



Bournemouth  
University

A dense, overlapping collage of various digital icons and symbols, primarily in shades of blue and green. The icons include words like 'NEWS', 'Internet', 'Support', 'UPGRADE', and 'http://www', as well as symbols like a globe, a padlock, a plane, and a network diagram. The collage is tilted and has a dark, textured background.

# Mixed Messages... Media Representations of Infant Feeding

Dr Catherine Angell  
Cardiff 2016

A scroll of parchment, partially unrolled, with a textured, aged appearance. The scroll is light brown and has two circular holes at the top, suggesting it was once part of a book or a scroll set. The text is overlaid on the central part of the scroll.

# LATIN: 'MEDIAN'

- AN INTERMEDIARY
- AN INTERVENING AGENCY,  
MEANS, OR INSTRUMENT

# MASS MEDIA



The Media can be conceived as collections of industries, practices, representations, products of economic and statutory regulations, audiences' understandings and as a means of delivering audiences to advertisers...

(Albertazzi and Cobley 2013)

# Literature review

- Media AND infant feeding, NOT otitis media, NOT social media
- x186 results
- Included: breastfeeding, formula milk feeding, peer review, English language, original research
- Excluded: weaning, social media, non peer reviewed, non English language, commentaries and opinion
- x18 papers - infant feeding in mass media
- x3 dissertations - infant feeding in mass media
- x7 papers - media for infant feeding health promotion

## **Angell and Hundley**

In July 2011 sixteen English daily and Sunday national newspapers were examined for articles containing references to breastfeeding and/or formula milk feeding.

Identified whether infant feeding appeared to be the:

- Focus of the article
- Incidental within the article
- Text and pictures coded - latent and manifest codes

# 28 articles covering 21 different 'stories' ....

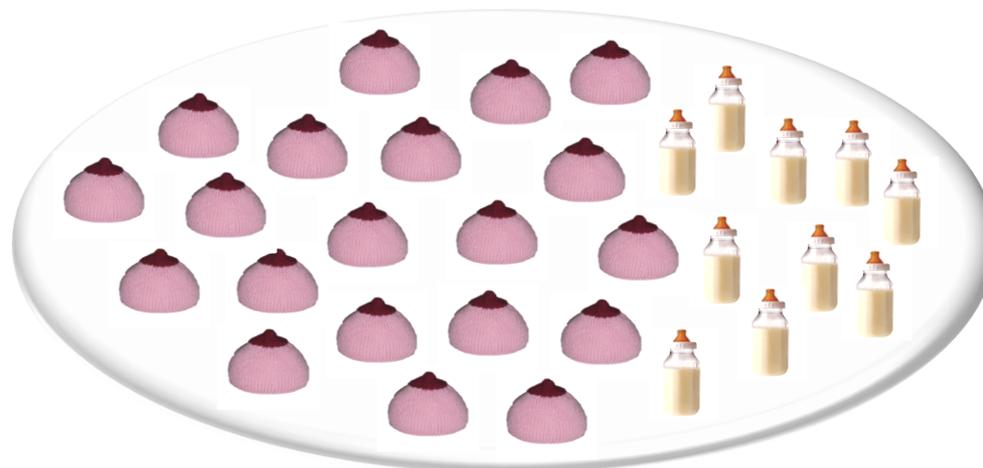
Breastfeeding in  
public spaces  
X8

Infant feeding  
incidental to  
article  
X16

Mastitis  
X1

Celebrities and  
breastfeeding  
X2

Returning to  
work X1



# Themes

- Patterns and trends
- Who breastfeeds?
- Reasons to breastfeed
- Problematic breastfeeding
- Breastfeeding in the public eye

# Patterns and trends

- Temporal or cultural variations in reporting of breastfeeding (Potter et al 2000, Foss and Southwell 2006, Foss 2010, O'Brien et al 2016)
- 'Spin' on messages or advertising mirrored the trends in feeding (Potter et al 2000, Foss and Southwell 2006, Foss 2010)
- Differences in coverage matched cultural norms and expectations (Dodgson et al 2008)



# Who breastfeeds?

- **‘Middle class’, educated, affluent women** (Henderson et al 2000, Dodgson et al 2008, Foss 2013)
- **White women** (Brown and Peuchard 2008, Dogson et al 2008, Duvall 2015)
- **Heterosexual, able bodied** (Foss 2013)
- **Celebrities** (Henderson et al 2000, Bridges 2007, Duvall 2015, O’Brien et al 2016, Angell and Hundley n.d.)
  - **‘Unattainable perfection’ and ‘Earth Mothers’**
  - **Strange and sensationalised situations**
  - **Interest in female body and breasts**

# Reasons to breastfeed...

- Breastfeeding identified as 'normal' and 'natural' (Foss 2013, Angell and Hundley n.d.)
- Lack of detail around specific health or emotional benefits (Henderson et al, 2000, Foss 2013, Angell and Hundley n.d)
- Societal or environmental implications of feeding choices not noted (Frerichs et al 2006)



**Not too Posh to breastfeed:  
Victoria plans to feed her  
new daughter naturally for  
the first time**

By **DAILY MAIL REPORTER**  
UPDATED: 14:02, 4 July 2011

# Problematic breastfeeding

- ‘Problems’ are newsworthy
  - Insufficient milk - infant deaths (Brown and Peuchard 2008)
  - Returning to work (Angell and Hundley n.d)
  - Breastfeeding in public spaces (Henderson et al 2000, van den Brandhof et al 2002, Brown and Peuchaud 2008, Angell and Hundley n.d)
- Fictional representations
  - Breastfeeding problems provided storylines (Henderson et al 2000)
  - Formula feeding ‘incidental’ or ‘everyday’ (Henderson et al 2000, Angell and Hundley n.d.)
- Individualised/extreme problems, pain and risk (Frerichs et al 2006, Foss 2013, Angell and Hundley n.d)
- Lack of practical information (Foss 2010)

# Breastfeeding in the public eye

- Breastfeeding in public spaces/public view - most cited news item (van den Brandhof et al 2002, Angell and Hundley n.d.)
- Lack of images - breastfeeding referred to verbally, not visually (Henderson et al 2000, van den Bradnhof et al 2002, Bylaska 2011, Angell and Hundley n.d.)
- Breastfeeding is good, but not in public...
  - Sexual connotations (Bridges 2007)
  - Unacceptable behaviour (Bridges 2007, Foss 2013)
  - Should be possible, but might cause outrage and disgust (Angell and Hundley n.d.)

# Why the mixed messages...?



# Media theories...



Exhibit 3.1 Partial List of Media Effects

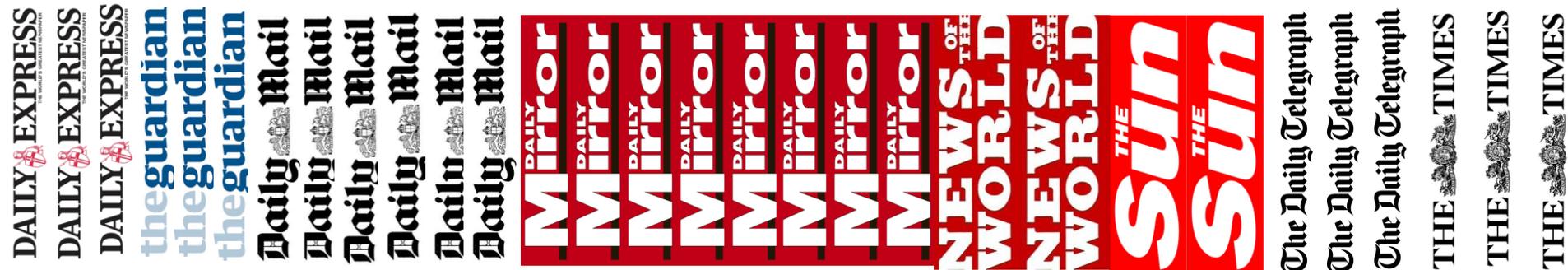
- |   |                           |   |
|---|---------------------------|---|
| Advertising                                 | Cultivation               | Homogenization                          |
| Affluent society                            | Cultural imperialism      | Imitation                               |
| Agenda building                             | Culture of narcissism     | Indirect effects                        |
| Agenda setting                              | Decision making           | Information flow                        |
| Aggression                                  | Diffusion of innovations  | Information seeking                     |
| Associative network building                | Direct effects            | Integrated response                     |
| Attitude construct creation                 | Disinhibition             | Interpretation by social class          |
| Audience as commodification                 | Disposition altering      | Interpretive resistance                 |
| Audience construction by media              | Distribution of knowledge | Knowledge gap                           |
| Audience flow                               | Double action gatekeeping | Double jeopardy                         |
| Audience polarization                       | Drench                    | Least objectionable programming         |
| Automatic activation                        | Elaboration likelihood    | Levels of processing                    |
| Availability-valence altering               | Elite pluralism           | Limited capacity information processing |
| Buffering                                   | Empathy activation        | Marketplace alteration                  |
| Capacity limits                             | Encoding-decoding         | Mass audience                           |
| Catharsis                                   | Excitation transfer       | Media access                            |
| Channel repertoire reinforcement            | Exemplification           | Media as culture industries             |
| Character affiliation                       | Expectancy value          | Media culture                           |
| Civic engagement                            | Fraction of selection     | Media enjoyment                         |
| Coalition building                          | Framing                   | Media enjoyment as attitude             |
| Cognitive dissonance                        | Gatekeeping               | Media entertainment                     |
| Cognitive response                          | Global village            | Media flow                              |
| Conservative/moralist decision making       | Gratification seeking     | Media system dependency                 |
| Consumer culture creation and reinforcement | Gravitation               | Medium as message                       |
| Cue activation                              | Hegemony                  | Message construction                    |
|   | Heuristic processing      | Mood management                         |
|   | Hidden persuaders         |   |

- |  |                               |   |
|--|-------------------------------|---|
| Motivated attention and motivated processing | Power elite                   | Social construction of meaning            |
| Neo-associationistic thinking                | Priming                       | Social construction of media technologies |
| Neo-mass audience                            | Principled reasoning          | Social identity                           |
| Network political priming                    | Profit-driven logic of safety | Social learning                           |
| News content                                 | Program choice                | Social norms                              |
| News diffusion                               | Proteus effect                | Sociology of news                         |
| News factory                                 | Pseudo-events blur reality    | Spiral of silence                         |
| News frame creation                          | Psychodynamics                | Synapse priming                           |
| News selection                               | Psychological conditioning    | Technological determinism                 |
| Newsworker socialization                     | Rally effect                  | Television trivialization of public life  |
| One-dimensional man                          | Reasoned action               | Third-person effect                       |
| Parasocial interaction                       | Reception                     | Transactional effects                     |
| Perception of hostile media                  | Resource dependency           | Transmission of information               |
| Persuasion                                   | Revealed preferences          | Transportation of audiences               |
| Political ignorance                          | Ritual reinforcement          | Two-step flow                             |
| Political socialization                      | Selective exposure            | Uses and dependency                       |
| Political significance                       | Selective gatekeeping         | Uses and gratifications                   |
|  | Selective perception          | Videomalaise                              |
|  | Semiotic interpretations      |   |
|  | Social cognitions             |   |

(Potter 2012)

# Moving beyond 'media effects'

- Seeing a behaviour = doing a behaviour
  - Media effects research 'starts at the wrong end' (Gauntlett, 1998)
- Two way reciprocal effect between media and public opinion (Neuman and Guggenheim 2011)
- Public opinion around infant feeding is mixed...so media portrayal will be mixed...



“When you’re young, you look at television and think, there’s a conspiracy...the networks have conspired to dumb us down. But when you get a little older, you realize that’s not true. The networks are in business to give people exactly what they want. That’s a far more depressing thought...”

*Steve Jobs*

# Anatomy of a news story...

'Breastfeeding mother told to  
leave court'

'You absolutely can't  
do that here'

*Daily Telegraph 14/7/11*

'You hear everywhere that breast

'It was just awful. I felt so  
humiliated, intimidated and  
guilty through the whole  
thing'

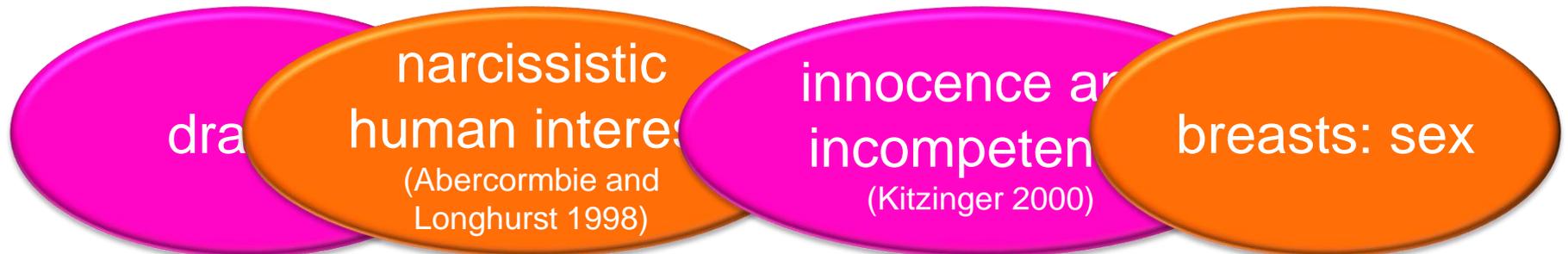
*Daily Express 14/7/11*

so why  
do that?'

# Media effects

## Agenda setting

- “Media do not tell us what to think...but rather what to think about” (McCombs and Shaw 1972 in Neuman and Guggenheim 2011)
- Lots of topics of potential interest...or not..
- What does the media choose to put in front of the audience?



# Anatomy of a news story...

'Breastfeeding mother told to  
leave council toilets'

'You absolutely can't  
do that here'

*Daily Telegraph 14/7/11*

'You hear everywhere that breast

'It was just awful. I felt so  
humiliated, intimidated and  
guilty through the whole  
thing'

*Daily Express 14/7/11*

'Don't breastfeed in  
here, you'll upset the  
'It's a multicultural

'Labour Councillor Shoab  
Akhtar said it was  
suitable'

'Mrs Mitchell, who is married  
to Neil, 43, a lorry driver, said:  
"I was told to use the public  
toilets"'

*Daily Mail 13/7/11*

# Media Effects

## Framing

- Media provide a focus and environment for reporting a story, influencing how audiences will understand or evaluate it (Tankard et al 2001)
- “Heroes and villains” (Seale 2003)
- “Group stereotyping” (Seale 2003)
- “The news wave” (Scheufele 1999)

# Anatomy of a news story...

'Breastfeeding mother told to  
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*Daily Telegraph 14/7/11*

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'Don't breastfeed  
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'Labour Councillor Shoab  
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suitable'

'Mrs Mitchell, who is married  
to Neil, 43, a lorry driver, said:  
"I was told to use the public  
toilets"'

*Daily Mail 13/7/11*

'BBC  
'Breast is beastly – unless  
men  
d to  
urants,  
e nice

'Cue outrage from the  
breastfeeding pressure  
groups such as the  
National Association of  
Perpetually Lactating  
Harridans'

*The Times 21/7/11*

“It has to be possible to balance freedom of expression with wider moral and social responsibilities”  
(David Puttnam 2014)

**WHOEVER CONTROLS  
THE MEDIA, THE  
IMAGES, CONTROLS  
THE CULTURE.**

Allen Ginsberg  
American Poet

“The media are not in the business of health education”  
(Brown and Peuchaud 2008)

[cangell@bournemouth.ac.uk](mailto:cangell@bournemouth.ac.uk)

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