

impact on individual behavior and social identity.



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# Reinforcing Spirals: The Mutual Influence of Media Selectivity and Media Effects and Their Impact on Individual Behavior and Social Identity

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## Abstract

The attitudinal or behavioral outcomes of media use can be expected to influence selection of and attention to media content. This process can be conceptualized in terms of mutually reinforcing spirals akin to positive feedback loops in general systems theory. This reinforcing spirals perspective highlights the need for longitudinal modeling of mutually influencing media selection and effects processes; study of the impact of such processes in youth and adolescent identity development; and analysis of social and psychological factors that control, dampen, or eventually extinguish the influence of such spirals. This perspective may also, more speculatively, be extended to address the maintenance of social identity for political, religious, and lifestyle groups. The relevance of a reinforcing spirals model to theories including spiral of silence, agenda-setting, framing, cultivation, selective attention, and uses and gratifications is also discussed.

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