide behavior in a relevant situation (p. 137).

Diffusion of Innovations

Another development in the late 1960s was the *diffusion of innovations,* developed by James Coleman, who investigated how doctors decided to adopt new antibiotic drugs (Rogers, 1982). Peer networks influenced doctors more than scientific evaluations by university medical schools and pharmaceutical firms. The diffusion process occurred through a combination of mass and interpersonal communication and often took years until an idea had spread. It is a complex process that begins with the people involved who exist within a system. First, their variables, including personality, social characteristics, and needs, are examined. Next, the social system itself has to be looked at in terms of its variables. Third, the characteristics of the innovation are analyzed. The adoption of the innovation itself may vary from optional decision, collective decision, or authority decision. All of this occurs in networks where change takes place. Mass communication channels may stimulate change, but interpersonal networks are crucial to the process. Innovation occurs as the result of interaction along the links of a network. Individuals can modify innovations as part of the adoption of them. This theory is of particular importance to those interested in attitude and behavior change in a natural setting, such as in a developing nation or an organization.

Recent Research on Attitudes

Recent research on attitudes has focused on the content and formation of attitudinal responses apart from their correlation to behavior change. McGuire (1985, p. 304) predicted that the 1990s would bring renewed interest in attitudes and attitude systems in general and in the structure of attitudes in particular. This new research recognizes that people have different and even contradictory needs that determine their attitudinal responses. Petty (1995), in a contemporary look at the nature of attitude change, said that beliefs, emotions, and behaviors can separately contribute to people's attitudes but that not all components influence attitude change. Not all three have to be consistent. Petty said,

> Recent research has begun to emphasize the implications of inconsistency and ambivalence among these bases of attitudes. We can feel wonderful when we eat ice cream, but we realize that the fat content in ice cream can produce heart disease. Whether this person's attitude toward ice cream can be predicted is dependent upon whether the affective or cognitive basis is more important. (p. 198)

The *elaboration likelihood model (ELM)* of persuasion (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) examines centralized processing of information for attitude formation on the basis of a person's motivation to do so, as well as the person's abilities to engage in message- and issue-related thinking. Motivation to engage in persuasive transactions is related to attentional factors, message quality, a person's involvement in the issue, and a person's ability to process persuasive argument. This means that if a person does not care about a topic, she or he is not likely to expend much energy to process the information in the message. Such a person can be expected to rely on extra-message peripheral cues, such as the attractiveness of the persuader or the persuader's credibility. Conversely, if the persuadee cares about the topic at hand in a personal way, she or he is likely to devote great energy to process the message content. In the latter case, evidence becomes important because, if it is sound, the person will be influenced by it (Reinard, 1988, p. 8). In other words, "confront individuals with their concrete social situations, demonstrate the relevancy of an issue for those

concerned, and reflection, critical thinking, and subsequent action will occur" (Pratkanis & Turner, 1996, p. 199).

The ELM has generated much attention as a central focus in persuasion research, a great deal of empirical research, and considerable theoretical controversy (see the journal *Communication Theory,* 1993, 1 and 2, for several articles criticizing and defending the ELM).

Research on Persuasion and Behavior

In the 1970s, experimental research on attitudes waned, and more emphasis was placed on behavior and media influence. Most studies that attempted to link attitude to behavior changes were not able to demonstrate a direct correlation between attitude change and some desired behavior change. One new development was to measure attitudes toward behavior and intentions to carry out a behavior. Researchers are attempting to determine what can enable them to predict behavior. Ajzen and Fishbein's *model of reasoned action* (1980) measures the strength of intentions to perform behaviors with strong predictive results. Two important determinants of intentions, however, are related to attitudes. First, the attitude toward the relevant behavior is based on beliefs regarding the behavior and its likely outcomes. Second, the approval or disapproval of significant people, which are attitudes or subjective norms, toward the desired behavior will be taken into consideration.

An attitude may predict behavior when the attitude is strong and clear, when the attitude is relevant to the behavior called for by the situation at hand, when the attitude and the behavior have strong links to the same components of the attitude system, and when the attitude is important to the individual (Zimbardo & Leippe, 1991, p. 192). Advertising research, however, reveals that people will have a strong positive attitude toward an advertised product and yet will not buy it. Zimbardo and Leippe (1991) explained that this occurs because the attitude and the buying behavior are connected to different components of the attitude system relative to the product. People may think an advertisement has a cute or lovable image, but they may not take the product seriously enough to purchase it.

When people are truly committed to an attitude, it is more likely that behavior consistency will occur. Citing the remarkable attitude-behavior

consistency of the Chinese student demonstrators in Tiananmen Square in Beijing in 1989, Zimbardo and Leippe (1991) concluded, "People act in accord with their attitudes on matters that matter, sometimes no matter what" (p. 196). Another predictor of behavior is the goal of the person who enacts the behavior. Bandura (1977, p. 161) found that explicitly defined goals create incentive to carry them out.

Bandura's *theory of observational learning* (1986) links behavior and behavior change to modeling that people observe in their homes, among their peers, and in the mass media. According to this theory, modeling influences produce new behaviors because they give people new information about how to behave. Through observation, people acquire symbolic representation of modeled activities that serve as guidelines for their own behavior. Observational learning results when models exhibit novel patterns of thought or behavior that observers did not already possess but that, following observation, they can produce in similar form. Modeling also strengthens or weakens inhibitions over behaviors that have been previously learned. Modeling can also encourage people to engage in behavior they had once perceived as threatening. Modeling influences, thus, can serve as instructors, inhibitors, disinhibitors, facilitators, stimulus enhancers, and emotion arousers. When people see models express emotional reactions, they are likely to experience emotional arousal. Of course, heightened arousal depends on how the modeled emotional reactions are perceived by the observer. It is obvious that modeling can be an important propaganda strategy, especially where members of an organization wear uniforms, participate in rituals, and reap positive rewards.

Four processes in Bandura's model are necessary to acquire new behavior: (a) attentional processes, (b) retention processes, (c) motor-production processes, and (d) motivational processes. First, a modeled behavior has to be attended to and then subsequently related to. How people relate to others' behavior is determined by perception, motivation, needs, and goals. People are inclined to pay attention to behaviors that have functional value to them. Successful modes of behavior tend to gain more attention than unsuccessful ones. Also, if the person doing the modeling is considered to be attractive or a friend, more attention will be given to observing that person. This is one reason why children in communities with aggressive

models for friends may join gangs and engage in aggressive behaviors; they have fewer opportunities to befriend other types or to observe prosocial behaviors than children who live in more pacifistic communities.

Second, what has been observed has to be retained in the memory. Bandura said that the modeled behavior has to be stored in some symbolic form. His studies found that subjects who expressed modeled behaviors in concise terms or vivid imagery remembered them better.

Third, production processes have to be activated, for they convert symbolic forms into appropriate action. This requires initiation of responses, monitoring, and refinement on the basis of feedback. When a behavior is performed, feedback, coaching, and reinforcement assist its adoption.

Fourth and most important, the actual performance of the modeled behavior requires motivation to do so. The primary motivation is the observation of positive consequences associated with the new behavior. Repeated observation of desirable consequences associated with a behavior provides a strong motivation to perform a behavior. Reinforcement is important to modeling behavior when it is used as an antecedent to the behavior. According to Bandura, the anticipation of positive reinforcement can effectively influence what is observed and the degree of attention paid to the observation of a given behavior. In other words, learning new behaviors through observation can be more successful if those observing the behavior are told ahead of time that they will benefit from performing the behavior.

The whole notion of consequences of behavior as a factor in persuasion is still under consideration. Ward Edwards (1954) developed the *subjective expected utility model (SEU)*, based on an economic theory known as *utility maximization theory* or "riskless choice." This model suggests that when faced with behavior choices, people tend to choose the alternative that has the highest expected utility, thus acting in their own interests. Gerald Miller, in the afterword to Cushman and McPhee's work on message-attitude behavior relationships (1980, p. 326), suggested that people have expectations related to their behaviors and that they may influence reception of related messages. Further, Miller indicated that people may behave according to perceived rewards and punishments for carrying out the

behavior. People may not have supportive attitudes but will behave according to perceived consequences.

Marwell and Schmitt (1967) developed a list of strategies for persuasion that focus on persuadee outcome, rather than on the content of the messages used in their study. They developed 16 "compliance-gaining" strategies with both positive and negative consequences, including reward, punishment, debts, altruism, and conformity. Wheeless, Barraclough, and Stewart (1983) concluded in their review of compliance-gaining literature that inherent in a successful compliance-gaining attempt is the persuader's power. Their definition of *power* is "the perceived bases of control that a person has over another person's behavior that would not have otherwise occurred" (p. 120). Perceptions of power vary with an individuals's sense of whether external forces are more controlling than internal strength.

A well-known compliance-gaining tactic is *low-balling*. This refers to getting someone to agree to a very attractive transaction—a business deal or sale—and then, on the basis of some excuse, changing the deal so that it costs more. For example, a new car may be advertised at $400 below blue book price. First, the salesperson lets the customer drive the car for a day before sealing the transaction. Next, the salesperson tells the customer that the price has to be higher because of the accessories on the car. By then, the customer has become committed to the purchase and rationalizes, "Well, what's $600 more when this is the car I like."

Another aspect of research into behavior has been *self-attribution research*. When subjects believe that the cause of a given behavior is derived from an attitude, they will consequently adopt that attitude. Valins (1966) conducted an experiment in which he showed male subjects slides of scantily clothed women. He told them that their physical reactions to the pictures were being measured. The men would hear a heartbeat each time they saw a slide, and each man was told it was his own heartbeat. The supposed heartbeat was manipulated by increasing or decreasing the rapidity of the beats. The men were asked to rate the slides. Predictably, they chose as the best pictures those that were accompanied by rapid heartbeats. People often use their perceived behavior to discover their attitudes.

Recruitment into the religious cult of the Unification Church of Korean Reverend Sun Myung Moon, otherwise known as "Moonies," includes an

invitation to a free or inexpensive dinner or weekend retreat. Once there, the recruits find themselves in the company of 20 to 30 pleasant people, eating a delicious meal and enjoying festive dancing and singing. People are very affectionate and attentive. Zimbardo and Leippe (1991, p. 100) pointed out that once recruits find themselves acting like Moonies and enjoying it, they may infer from their behavior that they also like and endorse Moonie ideas. This self-attribution is reinforced by commitment behaviors, such as giving a small donation or contributing some labor. Recruits may then think that because they are making a commitment, they have a positive attitude toward the cult and its beliefs.

Russell Fazio (1986) developed a *model of attitudes as object-evaluation associations in memory* and showed that the strength of this association determines the likelihood that an attitude will be automatically activated on exposure to the attitude object, as well as the extent to which the attitude influences behavior toward the object. In other words, a person has a storehouse of knowledge concerning behaviors that are expected and appropriate in a given situation. An attitude can guide how and what we perceive; thus, it provides a "sizing up" of objects and events in a situation. If an attitude is sufficiently accessible from memory and then is activated as a result of situational cues, it can influence a person's perceptions, definition of the event, and ultimately behavior. Studies have found that attitudes that are highly accessible from memory are more likely to predict behavior than are attitudes that are not accessible from memory.

Research continues on the relationship between attitude and behavior. As a result, a resurgence has occurred in the study of attitudes and their function. Attitude accessibility is an important area of research for developing a better understanding of cognition, memory, and incentives to behave (Roskos-Ewoldsen, 1996).

THE INFLUENCE OF THE MEDIA

The rather small number of scholars who devoted their careers to the study of the influence of the media in the 1940s and 1950s spawned several generations of followers. Today, several journals and annuals are devoted exclusively to research on the mass media, plus the thousands of articles in other journals and shelves and shelves of books. Mass communication

research has developed as a subdiscipline in its own right. Several works have summarized much of this research (Bryant & Zillmann, 1986; Cantor, 1998; Lowery & DeFleur, 1995; MacBeth, 1996; McQuail, 1994; Zillmann & Bryant, 1985). What follows are some highlights of this massive body of research.

Violence and the Media

After the turbulent 1960s, researchers turned their attention to investigations of media influence, especially in relation to violent behavior and other public concerns. In 1968, President Lyndon B. Johnson created the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence. Seven task forces and five investigative teams produced 15 volumes of reports. One of these reports, *Violence and the Media,* has become a landmark study in the question of media influence. After content analysis of television entertainment programming and survey research on actual violence in America, the researchers concluded that violence not only was a predominant characteristic on television but also was way out of proportion in comparison to actual violence in the real world. Although they acknowledged that the majority of adults who watch television and film are not likely to behave violently as a result, the editors of *Violence and the Media* recognized that long-term and indirect effects of exposure to violence were possible (Lowery & DeFleur, 1995).

Television and Social Behavior, 1969

The *Violence and the Media* report was followed in 1969 by the Surgeon General's Advisory Committee on Television and Social Behavior, which produced several volumes of studies conducted prior to and during the committee's duration. The general conclusion of the researchers was that the viewing of violent entertainment increases the likelihood of subsequent aggressive behavior, but it should be noted that the evidence was derived from laboratory settings and surveys; thus, generalizability is uncertain.

Some of the studies cited were conducted by Albert Bandura, others by Leonard Berkowitz, both of whom had been testing children, adolescents, and young adults in laboratory settings for more than a decade. Their conclusions were more tempered. Both Berkowitz and Bandura and their

colleagues were very careful to state that they made no claim to any situation outside the laboratory. They did find, however, that television violence could incite violent behavior in viewers. Berkowitz said it was possible for subjects to behave aggressively in later situations if the fantasy situation on film or television seemed justified. He also indicated that repeated exposure to violence increased the probability of subsequent aggressive acts for some members of an audience but that other factors also determine what may happen—how aggressive the subject is, how hostile the media make her or him, how much the subject associates the story in film or television with situations in which she or he learned hostile behavior, and the intensity of the guilt or aggression anxiety or both aroused by exposure to the film. Bandura also found that children under certain conditions were apt to reproduce aggressive action after observing adults exhibit novel and aggressive action on the screen. Authors of a review (O'Donnell & Kable, 1982, pp. 210-211) of their extensive research concluded that sometimes media violence may be persuasively effective, with the attitude changes consisting more often of modifications than of conversions. With respect to behavior changes, it can be generalized that some types of depicted violence will have some types of effects on the aggression levels of some types of children, adolescents, and young adults under some types of conditions.

One of the most interesting aspects of the experimental evidence concerning the relationship between the media and behavior change is that subjects tend to be influenced by film and television characters whom they perceive to be similar to themselves. Berkowitz, McGuire, and others found that *viewer identification* is the central concept in the interpretation of film and television effects. The extent to which viewers rated themselves as similar to particular characters influenced their reactions to aggressors in the media.

Television and Behavior, 1982

In 1982, a second Surgeon General's Advisory Committee recommended that other areas of television be investigated. The research that followed was extensive. Already begun in 1972 after the first surgeon general's report, the research consisted of more than 3,000 studies, three

fourths of which appeared after 1975 (Lowery & DeFleur, 1995). Because so much information was available, Surgeon General Julius B. Richard recommended that a synthesis and evaluation of the research be undertaken by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). The resulting report, entitled *Television and Behavior: Ten Years of Scientific Progress and Implications for the Eighties* (Pearl, Bouthilet, & Lazar, 1982), covered many themes, but the most publicized finding concerned the link between televised violence and later aggressive behavior in children. This link was found in both field and laboratory studies, but much work remains to be done in this area. One study in a related area suggested that aggression can be stimulated by high levels of action even without high violence content. Furthermore, the report emphasized that emotional arousal created by television stimuli that were not necessarily violent had a relationship to aggressive behavior. Increased levels of arousal can lead to excitement that may be channeled into aggression; thus, television content that is exciting could also possibly induce aggressive behavior. In many respects, the report asked more questions than it answered.

Recent Findings on Television and Aggressive Behavior

Dubow and Miller (cited in MacBeth, 1996) reviewed the evidence on experimental studies in laboratory settings and concluded, "Findings in the laboratory enable us to conclude that television viewing can cause viewers to behave more aggressively. But these studies do not allow us to draw conclusions about the effects of television violence viewing in natural settings" (p. 121). Their review of observational studies of children in natural settings ended with the following:

> Overall, the majority of observational studies suggest that the relation between TV violence viewing and the development of aggressive behavior is small compared to the relation between other salient environmental variables (e.g., parenting practices) and child aggression. Nevertheless, the significant effect has been repeatedly replicated and is large enough to be considered socially significant. In contrast, by adulthood, relations between violence viewing and aggressive behavior are rarely significant. (p. 122)

Dubow and Miller studied how aggression is learned, and they pointed out that children commit to memory scripts for behavior that are learned from observation and from their own behavior. They speculated that if a child has more violent scripts than nonviolent ones, she or he may access a violent script to use in a social interaction. They also recognized that other environmental, familial, and individual personality traits are potential contributors to behavior as well.

Cultivation Studies

Watching violence on television seems to have caused many Americans to be fearful, insecure, and dependent on authority, according to *cultivation studies* by George Gerbner and his associates (Gerbner, Gross, Signorelli, Morgan, & Jackson-Beeck, 1979). The most significant and recurring conclusion of their long-range study of heavy television viewing was that "one correlate of television viewing is a heightened and unequal sense of danger and risk in a mean and selfish world" (p. 194). The researchers thought this would lead people to demand protection and even welcome repression in the name of security. A study of students in junior and senior high schools revealed that those who were heavy viewers of crime shows were more likely to have anti-civil libertarian attitudes (Carlson, 1983). These studies indicate that television influences political learning and, in the case of televised violence, may produce an increasing dependence on the exercise of authoritarian power in society. One general criticism of cultivation research is that it does not demonstrate causality between heavy television viewing and estimates of violence (Williams, 1992). Comstock (1980) viewed television as a reinforcer of the status quo in society. He thought television portrayals, particularly violent ones, assign roles of authority, power, success, failure, dependence, and vulnerability in a manner that matches the real-life social hierarchy.

Prosocial Behaviors and Television

Other researchers have found that some television programming creates the learning of *prosocial behaviors.* Liebert, Neale, and Davidson (1973) found that children learned altruism, self-control, and generosity from television viewing. Stein and Friedrich (1972) demonstrated that children

learn prosocial behaviors such as cooperation, nurturing, and expressing feelings after watching such television programs as *Mr. Rogers.* A review of laboratory and field studies in *Television and Behavior* (Pearl et al., 1982) showed that behaviors such as friendliness, cooperation, delay of gratification, and generosity could be enhanced by exposure to relevant television content. Lowery and DeFleur (1988) stated that people learn from television and that it can no longer be regarded as mere entertainment: "It is a major source of observational learning for millions of people. In that role it may be one of the most important agencies of socialization in our society" (p. 384).

Pornography

As public standards regarding film and television content related to sex and nudity became less rigid, the public began to be concerned about pornography, especially where women were represented as victims of violence. Research on the effects of filmed pornography (Donnerstein & Malamuth, 1984) has suggested a possible link between pornography and violence against women. On the one hand, experiments in laboratory settings demonstrated that, after exposure to aggressive pornography, some men showed less sensitivity toward rape victims, an increase in the willingness to say they would commit rape if not caught, an increase in the acceptance of certain myths about rape, and increased aggressive behavior against women in a laboratory experiment. On the other hand, Fenigstein and Heyduk (cited in Zillmann & Bryant, 1985) suggested that individuals who have tendencies toward sexual violence may be more attracted to violent pornography. The overall link between media violence against women and real violence against women is as yet inconclusive, but researchers are actively exploring it in both laboratory and field studies.

Health, Families, and Politics

Other topics reflecting public concern that have been subjects of television research are health, families, and politics. An increasingly health-conscious public may view physically fit men and women in entertainment programs, but they will not necessarily see them behaving in healthful ways. Dramatic characters on television ate or drank or talked about doing so

75% of the time they were on screen. Instead of eating nutritious meals, television adults snacked 39% of the time, and television children snacked 45% of the time. Alcohol is the beverage most frequently consumed on television, twice as much as coffee or tea and 14 times as often as soft drinks. Alcohol is shown or discussed in 80% of prime-time programs, not counting commercials. Although few television characters are seen smoking, in no instances were antismoking sentiments expressed. Although many cars and trucks are shown on television, seldom do their drivers use seat belts (Lowery & DeFleur, 1995).

Concerns voiced about family by politicians, counselors, and clergy have prompted research regarding both the portrayal of families on television and the effect of television on family and social interactions. Glennon and Butsch (cited in Lowery & DeFleur, 1988, pp. 399-403) content-analyzed 218 family series, finding that the middle class was overrepresented, whereas the working class was underrepresented. Working-class fathers were often depicted as inept, dumb, or bumbling, leading the researchers to speculate that working-class children might perceive their fathers as inadequate and inferior. Middle-class families appeared to be economically successful and often able to solve problems easily. The researchers thought the idealized portrayals of these families might lead viewers to question the adequacy of their own families. Another of Glennon and Butsch's findings was that heavy television viewing is linked to poor family communication and tension (see also Brody & Stoneman in Morley, 1988, p. 29). Kubey and Csikszentmihalyi (1990), however, found, by having subjects report through electronic pagers, that heavy television viewing with the family was a more positive experience than viewing alone and possibly increased the time a family spends together. They found that family members talked with each other during programs, thus making television viewing more cheerful and sociable. Their major finding, however, was that families who engaged in television viewing were passive and less alert, whereas families who engaged in nontelevision activities felt more alert and active. Although family life, daily schedules, and social interaction have been profoundly affected by television, no area has been more reshaped by television than politics.

Politicians have to voice "sound bites" to ensure 15-second coverage on the evening television news, and television commercials account for a major

portion of campaign budgets. The television image of a candidate has become crucial to voter decisions. More and more voters are abandoning party lines to split their votes among candidates of different parties. Evidence suggests a growing reliance on issues to make voting choices. Lowery and DeFleur (1988) predicted that mediated information may play a greater role in elections, whereas "reinforcement and crystallization, in the sense of cultivating prior loyalties, presumably will have a reduced role" (p. 418).

The Agenda-Setting Function of the Media

One powerful feature of mass communication is its *agenda-setting* function. Early research on this concept began when Donald Shaw and Maxwell McCombs (1974) investigated what voters in North Carolina said were the key issues in the 1968 presidential campaign. They compared these data with the key issues presented in television news, newspapers, and news magazines and found a startlingly high relationship. The news media had not told the voters what to think, but they had told them what to think about. Agenda setting emphasized the gatekeeping aspect of the news. Numerous studies have been conducted in this area, yielding sufficient evidence to conclude that media gatekeepers formulate meaning—selecting, screening, interpreting, emphasizing, and distorting information.

The Spiral of Silence

Another concept, less widely accepted than agenda setting, is the *spiral of silence* (Noelle-Neumann, 1991). This theory describes people supporting popular opinions and suppressing unpopular ones to avoid social isolation. Assumptions made by this theory are that (a) society threatens deviant individuals with isolation, (b) individuals fear isolation continuously, (c) this fear of isolation causes people to assess the climate of opinion at all times, and (d) the results of this assessment affect behavior in public, especially the open expression or concealment of opinions. Although perceptions of dominant opinions are shaped by the media, critics of the spiral of silence point out that tolerance of deviant opinions differs from society to society. Indeed, dissent, if valued in a free society, makes social

isolation unlikely. When new issues penetrate public discussion, the spiral of silence is broken.

Dependency Theory

Both the agenda-setting and spiral of silence theories focus on the media as instruments for the distribution or withholding of information, giving issues legitimacy and shaping public opinion. Sandra Ball-Rokeach's dependency model (Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976) explains why people are reliant on the media to set the agenda for public discussion. In a complex society with a proliferation of information, people rely on the media for information about that which they do not have immediate knowledge. An important premise of *dependency theory,* however, is that people do not use the media separately from other social influences in which they and the media exist. How people use and react to the media is influenced by their past learning about society, including what they learned from the media in the past, as well as what is happening in the present. Thus, a certain piece of media information and subsequent conversations about it will have quite different consequences for different people, depending on their previous experiences and social conditions at the moment. Because dependency theory encompasses the interactive nature of media, audience, and society, it is a more comprehensive theory than others that emphasize simple cause and effect. Dependency theory also recognizes that more urban and industrialized societies have more dependency on the media and that as social change and conflict increase, so does public dependency on the media.

Dependency theory also accounts for media effects that can, in turn, affect society as well as the media. Ball-Rokeach delineated three types of effects: cognitive, affective, and behavioral. The *cognitive effects* are (a) ambiguity resolution, (b) attitude formation, (c) agenda setting, (d) expansion of the belief system, and (e) value clarification. *Affective effects* are emotional responses to mediated information that can create strong feelings about parts of society and/or desensitize people to violence because of excessive exposure. *Behavioral effects* may be initiating new behaviors or ceasing old ones. Any or all of these effects are likely to be felt only by people who depend on media information. Look at the following example

of the effects of media coverage of a controversial event to see how this may work:

When Anita Hill, professor of law at Oklahoma University, testified during the Senate hearings on the nomination of Clarence Thomas to the U.S. Supreme Court, sexual harassment became a news agenda item. People who watched the hearings on television or followed them in the newspapers may have experienced all three types of effects. The term *sexual harassment* was clarified for some, made ambiguous for others. Whether or not people believed Hill, attitudes about sexual harassment were formed, and sexual harassment became much more of an agenda item than it previously had been. Public discussion regarding appropriate behavior at work and in school intensified, and in the process, belief systems expanded and some values were clarified. Strong emotions were felt, especially by those who had experienced sexual harassment in the past, and many women came forth to talk about their experiences. Behavior changes have occurred, especially the cessation of practices that were suspect, and numerous charges against offenders have been brought forth. The agenda regarding sexual harassment was prominent in October 1991, until it no longer was a media story, but the effects of it over the long term are still being felt. Even President Bill Clinton was not immune to sexual harassment charges (for alleged conduct years earlier, while he was governor of Arkansas) in the Paula Jones case.

Uses and Gratifications Theory

Most mass communication theories focus on what the media do to the receiver, but *uses and gratifications theory* focuses on what the receiver does with the media. The consumer of media is viewed as an active selector and goal-directed user of it. The assumption is that the user of media is responsible for choosing media to meet psychological and sociological needs. Elihu Katz (cited in Williams, 1989) found in his research "overall patterns that suggest that individuals specify different media for fulfilling different kinds of needs" (p. 71). Human needs are the primary consideration of uses and gratifications studies and include the need to be diverted as well as informed. Katz viewed mass communication as "an elaborate system of cultural, social, and psychological 'services' " (p. 71). After three

decades of research on this theory, it has been codified with an understanding of attitude formation based on a consumer's expectancy of media and evaluation of it. One would therefore seek gratification of needs based on one's expectancies of the media content. As one's needs get satisfied, expectations are intensified; thus, the effect is cyclical. One criticism of this type of research is the ambiguity surrounding the concept of *need.* A survey of cross-national studies found that four basic clusters of needs emerged: (a) self and personal identity, (b) social contact, (c) diversion and entertainment, and (d) information and knowledge about the world (Roberts & Maccoby, 1985). Most needs can be fit into one of the reduced categories.

Links may exist between uses and gratifications and effects. Most research in this area centers on political campaigns, news, and wars. People tend to turn to the media for information and issue salience in these areas. With regard to the political campaign, they will receive more than information because the objective of a campaign is to influence prospective voters.

Uses and Dependency Theory

Some researchers argue that dependency theory and uses and gratifications theory are not mutually exclusive, for although individuals make choices about using the media, the media influence individuals as well. Rubin and Windahl (1986) combined both approaches into what they called the *uses and dependency model.* This model shows societal systems and media systems interacting with audiences to create needs in individuals. The needs influence the individual to choose both media and nonmedia sources of gratification, which subsequently leads to dependencies on the sources. Effects are cognitive, affective, and behavioral, as in dependency theory, and the results are then fed back into the societal and media systems. Rubin and Windahl suggested that people will narrow the search for certain need fulfillment to few media and will therefore be more susceptible to influence. A businessperson, for example, may rely on one newspaper for business information, thus becoming dependent on it and more likely to adopt its views.

The multitude of studies on the effects of television on human behavior has underscored society's concerns with effects. It is generally accepted that the media do influence individuals but do so among and through a nexus

of mediating factors and influences. The mass media are viewed as a powerful contributory agent but not the sole cause in the process of reinforcing existing conditions or bringing about change.

Limitations of Effects Research

Research on the effects of the mass media continues to thrive, but it has not become the united behavioral science envisioned by its pioneers. Lazarsfeld regarded mass communication research as "administrative research" in 1941, suggesting that research be carried on in the service of some kind of administrative agency and defining it as social science research primarily concerned with effects. Although government-sponsored research yielded important findings about the effects of various media, it has not been as prevalent as marketing and advertising research. The broadcasting industry regards research as vital to decision making. Meanwhile, other forms of research are taking hold. Empirical and experimental research has been criticized because research questions are often limited by laboratory methods and laboratory settings. Roberts and Maccoby (1985, pp. 543-544) pointed out three major criticisms of experimental research on media:

1. An effect that is attributed to a larger unit may derive from one or more of its components, but it may be totally unrelated to other components. For example, stimuli for experiments related to violence in the media range from single scenes to specifically prepared sequences; thus, subjects view a specific violent act, which is something quite different from an entire program or film.
2. Researchers tend to be more concerned with media content than with media techniques. Furthermore, they categorize media content subjectively—for example, by genre or by topic.
3. What is used as a stimulus to determine effects may not be representative of media content. For example, what may be used as a prosocial stimulus for children as subjects in an experiment may be totally unrepresentative of the children's typical television diet. Also, what is regarded by the researchers as a type of stimulus may not be perceived that way by the subjects. A researcher's "violence" may be a subject's "playful competition."

Roberts and Maccoby stressed an important adage, well known in communication studies: "Meanings are not in messages, but in people."

Finally, as Jesse Delia (1987) pointed out in his comprehensive history of communication research,

> The received view constructed the history of communication research . . . [and] privileged a particular model of scientific practice . . . [which] has profoundly affected the assumptions defining the parameters of the field . . . [and] marginated explorations of the relationship between culture and communication. . . . A deep tension was thus built into the mass communication field from its inception. It aimed to organize the whole scope of concern with the mass media under a single, encompassing umbrella, while its focus on scientific research placed historical and critical studies on the margin. (pp. 21, 71)

The dominant paradigm of effects resulting from the transfer of a message from a source to a receiver has been challenged, and questions related to the functions of cultural communication within the total process of society are now being asked.

Cultural Studies

The most prominent ideas for the *cultural study* of communication initially came from Great Britain. Raymond Williams, a fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge, opposed the study of mass communication because he thought it limited studies to broadcasting and film exclusively and because it conceived of the audience as a mass. Rather, he proposed that communication be studied as a set of practices, conventions, and forms through which a shared culture is created, modified, and transformed. In his works (1958, 1961, 1966, 1973), he examined how culture reproduces and articulates existing social structures and how media maintain industrial economic societies. The other prominent British researcher is Stuart Hall, who began his work at the Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham and continues at the Open University in Milton Keynes, England. Hall sees communication as encompassing a wide variety of cultural expression and ritual forms of everyday life. Fundamen-

tal to Hall's work (1977, 1980, 1984, 1997) is the encoding process or message formulation in the media, together with social and economic conditions that explain why and how viewers decode messages in a variety of ways. Hall said that a message "hails" a person as if it were hailing a taxi. To answer, the person must recognize that it is she or he, and not someone else, being hailed. To respond to the hail, the person recognizes the social position that has been constructed by the message, and if the response is cooperative, the position has been adopted. Thus, television viewers may be hailed as conformists or sexists or patriots. If the viewers accept the position of the program, then they constitute themselves as subjects in an ideological definition that the program proposes.

There are essentially three social positions: dominant, oppositional, and negotiated, although Hall speculated there could be multiple positions. The *dominant* position is produced by a viewer who accepts dominant ideology in the media. The *oppositional* position is direct opposition to the dominant ideology in the media or acceptance of an oppositional point of view. The *negotiated* position is produced by viewers who fit into the dominant ideology but need to resist certain elements of it. Negotiated positions are popular with various social groups who question their relationship to the dominant ideology. Cultural analysts may examine audience decoding through ethnographic methods, using in-depth interviews, often over time, to determine how people actively use television to make sense of social experience and of themselves. Cultural critics also work in a manner similar to literary critics, but the texts are the mediated messages of television, newspapers, and films, as well as the behavior of people as it has been shaped by the media. They "read" the "text" to construct its meaning.

Essentially, cultural studies are concerned with the generation and circulation of meanings in industrial societies. James W. Carey (1988) said the sources of cultural meanings are in "construable signs and symbols . . . embedded in things; some relatively durable such as artifacts and practices, some relatively transitory like fashions and follies" (p. 11). In a later work, Carey (1989) stressed that human needs and motives must be studied within the context of history and culture. John Fiske (1987) saw television as "a bearer/provoker of meanings and pleasures" (p. 1) and thus as a cultural agent. The view of media as cultural agent and the construction of meaning by the users of the media is a view that tries to understand

human behavior rather than to explain it. Rather than attempt to predict human behavior as social scientists do, cultural analysts attempt to diagnose human meanings.

In addition to the works cited on cultural studies, the journal *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* is a major source for cultural studies of the media. We believe that the student of propaganda needs to be conversant with both social science and cultural studies. Our model of the process of propaganda in Chapter 8 represents a broad conceptualization based on both approaches. The nature of research in propaganda and persuasion is and always has been interdisciplinary.

Collective Memory Studies

A new area of academic study that has elements of propaganda and persuasion is *collective memory,* defined as "the ways group, institutional, and cultural recollections of the past shape people's actions in the present" (Schudson, 1992, p. 65). Collective memory is formed by folklore, holidays, stories, songs, rituals, ceremonies, museum displays, monuments, paintings, cartoons, films, and television programs. Often white propaganda, collective memory is used to promote patriotism and nationalism. It can also be gray or even black propaganda. Consider the case of the horse Comanche, the only survivor of the U.S. Cavalry in the Battle of Little Bighorn. After his death, Comanche was stuffed and put on display in various places but ended up at the University of Kansas Natural History Museum with a placard that said, "The only surviving horse of the Custer massacre." Until several Native Americans protested, no one gave any thought to the fact that many Indian horses as well as Indians survived because they had been victorious at the battle. The placard was removed, and in its place is a long text that says, in part,

> The horse stands as a symbol of the conflict between the United States Army and the Indian tribes of the Great Plains that resulted from the government's policy of confinement of Indians on reservations and extermination of those Indians who refused to be confined. (Hall, 1997, pp. 212-213)

Thus, the collective memory of General George Armstrong Custer's defeat as a "massacre" was changed, at least in the case of the horse display at the university, to a memory of maltreatment of American Plains Indians.

Zelizer (1995) pointed out that collective memory is partial because an event is never reproduced in its entirety, but rather what is "remembered" is what is useful in social, political, and cultural ways. Kammen (1991) reminded us that some memories are "suspiciously self-serving rationalizations that sustain the political or economic superiority of one group or the value system of another" (p. 4). How we remember the Vietnam War is very much influenced by the films of the 1970s and 1980s and certain photographs—the napalm strike on Trang Bang Village and the Eddie Adams' photograph of General Nguyen Ngoc Loan shooting a Viet Cong suspect in the head. Even our collective memory of World War II is undergoing some alteration because of Stephen Spielberg's film *Saving Private Ryan*. As a new area of study, we suggest that the connection of collective memory to propaganda may be significant and plays an important role in the study of propaganda.

SUMMARY

Research on the nature and effects of propaganda flourished during the World War II years. After the war, research moved into persuasion and communication studies of effects. Research questions were concerned with the variables of communication interaction, especially with regard to attitudes and attitude change. Later, attempts were made to predict behavior and behavior change. With regard to the focus of the book, it would be useful to have a catalog of practices relevant to propaganda that produce effects, but it is not possible to develop such a catalog. The most pertinent conclusion that one can draw after such a review of 80 years of research is that individual differences and contexts determine the nature of effects. It is also important to pay attention to the historical and cultural contexts in which propaganda and persuasion occur and especially to recognize that people construct different meanings according to their social experiences.

Generalizations About Propaganda and Persuasion Effects

When we attempt to make generalizations, we are confronted by the ever-changing nature of what is under study. The media undergo continuous changes, and those changes are primarily related to technology. Social,

political, and cultural changes in society are not only continuous but also dramatic, as we have witnessed in the aftermath of the fall of Communism in Europe and breakup of the former Soviet Union. What may be a valid generalization today may become obsolete a short time later. Nevertheless, a few generalizations can be made regarding propaganda and persuasion.

First, it seems safe to say that communication effects are the greatest where the message is in line with existing opinions, beliefs, and dispositions of the receivers. Selectivity in the perception of messages is generally guided by preexisting interests and behavior patterns of the receivers. The result is that most messages are more likely to be supportive of, than discrepant from, existing views. Furthermore, mass communication effects tend to take the form of reinforcement rather than change.

Second, when change does occur, it does so as the result of a multitude of factors, including the mass media, socially contextual conditions, group interaction, the presence and influence of opinion leaders, and the perceived credibility of the source or sources of the message. Topics most likely to be influential are on unfamiliar, lightly felt, peripheral issues that do not matter much or are not tied to audience predispositions. Issues deeply rooted and based on values and past behavior patterns are not as likely to change. Ideas related to political loyalty, race, and religion tend to remain stable over time and resistant to influence. As John Naisbitt (1982) said in *Megatrends*, "When people really care about an issue, it doesn't matter how much is spent to influence their vote; they will go with their beliefs. When an issue is inconsequential to the voters, buying their vote is a snap" (p. 191).

Third, the way we maintain consistency of attitudes and behaviors has an economical aspect that gives a propagandist the advantage. As Karlins and Abelson (1970) pointed out, a propagandist does not have to win people over on every issue to get their support. If the propagandist can get people to agree with her or him on one or two issues, then their opinion toward her or him may become favorable. Once that has happened, and the mention of the person's name evokes a favorable response in the people, they may find themselves inventing reasons for agreeing with other issues advocated by her or him.

Fourth, people can appear to accept an idea publicly without private acceptance. Behavior can be guided by a system of rewards and punish-

ments that do not require attitude change. Furthermore, public compliance will continue under conditions of surveillance by authority but not necessarily under conditions of nonsurveillance.

Finally, the greater the monopoly of the communication source over the receivers, the greater the effect in the direction favored by the source. Wherever a dominant definition of the situation is accompanied by a consistent, repetitious, and unchallenged message, the influence of the message is greater.