Media system dependency theory
Catch phrase

the more a person depends on media to meet needs, the more important media will be in a person’s life and the more effects media will have on a person
Media system dependency theory

Background

Sandra Ball-Rokeach, Melvin Defluer in 1976
Media system dependency theory

Variables and model

relationship
The relationship between the society and the media
The relationship between the media and the audience
The relationship between the society and the media

Needs
Surveillance: The need to understand one’s social world
Social utility: the need to act meaningfully and effectively in that world
Fantasy-escape: the need to escape from that world when tensions are high

Two basic conditions for heightened media needs
The number of media and centrality of media functions in a society are high
Under social change and conflict
Media system dependency theory

Variables and model

**The effect of media messages**

- **Cognitive**
  The creation and resolution of ambiguity
  Agenda-setting
  Attitude formation
  People’s belief systems expanding
  Value clarification and conflict

- **Affective**
  Desensitization
  Increasement of people’s fear or anxiety
  Morale and feelings of alienation

- **Behavioral**
  Activation
  Deactivation
Media system dependency theory

Variables and model

- **SOCIETY**
  - (Degree of structural stability varies)

- **MEDIA**
  - (Number and centrality of info function varies)

- **AUDIENCE**
  - (Degree of dependency on media information varies)

- **EFFECTS**
  - (Cognitive, Affective, Behavioral)
Media system dependency theory

**Critics**

Difficult to empirically verify because the microlevel is hard to be measured.
Variability in microlevel and macrolevel measurement makes between-study comparability problematic.