

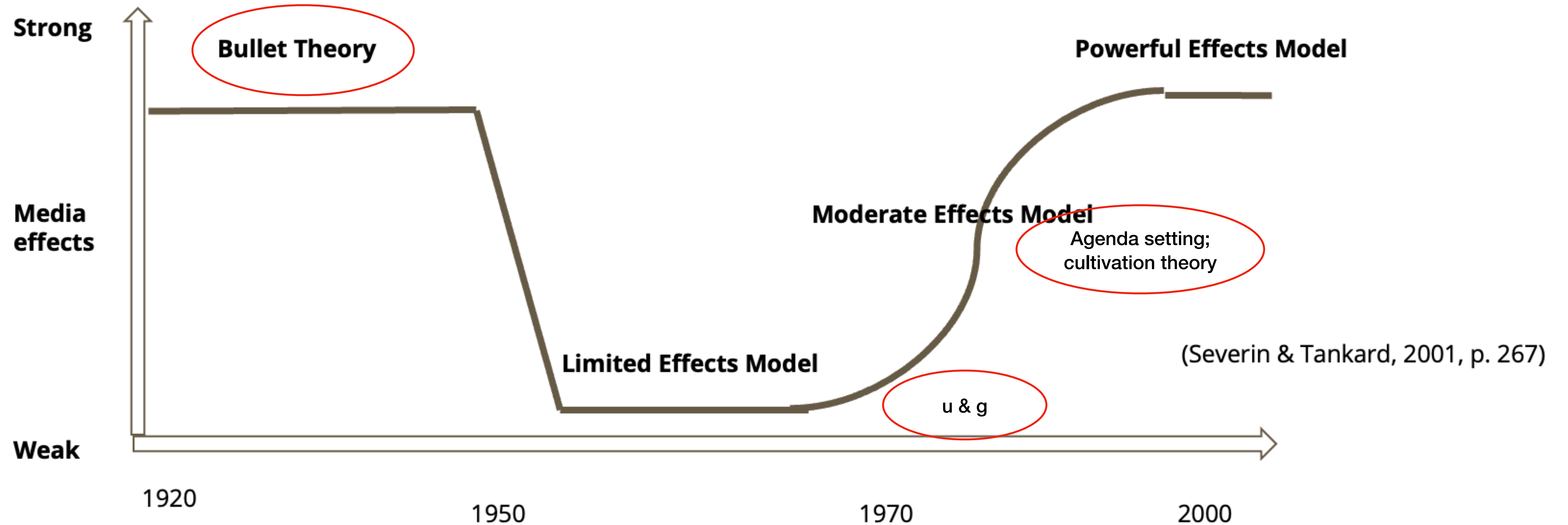
Week 15: Cultivation Theory + Agenda Setting

COMM 2100 Introduction to Comm Theory
SI Session

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Media effect background

Four phases of research



Cultivation Theory

- Cultivation theory: The more time people spend “living” in the television world, the more likely they are to believe social reality aligns with reality portrayed on TV.



- *Tweek's story in South Park.*

Prong #1 Message system analysis

content analysis: what's on TV?

- Dramatic violence: the overt expression or serious threat of physical force as part of the plot.

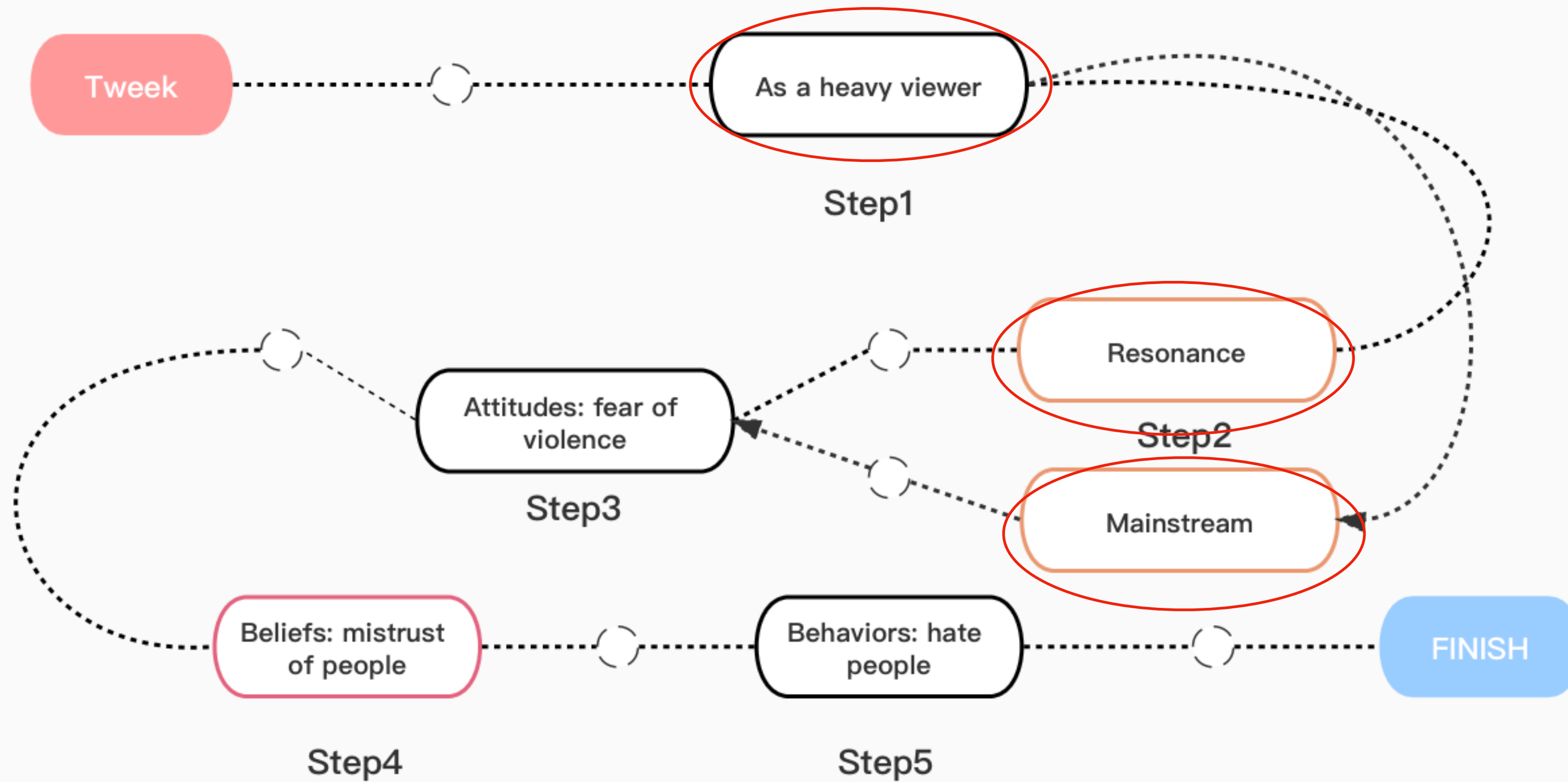
Prong #2: Cultivation analysis

Those who spend more time watching TV are more likely to see the “real world” through TV’s lens.

- Heavy viewers: TV viewers who report that they watch at least 4 hours per day.
- Mechanism: mainstreaming & resonance.
 - Mainstreaming: when heavy TV viewers from disparate groups develop a common outlook.
 - Resonance: when viewers’ real-life environment is like the world of TV.
- Result:
 - Cultivation differential: difference in the percentage giving the “television answer” between heavy and light viewers.
 - Mean world syndrome: cynical mindset of general mistrust of others.

How do you explain Tweek's behavior in the clip?

Within cultural analysis



Prong #3

Institutional process analysis

- looks behind the scenes of media organizations to understand their policies and practices.
- e.g., inner working in Hollywood.

The evolution of cultivation theory today

Active viewers

- Active viewers: The audiences have the right to explain what they really feel about the issues and create multiple meanings.



Agenda Setting

Media agenda sets public agenda

- Three levels: what to think, what attributes to think, what issues go together.

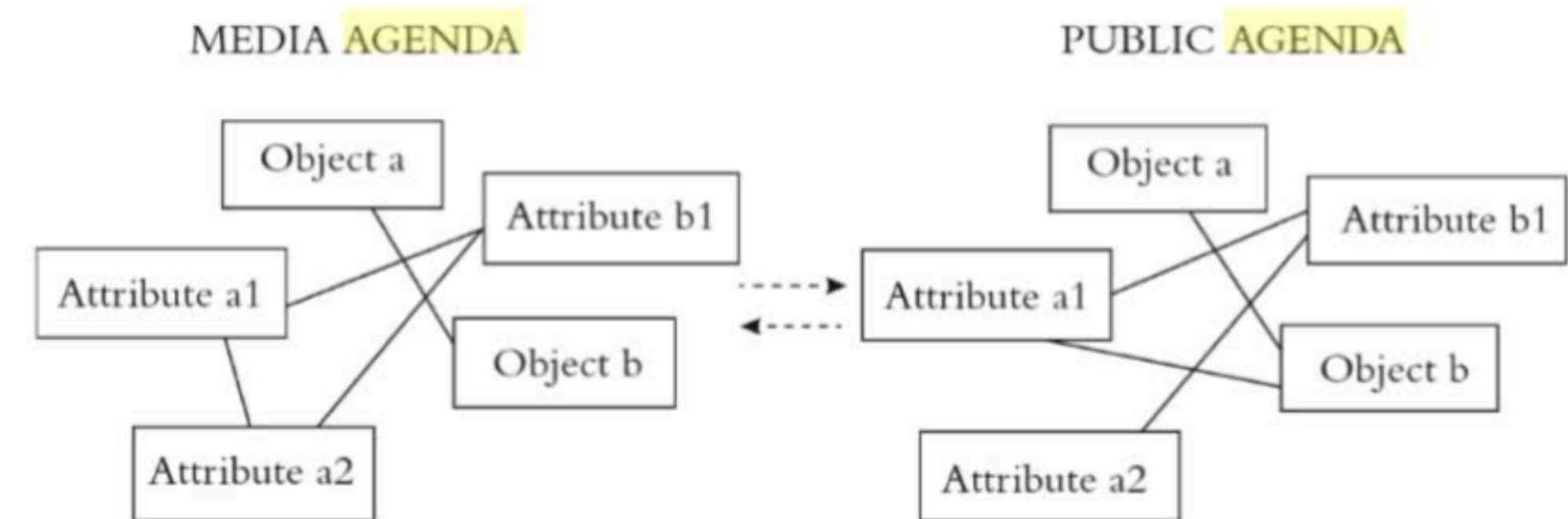
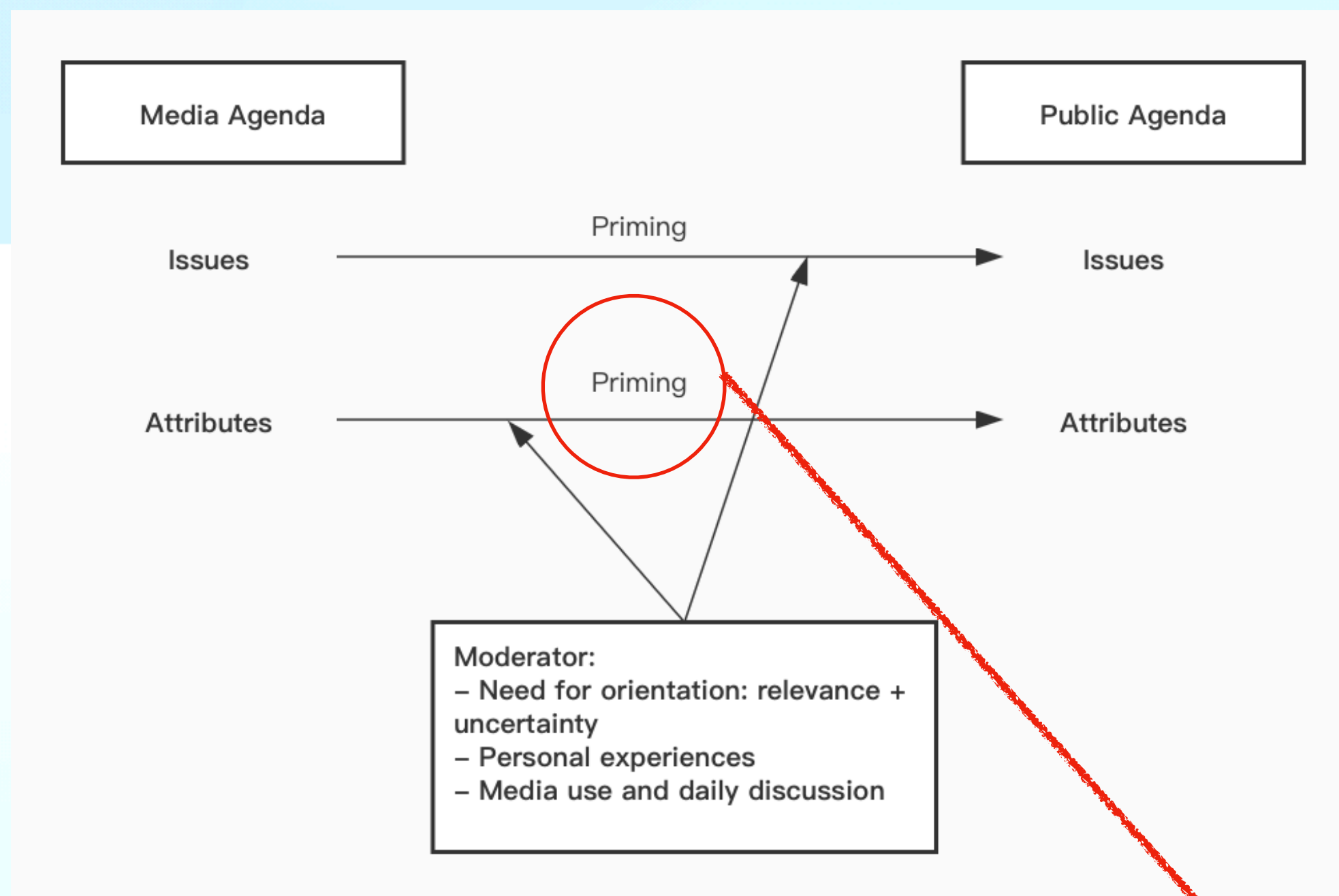


FIGURE 1.2 Network agenda setting

framing: The central organizing ideas for news content that supplies a context and suggests what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion and elaboration.

Who sets the agenda?

Interest aggregations

- Interest aggregations: clusters of people who demand center stage for their one overriding concern; pressure groups.

Other news organizations

Emerging media. e.g., reddit.

Partisan media

Fake news

Candidates

Press release

Gatekeepers

Agenda melding

The social process by which we meld agendas from various sources to create pictures of the world that fits our experiences and preferences.

- Vertical media: news media try to reach broad, diverse audiences.
- Horizontal media: news media try to appeal to specific interest communities.

Thank you!
See you next week!