

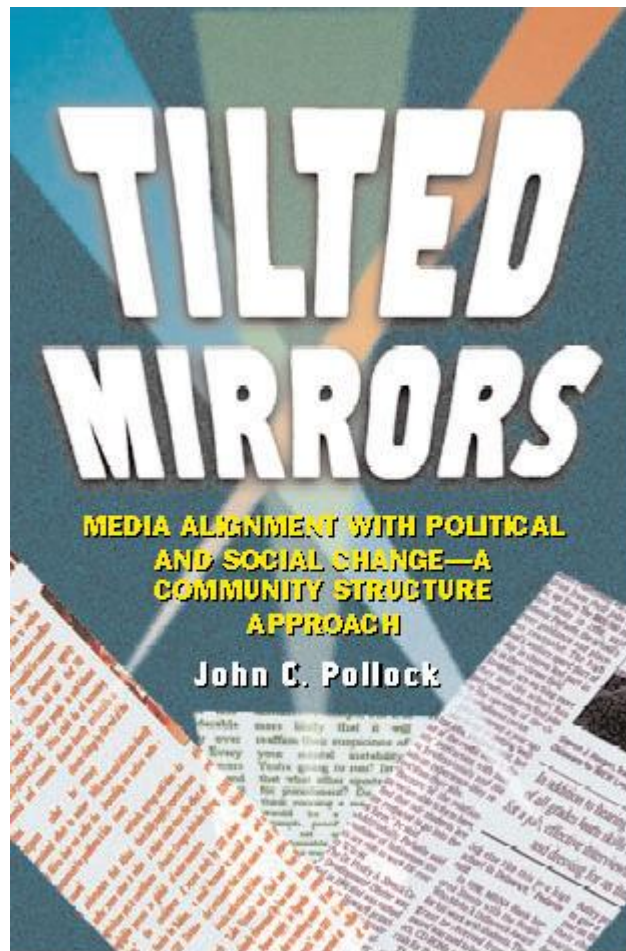
John C. Pollock, Ph.D., M.P.A.

pollock@tcnj.edu

<http://www.tcnj.edu/~commstud/faculty/pollock.html>

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John C. Pollock, a Professor in the Communication Studies Department, The College of New Jersey (TCNJ), received his BA from Swarthmore (political science), M(I)PA from the Maxwell School at Syracuse (international public administration) and PhD from Stanford (political science/comparative politics/Latin America). He also studied at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies as a PhD candidate . His current teaching and research interests include Public Communication Campaigns (especially Health Communication), International Communication, Mass Communication and Research Methods. Dr. Pollock has taught at Rutgers University and the City University of New York (Queens College) and has conducted research in India and Latin America (Colombia), serving as director of the Latin American Institute at Rutgers. Dr. Pollock serves on four editorial boards -- *The Atlantic Journal of Communication*, *Journal of Media Sociology*, *Communication Research Reports* and *Mass Communication & Society* (book review editor), and he has recently authored *Tiltead Mirrors: Media Alignment with Political and Social Change – A Community Structure Approach* (Hampton Press, 2007) and authored or co-authored three other books. Dr. Pollock has published scholarly and professional articles in *Journalism Quarterly*, *Journal of Health Communication*, *Communication Research Reports*, *Society*, *Newspaper Research Journal*, *Journal of International Communication*, *Mass Communication Review*, *International Encyclopedia of Communication III*, and *Communication Yearbook IV*, as well as *The New York Times*, *The Nation*, *Industry Week* and the *Public Relations Journal*. Former president of the national public opinion research subsidiary of a leading public relations firm, Dr. Pollock is the recipient of a Silver Anvil, the "Oscar" of the Public Relations Society of America. He has also appeared on the TODAY show and Nightline and has testified before congress on the results of his surveys. Former president of the New Jersey Communication Association, Dr. Pollock has received grants from the Social Science Research Council, National Cancer Institute and the United Nations Foundation for research on media coverage of critical issues. He was also selected as a spring, 2010, Fulbright Scholar in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Past chair of The College of New Jersey Marketing Advisory Council and the Arts & Sciences Curriculum Committee, Dr. Pollock received the first award for "Mentoring Student Research" from The College of New Jersey in February, 2002. He also received the 2003 national "Advisor of the Year" award from the National Communication Association for his work with the TCNJ Chapter of Lambda Pi Eta, the national communication student honor society.



**SCHOLARLY TESTIMONIALS FOR RECENT POLLOCK BOOK
 “TILTED MIRRORS: MEDIA ALIGNMENT WITH POLITICAL
 AND SOCIAL CHANGE” (HAMPTON PRESS)**

Comments on “Tilted Mirrors”, found on the back jacket, include the following four:

“John Pollock’s impeccable study is a terrific piece of research. It goes far beyond previous work in illuminating the relationship between a community and its daily paper. His unsettling findings will force journalists to rethink comfortable assumptions and will require faculty to revise the way they teach and write about the press. “Tilted Mirrors: Media Alignment with Political and Social Change” belongs on the bookshelf of anyone who wants to know how the press in America truly operates.”

Thomas E. Patterson, Ph.D.

Bradlee Professor of Government and the Press

The Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy

John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University

“John Pollock’s (“Tilted Mirrors”) book enters a new theoretical and methodological domain in explaining media content on politics and public affairs. His community structure approach, based on earlier works by Tichenor, Donohue and Olien but taken much further, seeks explanations for journalists’ news decisions in the wider social structure of the community, including among others economic indicators and public opinion. Its basic hypothesis is that the coverage of critical issues varies with the more enduring characteristics of a community if these characteristics are somehow linked to the issue at hand. Thus, the theory implies that journalists in a community would, partly due to their own local socialization, partly because of marketing considerations and audience feedback, cover such issues in a way that these get adjusted to the community needs. The local newspaper is thus conceptualized as a community institution, and not (as is the case in most other approaches) as a professional world of its own. (T)he book merits attention by communication scholars because it conceptualizes the factors influencing media content in a new way.”

Professor Doctor Wolfgang Donsbach (former president of the
International Communication Association)
Director, Institute for the Study of Communications
Dresden University of Technology, Dresden, Germany

“John Pollock’s elaboration of the concept of community structure transforms the notion of “community pluralism” into a well grounded and empirically validated approach toward understanding the ways in which power actually operates on and through the press. His use of a simple, but quite robust technique for associating vectors of support or opposition to a broad variety of social policy concerns helps to reveal the ways in which interests, positions of privilege and status among key stakeholders work together to determine how these issues will be framed in different communities. Community structure analysis holds great promise for media and public policy research, and *Tilted Mirrors* will help to point the way forward.”

Oscar H. Gandy, Jr., Ph.D.
Herbert I. Schiller Term Professor Emeritus
Annenberg School of Communication
University of Pennsylvania

In addition, David Demers, Washington State University, who studied with Phillip Tichenor, one of the key founders of the community structure approach at Minnesota, wrote a summer, 2009, review of “Tilted Mirrors” in the journal “Political Communication”, in which he said:

“Pollock’s book makes a unique and worthy contribution to the literature on media processes because it is one of the few empirical studies to employ a national cross-section sample of newspapers and contains a set of propositions that go beyond much of the contemporary research. (In addition), Pollock’s research joins a growing body of other

research showing that mass media can, from time to time, produce content that leads social systems to accommodate the needs of alternative and challenging groups.”

NOW AVAILABLE!

Communication studies professor’s book examines how society shapes media. Inequality in cities drives nationwide coverage of critical events Tilted Mirrors

Media Alignment with Political and Social Change—

A Community Structure Approach

John C. Pollock, The College of New Jersey

Rather than examining the impact of media on society, Professor John Pollock’s *Tilted Mirrors* reverses the focus: What is the impact of society on media? This reverse question is rarely studied by media scholars, who more often explore the way media exaggerations (such as frequent depictions of violence and sex and extraordinarily successful individuals – lawyers and physicians and affluent families) cultivate inaccurate and inappropriate public perceptions and behavior. By contrast, *Tilted Mirrors* examines the way media perspectives or “frames” (organized narratives that work symbolically to structure the social world) are constructed by media. When journalists and the public alike are asked to choose sides between such media frames as “civil war” or “war on terror” regarding Iraq, or between “opportunity to work” or “illegal alien” frames for undocumented workers in the US, or between “universal access” and “government control” frames regarding health care reform, it is important to understand how media go about fashioning or “building” their news frames.

Tilted Mirrors addresses that issue by asking how different communities influence media frame-building. The book adopts an innovative “community structure” approach, using modern databases to compare selected city characteristics and nationwide newspaper reporting on critical issues and events, and introduces a media analysis measure sensitive to differences in editorial judgment, combining both article prominence and direction into a single composite newspaper “Media Vector” score.

“*Tilted Mirrors* finds that inequality in cities helps drive nationwide coverage of critical events,” explains Pollock. Reaching beyond traditional factors such as journalists’ professional norms, organizational routines or ownership footprints, community demographic differences are new fields to explore to explain variations in coverage.” Several frame-building patterns emerge, including the “Buffer Hypothesis”: The larger the proportion of privileged groups “buffered” from economic uncertainty in a city (college-educated, high family income or high occupational status), the more favorable the reporting on human rights claims or scientific advances (e.g., Anita Hill, physician-assisted suicide and embryonic stem cell research). Other frame-building patterns – Violated Buffer, Vulnerability, Protection and Stakeholder – also illuminate critical issues (e.g., banning smoking advertising to children, the Supreme Court stopping presidential vote counting in 2000, capital punishment, Patient’s Bill of Rights, gun control, Arctic oil drilling, trying juveniles as adults, gays in the Boy Scouts, and tracked over several years, those with HIV/AIDS).

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ESSAY ON “COMMUNITY STRUCTURE MODEL” IN SPANISH AND ENGLISH

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“EI MODELO DE LA ESTRUCTURA DE LA COMUNIDAD Y LOS MEDIOS DE COMUNICACIÓN”

John C. Pollock¹

Palabras clave: Vector mediático, cambio político, métodos de investigación, cambio social, control social, pluralismo estructural.

¹ Ph.D. de la Universidad de Stanford, Professor and Chair, Communication Studies

Department, The College of New Jersey Correo Electrónico: pollock@tcnj.edu

El modelo de estructura comunitaria examina las relaciones entre las características de la comunidad, el contenido de los medios y los efectos de la exposición a los contenidos mediáticos desde una perspectiva sistémica. Enfocándose en las macro construcciones asociadas con el contenido y los efectos de los medios de comunicación, el modelo de estructura de la comunidad rechaza la perspectiva de que todos los estudios sobre los medios y sus audiencias pueden ser reducidos al nivel individual de los fenómenos psicológicos. “La estructura” se refiere a los aspectos demográficos de la comunidad --usualmente, a nivel de la ciudad-- o a otras medidas agregadas de la identidad comunitaria, pertenencia, participación, producción, consumo o acceso, que van desde el ingreso o la educación o acceso a la asistencia sanitaria (por ej. el número de médicos por cada 100,000 personas o el porcentaje que cada municipio gasta en atención sanitaria), los niveles de desempleo y pobreza, y los tamaños de grupos de interés (como porcentajes que votan por demócratas o republicanos, o distintas generaciones).

El modelaje de la estructura comunitaria refleja el mandato de Robert Park de la Universidad de Chicago a principios del siglo veinte de estudiar no solamente el impacto en la sociedad del *contenido mediático* (el método predominante de los estudios sobre los medios), sino también el impacto de *la sociedad* sobre los medios. A partir de los estudios de Philip Tichenor, George Donohue, y Clarice Olien (1973, 1980) y sus generaciones de estudiantes de postgrado, el modelo de la estructura de la comunidad ha sido transformado a lo largo varias décadas.

La Expansión Geográfica y el Enfoque Comparativo

Los estudios iniciales se enfocaron en ciudades o condados de Minnesota, con el tamaño y la estructura de la comunidad como los pronosticadores más importantes de la

variación en las noticias (Tichenor et al. 1980). Esta teoría del “pluralismo estructural” propone que las comunidades más grandes, más diversas o socialmente pluralistas estarían asociadas con mayor diversidad en los medios, especialmente en la cobertura de temas críticos por los periódicos (Pluralidad). En otro estudio, Keith Stamm se concentró en una o dos ciudades, conectando la estructura de la comunidad y las actitudes políticas (1985).

Desde mediados de los 1990's en adelante, el trabajo teórico organizado por Demers y Viswanath (1999) y las bases de datos nacionales e internacionales, como Lexis-Nexis y NewsBank, ayudaron a generar proposiciones para el estudio de marcos muestrales histórica y geográficamente más amplios, puestos de manifiesto por el trabajo de comunicación política que asocia el capital social de la comunidad, compromiso cívico y mediático; y en las comparaciones de estructura y la cobertura en estudios empíricos en diferentes ciudades de los Estados Unidos (Pollock, 2007). Efectivamente, los análisis macros de los países diferentes usando los estados-naciones como unidades de estructura y los periódicos nacionales más prominentes para el contenido de las noticias han encontrado vínculos significativos entre, por una parte, el PIB, la mortalidad infantil o el índice de alfabetización, y por otra parte, las perspectivas de la cobertura de las luchas de las Naciones Unidas y las organizaciones no-gubernamentales contra el SIDA (Gratale et al., 2005; Eisenberg et al., 2006).

Las Proposiciones más Importantes:

La Cobertura Informativa puede Reforzar el Control Social o Acomodar/Afirmar el Cambio Social

Los estudios tradicionales sobre la estructura de la comunidad han relacionado la estructura con el “control social”: los medios refuerzando las configuraciones sociales, políticas, y económicas ya existentes. En esta tradición, los medios son muy receptivos a los grupos poderosos, y funcionan como “perros guardianes” (Donohue et al. 1995) para servir a los élites sobre los intereses más que los de la gran masa de la población (Tichenor et al 1980; Demers & Viswanath 1999, p. 4). Una perspectiva alternativa es que los medios pueden también ser agentes del cambio social. Esta idea ha sido expresada con mucha fuerza desde mediados de los 1990’s: Demers y Viswanath dicen que los mensajes de los medios de comunicaciones usualmente refuerzan las normas e instituciones dominantes, pero en contraste con las otras instituciones sociales- la iglesia, la escuela, el estado, y la familia- los medios tienen una mayor capacidad de criticar a las instituciones y las tradiciones establecidas (1999, p. 3).

Los estudios recientes han confirmado relaciones específicas entre la estructura de la comunidad y la cobertura acerca del cambio social. Empleando una medida de “Media Vector” (Vector de los Medios) que combina la prominencia de un artículo en un periódico (la suma de puntajes de uno a cuatro para cuatro dimensiones: colocación o emplazamiento; número de palabras en el titular; el número de palabras en el artículo; y el número de fotos o gráficas) con la dirección (o tono) del contenido, estudios nacionales de muestras representativas de distintas grandes ciudades de los EEUU dan por resultado que hay asociaciones significativas y positivas entre, por una parte, la pobreza o el nivel del desempleo, y por otra parte, la cobertura que se opone la pena de muerte o apoya los derechos de los pacientes (la hipótesis de la “vulnerabilidad”); o entre niveles más altos de privilegio (la educación, los ingresos, las ocupaciones profesionales) en una ciudad y

el apoyo para los derechos de las mujeres (en el testimonio al Congreso de los EEUU de Anita Hill como parte de las sesiones para confirmar como juez el candidato Clarence Thomas) o la investigación de las células madres (la hipótesis de “buffer” o de “seguridad”); o entre niveles más altos de privilegio y la oposición a las campañas publicitarias de las empresas de tabaco orientadas a los niños (la hipótesis de “violated buffer” o “seguridad violada”); o entre partes interesadas (por ej., la proporción de las familias con niños de edades específicas, o que votan los Demócratas o los Republicanos) y la cobertura mediática sobre los asuntos como el control de las armas o el enjuiciamiento en los tribunales de los menores como si fueran adultos (todos son de la hipótesis “stakeholder” o “los interesados”) (Pollock, 2007). Otros estudios hacen las conexiones entre el porcentaje que son hispanos y las variaciones en la cobertura de la reforma inmigrante, o el porcentaje que son católicos y el periodismo variado sobre la discriminación étnica, las bodas homosexuales o las adopciones por parejas homosexuales.

La Multiplicidad de Medidas Estructurales

Mientras inicialmente la academia se enfocó en el tamaño de la ciudad como un indicador de la diferenciación o el pluralismo estructural, el trabajo más reciente mide el *tamaño de los grupos de interés especial* y la diversidad, particularmente la diversidad étnica, para estimar cuánto la cobertura informativa apoya (Gandy 1999; Hindman 1999; Hindamn et. Al 1999; Viswanath & Arora 2000) o (desde 9/11) o se opone a grupos étnicos o religiosos (Pollock et .al., 2005). Además, las bases de datos del censo de E.E.U.U.- disponible en línea- e información de mercadotecnia y demográfica que está disponible al público más fácilmente ilustran medidas innovadoras de la estructura

de las ciudades estadounidenses que comparan indicadores de desigualdad, poder, los intereses de partes interesadas: privilegio (educación universitaria, un ingreso familiar de más de \$100,000, el estatus de ocupación profesional) ; el acceso a los servicios de salud; la vulnerabilidad (el desempleo o la pobreza extrema); y los interesados (porcentaje que son Católicos, evangélicos, Protestantes, Demócratas o Republicanos, familias con niños de varias edades, porcentaje afroamericano, hispano, o de habla árabe o persa) (Pollock & Yulis 2004; Pollock 2007).

Los Desafíos Contemporáneos

El modelo de la estructura de la comunidad está a punto de extenderse más allá de la curiosidad inicial a un marco teórico robusto que abarca principalmente cuatro desafíos. Primero, el análisis longitudinal y los análisis de series cronológicas (time series) (por ej., la cobertura de VIH y SIDA por Pollock, 2007, capítulo 8) pueden validar el poder explicativo y predictivo de la teoría estructural mediante análisis longitudinales. Segundo, definiciones flexibles de la comunidad que se extiendan más allá de las fronteras políticas y geográficas tradicionales mediante el uso de los recursos modernos de sistemas de información geográfica (Geographic Information Systems) para comparar las unidades geopolíticas más pequeñas y más grandes para abrazar las actuales comunidades de redes interactivas o las medidas de la interacción entre estas comunidades diferentes, un enfoque del trabajo sobre el control de tabaco en el estado de Colorado (Buller, et al., 2001, pp. 357-372) y una variedad de las comunidades del ciberespacio que son definidas por relaciones múltiples, medidas por los hipervínculos o el número de socios en los canales de charla para definir las características de “comunidades interpretativas” (Berkowitz & TerKeurst 1999). En tercer lugar, la

opinión pública como sustituto para el comportamiento que combina los distintos niveles de análisis, sea la estructura y la opinión pública (Paek et al., 2005) o la estructura y la manera en que se compone el liderazgo (Armstrong, 2006). En cuarto lugar, la combinación de la estructura de la comunidad con otras teorías poderosas como la difusión (Difusión de información e innovación) o la mercadotecnia social pueden proveer nuevas proposiciones sobre la alineación de los medios con los cambios políticos y sociales, apoyando a las comunidades seleccionadas a ser más receptivas a los mensajes que impulsan comportamientos más saludables (Comunicación para la Salud).

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Community Structure Model

John C. Pollock

The community structure model explores links among community characteristics, media content and effects of exposure to media content from a system perspective. Focusing on macro constructs associated with media content and media effects, the community structure approach rejects the perspective that all studies of media and audiences can be reduced to the individual level of psychological phenomena. “Structure” refers to community – typically city-level – demographics or other aggregate measures of community identity, membership, participation, production, consumption or access, ranging from income or education to health care access (e.g., physicians/100,000 or percent municipal spending on health care).

Community structure modeling mirrors the injunction of University of Chicago’s Robert Park in the early twentieth century to study not only the impact of *media* on society (the prevailing model in media studies), but also the impact of *society* on media. Beginning with the famous studies of Philip Tichenor, George Donohue and Clarice Olien (1973, 1980) and their several generations of graduate students, the community structure model has been transformed over several decades.

Expanding Geographic and Comparative Focus

Initial studies focused on cities or counties in Minnesota, with size and structure of the community as major predictors of news variation (*Community Conflict and the Press*, 1980). This “structural pluralism” theory proposed that larger, more diverse, socially pluralistic communities would be associated with greater diversity in media, especially newspaper reporting on critical issues (→ Plurality). Elsewhere, Keith Stamm focused on one or two cities linking community structure and political attitudes (1985).

From the mid-nineties onward, the theoretical work organized by Demers and Viswanath (1999) and national and international databases such as Lexis-Nexis and NewsBank helped generate propositions for broader historical and geographic sample frames, illustrated in political communication work associating community social capital, media and civic engagement; and in empirical, cross-city US national comparisons of structure and reporting (Pollock, 2007). Indeed, cross-national analyses using entire nation-states as units of structure and leading national newspapers for news content have found significant links between Gross Domestic Product, infant mortality rate or literacy rate and reporting perspectives on United Nations’ and Non-Governmental Organizations’ fights against AIDS (Gratale, et. al., 2005; Eisenberg, et. al., 2006).

Major Propositions

Media Can Reinforce Social Control or Accommodate/Affirm Social Change

Traditional community structure studies have linked structure to “social control”: media reinforcing existing social, political and economic configurations. In this tradition, media are highly responsive to powerful groups, functioning as “guard dogs” (Donohue, Tichenor & Olien, 1995) to generally serve elite over mass interests (Demers & Viswanath, 1999, p. 4; Tichenor, Donohue & Olien, 1980). An alternative view is that media can also be agents of social change, articulated strongly since the mid-nineties: “Mass mediated messages typically reinforce dominant norms and institutions, but relative to other social institutions – including the church, school, state and family – media have a greater capacity to criticize ... established institutions and traditions (Demers & Viswanath, 1999, p. 3).

Recent studies have confirmed specific links between community structure and reporting on social change. Cross-sectional national studies of US cities find significant, positive associations between: poverty or unemployment levels and reporting opposing capital punishment or supporting a patients’ bill of rights -- a “vulnerability” hypothesis; or between higher levels of privilege (education, income, professionals) in a city and support for women’s rights (in Anita Hill’s congressional testimony in the Clarence Thomas hearings) or stem cell research – a “buffer” hypothesis; or between higher levels of privilege and opposition to tobacco advertising to children -- a “violated buffer” hypothesis; or between specific stakeholders – proportions of families with children of specific ages, or voting Democratic or Republican, and reporting on such issues as gun control or trying juveniles as adults – all “stakeholder” hypotheses (Pollock, 2007). Other studies trace connections between percent Hispanic and variations in reporting on immigration reform or percent Catholic and varied journalism regarding ethnic profiling, gay marriage and gay adoption .

Multiplicity of Structural Indicators

While early scholarship focused substantially on city size as an indicator of structural differentiation or structural pluralism, more recent work measures the *size of interest groups* (Hertog & McLeod, 1995) and diversity, in particular ethnic diversity, estimating how much media either support ethnic interests (Gandy, 1999; Hindman, 1999; Hindman, Littlefield, Preston & Neumann, 1999; Viswanath & Arora, 2000) or (since 9/11) oppose ethnic or religious groups (Pollock, Piccillo, Leopardi, Gratale, & Cabot, 2005). In addition, online US Census databases and more widely available marketing and demographic data illuminate innovative, comparative US city structural measures of inequality, power and stakeholder interests: privilege (college educated, family income of \$100,000+, professional occupational status); health care access; vulnerability (unemployed or below the poverty level); and stakeholders (percent Catholic, Evangelical, or Mainline Protestant; voting Democratic or Republican in presidential elections; different age/generation groups, families with children of various ages; percent African American, Hispanic, or Arabic or Farsi speaking (See Pollock, 2007; Pollock & Yulis, 2004).

Modern Research Challenges

The community structure model is poised to move beyond initial curiosity to a robust theoretical framework addressing mainly four challenges. First, longitudinal and time series analyses (e.g., HIV/AIDS coverage over time in Pollock, 2007, Chpt. 8) can validate the explanatory and predictive power of cross-sectional structural theory (→ Longitudinal Analysis). Second, flexible definitions of community reach beyond traditional political/geographic boundaries, using modern GIS data resources to compare smaller and larger geo-political units and to embrace “networking communities” or cross-community network measures, a focus of work on tobacco control in Colorado (Buller, et. al., 2001, pp. 357-372) and a variety of cyberspace communities defined by multiple relationships, measured by hyperlinks or memberships in chatrooms, mapping multiple “interpretive communities” (Berkowitz and TerKeurst, 1999).

Third, → public opinion as a proxy for behavior combines different levels of analysis, whether structure and public opinion (Paek, Yoon, & Shah, 2005) or structure and leadership composition (Armstrong, 2006). Fourth, combining community structure with other powerful theories such as diffusion (→ Diffusion of Information and Innovation) or → social marketing theory can yield new propositions on the alignment of media with political and social change, helping target communities most receptive to messages promoting healthier behaviors (→ Health Communication).

SEE ALSO: Communication and Social Change: Research Methods; Community Integration; Community Media; Content Analysis, Quantitative; Development Journalism; Diffusion of Information and Innovation; Exposure to Communication Content; Framing Effects; Health Communication; Health Communication and Journalism; Health Communication and the Internet; Health Disparities, Communication in; Journalists’ Role Perception; Knowledge Gap Effects; Longitudinal Analysis; Media Effects; Plurality; Public Opinion; Social Marketing.

KEYWORDS: Media Vector Measure; Political Change; Research Methods; Social Change; Social Control; Structural Pluralism.

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John C. Pollock (Ph.D., Stanford) is Professor and Chair of Communication Studies at The College of New Jersey, Ewing, New Jersey. He is the creator of the interdisciplinary Health Communication Concentration at The College of New Jersey and author of *Tilted Mirrors: Media Alignment with Political and Social Change – A Community Structure Approach* (Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 2007).

LEXICON CATEGORIES: Communication Theories, Models; Media Content; Media Effects; Social Change.