

May 14, 1981

Dr. Sandra Ball-Rokeach
Professor
Department of Sociology
Wilson Hall, Room 133
Washington State University
Pullman, WA 99164

Dear Sandra:

Thank you for your letter of April 21, the enclosures, and the subsequent review which is also much appreciated.

I am enclosing a copy of my letter to David Scudder. It explains our procedure and the information we will need. I appreciate your interest and assistance in our consideration of David Scudder.

We reviewed the section from the fourth edition that you kindly sent us, and would like to make a few comments and suggestions. We feel that the most valuable demonstrations of cultivation theory have come from our studies of aging, women and minorities, occupations like science and medicine, health-related practices, as well as (or perhaps even more than) the area of violence. So we hope that if you place it in the violence chapter, you will nevertheless, mention the other areas. Also, your footnote 24 reference does not include any mention of cultivation theory, and your footnote 25 reference is not the publication that is most readily available.

We also felt that the statement of violence as a demonstration of power is imprecise and somewhat misleading.

Instead of trying to mark up the text, I am taking the liberty of re-writing it in the way we believe is both more specific and more correct. I hope that you will consider it for inclusion in the book.

I also hope that we can stay in closer communication and look forward to seeing you again soon.

With best regards from Ilona and me to you and Milt.

Sincerely yours,

George Gerbner

GG:ab

Chapter 10

THEORIES OF THE EFFECTS OF MEDIA VIOLENCE

- I. BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM
- II. THE BASICS OF THE MAJOR THEORIES
 - A. Catharsis Theory
 - B. Stimulating Effects Theory
 - C. Observational Learning Theory
 - D. Reinforcement Theory
 - E. Cultivation Theory
 - F. Summary
- III. POLICY IMPLICATIONS
- IV. SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH

C1 (Group of Four):
Sandra Ball-Rokeach sent me this
for comments (and possible revision).
It goes in 4th edition of the Theories
book.

Now I know that we could write
teams of comment, but what we
really need is suggestions for
alternative and/or (some) additional
wording. Please let me have in a
few days so I can respond.

[Signature]

NB - Seems we are in chapters on violence. Will try to change that

Cultivation Theory

Cultivation Theory has been developed primarily by Gerbner²⁴ and his associates. Its basic thesis is that the symbolic world of the media, particularly television, shapes or cultivates audiences' conceptions of the real world. Television, with its presence in the vast majority of American homes, is said to be one of the few sources of exposure to everyday symbolic cultures which Americans share or have in common. The symbolic world of television is shown by content analyses to be a "mean" world where violence is commonplace. Violence is used by most TV characters, usually to gain the upperhand in struggles for power. The white, young males who dominate the TV world as leading characters also dominate other, particularly women, minorities, and old people, via the successful use of violence. According to cultivation theory, this violent white male dominated TV world seeps into viewers' consciousness such that they see the real world as being like the TV world.

In contrast to the other theories we have discussed, the major effect that concerns cultivation theorists is not so much violent behavior, but the fear, anxiety, and alienation consequences of people adopting the symbolic and violent worlds of the media as reflections of reality. To the extent that people believe the real world to be as extremely violent as the media world, they should experience fear and anxiety in such routine activities as walking down the street, and this fear should create a state of alienation from others.

In a recent elaboration of cultivation theory, Gerbner and his associates²⁵ have incorporated the concepts of "mainstreaming" and

²⁴George Gerbner, "Violence in Television Drama: Trends and Symbolic Functions," in *Television and Social Behavior*, ed. George Comstock and Eli Rubinstein (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1971), vol. 1.

²⁵George Gerbner, Larry Gross, Michael Morgan, and Nancy Signorielli, "Violence Profile No. 11: Trends in Network Television Drama and Viewer Conceptions of Social Reality, 1967-1979." (Technical Report, University of Pennsylvania: The Annenberg School of Communications, 1980).

"resonance". Mainstreaming refers to a kind of homogenization effect where people, who for some unspecified reason, have developed a conception of the world as being either much more peaceful or much more violent than the average conception, are influenced by exposure to the television world of violence to adopt a less extreme view of the real world. Resonance refers to a kind of increased salience effect in which people who live in unusually violent circumstances resonate to the even more violent TV world such that their conception of the real world as violent is amplified or intensified by TV exposure.

Cultivation theory incorporates aspects of both the individual differences and the social categories perspectives. The two major individual differences of interest to cultivation theorists are differences between individuals that affect the degree of media exposure and differences in experience that affect individuals' perceptions of the real world and of the symbolic media world. Social category differences in sex, race, social class, residence, and other social factors enter the picture because people who share similar social category characteristics are also likely to share similar experiences and conceptions of the real world and, thus, are likely to be similarly affected by exposure to the media world.

CULTIVATION THEORY

Cultivation Theory has been developed primarily by Gerbner²⁴ and his associates. Its basic thesis is that the symbolic world of television shapes and maintains--i.e., cultivates--conceptions of the real world. Television, with its presence in virtually all American homes, is said to be the common symbolic environment into which most children are born and thus the most pervasive source of exposure to a symbolic world which Americans have in common. The symbolic world of television and its cultivation of conceptions of and behaviors in the real world has been studied with regard to women and minorities, aging, health-related conceptions and behaviors, science and scientists, and other aspects of life, as well as violence.

In so far as violence is concerned, analyses show its prevalence and nature in the world of television and its role in establishing a social structure of power in that world. The hierarchy of power is measured by establishing a "risk ratio" through dividing the number of violent aggressors in each demographic group by the number of victims. In that way, it is shown that the white males who dominate the TV world as leading characters also dominate other groups, particularly women and minorities, via their ability to be more successful and less likely to be victimized if and when involved in an act of violence. According to cultivation theory, the frequent presentation of patterns of violence, and of the prevalence of violence in what appears to be a "mean" world, cultivates a sense of anxiety, insecurity, and exaggerated fear of victimization in viewers' consciousness of the real world.

In contrast to the other theories we have discussed, the major effect that concerns cultivation theorists in terms of media violence is not so much the triggering of violent behavior as the anxiety, insecurity, and consequent dependence and controllability of people perceiving the violent world of television as reality.

In a recent elaboration of cultivation theory, Gerbner and his associates²⁵ have incorporated the concepts of "mainstreaming" and "resonance," which help explain differences in cultivation patterns among different groups. Mainstreaming refers to a kind of homogenization effect where people, who because of other influences, have divergent perceptions of the world, are influenced by exposure to television to adopt a more common and shared ("mainstream") view of the real world. Resonance refers to a kind of increased salience effect in which people who live in unusually violent circumstances resonate to the violent TV world so that their conception of the real world as violent is amplified or intensified by TV exposure.

Cultivation theory incorporates aspects of both the individual differences and the social categories perspectives. The two major individual differences of interest to cultivation theorists are differences between individuals that affect the degree of media exposure and differences in experience that affect individuals' perceptions of the real world and of the symbolic media world. Social category differences in sex, race, social class, residence, and other social factors enter the picture because people who share similar social category characteristics are also likely to share similar experiences and conceptions of the real world and, thus, are likely to be similarly affected by exposure to the media world.

FOOTNOTES:

²⁴ George Gerbner and Larry Gross, "The Violent Face of Television and Its Lessons," in *Children and the Faces of Television: Teaching, Violence Selling*, eds. Edward L. Palmer and Aimee Dorr (New York: Academic Press, 1980.)

²⁵ George Gerbner, Larry Gross, Michael Morgan and Nancy Signorielli, "The 'Mainstreaming' of America: Violence Profile No. 11." Journal of Communication, Summer 1980.

Mixed with carbon of Scudder letter (attached)

November 18, 1981

Sandra J. Ball-Rokeach
Professor
Department of Sociology
Washington State University
Pullman WA 99164

Dear Sandra:

In your P.S. to the copy of your letter of September 30 to Jerry Salvaggio you ask about David Scudder. Enclosed is a copy of my last letter to Scudder; so far, no response.

I look forward to a copy of the 4th edition. (Have already received copy of the book jacket from Tren, and it looks very good.)

Yes, we are publishing some books through Longman.

Best regards to you and Milt.

Sincerely yours,

George Gerbner
Professor of Communications
and Dean

GG:ab

Enclosure

September 23, 1981

David F. Scudder
Washington State University
Social Research Center
Pullman, Washington 99164

Dear Mr. Scudder:

Thank you for your letter of August 31. I look forward to receiving the theory chapter of your dissertation, a curriculum vita, and any other materials you might have available. All this will be forwarded to the Faculty Committee considering our staffing needs for the next few years, and then we shall keep you informed of the prospects.

Sincerely yours,

George Gerbner
Professor of Communications
and Dean

GG;pr

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY

PULLMAN, WASHINGTON 99164

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

Salvaggio

① To his in?

② David Scudger

③ Book wr.

30 September, 1981

Dr. Jerry L. Salvaggio
Department of Speech
Louisiana State University
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70803

Dear Jerry,

I have made a number of editorial changes and corrections, particularly in the early pages of the enclosed copy of our paper. I am glad to hear that George will be playing the series editor as well as the writer of the Introduction roles.

One question that has not to my knowledge been discussed is the matter of royalties or the financial arrangements between all parties. We do not really mind whether you and the publishers prefer flat sums or royalty splits, but it seems time for this to be discussed as the completion of the book appears to be at hand.

I did not find a copy of the Table of Contents that you had said in your letter was enclosed in the packet that you sent to me. Thus, I really don't have any terribly helpful comments to make on the overall composition of the book.

I hope that your move to Louisiana has been as smooth as those things can be, and that you are finding your new work environs more conducive than those in the WSU Communications Department. Your departure was timed well as you may have heard about the sorry financial situation that suddenly hit the State and our university.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Sandra
S. J. Ball-Rokeach
Professor
509-335-1511 (office)
509-332-1980 (home)

c/c George Gerbner

Hello George

Hope all goes well by you. Can you tell me anything about prospects for David Scudger, whose letter and materials I hope you have received. The theories 4th Edition should be out in November. I will send you a copy. Is Annenberg co-publishing with Longman re: the Communication Series?

*Regards,
Sandra*

September 22, 1982

S. J. Ball-Rokeach
Professor of Sociology
Washington State University
Social Research Center
Pullman, WA 99164-4014

Dear Sandra:

I was pleased to get your letter of September 7, but shuddered to think of you writing at that hospital scene. I hope that is over now.

We have just made a junior appointment (Christine Bachen, Communications Ph.D. from Stanford) and have no other openings except in the communications policy research area. Nevertheless, I would be pleased to read and circulate among our faculty any materials Jim Wittebols cares to send me. We do not have postdoctoral or lecture positions, so that the only possibility open is formal consideration for a regular faculty position in his area, if an when that becomes available. Yes, your book manuscript is now undergoing the standard evaluation process (both inside and outside) and I hope to have the results before long.

I am still working on the violence story and will send you a draft as soon as I can.

With best regards,

Sincerely yours,

George Gerbner
Professor of Communications
and Dean

GG:ab

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY

PULLMAN, WASHINGTON 99164-4014

SOCIAL RESEARCH CENTER

UNIT ON HUMAN VALUES

September 7, 1982

Dr. George Gerbner, Dean
Annenberg School of Communications
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, PA 19174

Dear George:

I once again write to you on the behalf of one of my students to inquire about the possibility of employment. I should just dispose of some ambiguity about the other student--David Scudder--who failed to respond to your very kind communication. Dave was forced to assume major responsibility for a suddenly invalidated mother-in-law and, thus, was held up in completing his dissertation. He is now finished with the degree, but did not feel free at this time to re-establish communication with you. I hope that he will in the future as he is someone you may be interested in. In any case, I felt some need to explain and to let you know that I became aware of his failure to get back to you too late in the day to correct the situation. I am now working with Dave on a research proposal which, if funded, would provide him with employment and, equally important, time to get his dissertation and other research published.

The student about whom I now write--James Wittebols--has just completed his Ph.D. He had written to you earlier, and I believe that you had asked him to get back in touch when his degree was finished. I decided to write to you, instead, as you would probably want to know my evaluation in any case. The primary reason why I urged him to write to you is his sincere desire to become expert in both the research and the professional side of the mass media--an aim that is best fulfilled at Annenberg. My hope would be that you might find him to be a suitable post-doctoral candidate or, possibly, a lecturer. While his undergraduate training was in journalism and while his love in graduate school has been the media, I am not sure that he would bring sufficient breadth in communications at present to be competitive for a tenure-track position. Such breadth, however, will come very quickly if Jim could sink his teeth into a bona fide context of communications researchers and practitioners. As you can see from the previous materials that he sent to you, he has been working on the topic of how to go about developing a theory-guided strategy of stimulating critical public discourse. His efforts, to date, have been aimed at application of Friere's pedagogical strategies vis a vis exposure of the ideological language in TV news. I know that he intends to continue these research efforts to not only improve upon the strategy developed for his dissertation, but also to expand its scope to include behavioral as well as linguistic effects concerns. Thus, Jim combines a dedication to his own scholarly growth with a direction to his future research plans.

Dr. George Gerbner, Dean
September 7, 1982
Page 2

I should note that during my supervision of Jim's dissertation work, he evidenced an energetic pursuit of understanding (as opposed to mere hurdle jumping). He not only searched out relevant anthropology training in linguistics, but also demonstrated eagerness to make theoretical sense of his research findings in order to gain a better grasp of how to counteract media mystification in the political arena. Jim made steady and substantial progress as a scholar and researcher during this relatively brief dissertation-work period of a year or so. During this same period of time, he taught his own courses and participated in an experimental teaching program with a couple of junior faculty. I understand from these faculty members (Comstock and DeMartini) that Jim has become an excellent teacher.

I, of course, have no idea if post-doctoral or lecturer positions are available at Annenberg. I do know, however, that Jim could benefit enormously from contact with you, other accomplished researchers on the faculty, and from an opportunity to gain professional skills vis a vis the electronic media. I am confident that if a suitable position were available, that you and your faculty would find him to be a highly motivated, stimulating, and enjoyable co-worker. In any case, I appreciate your time in considering this matter.

I am writing this letter at Swedish Hospital in Seattle where one of Milt's children is undergoing a bone marrow transplant as the last hope of saving her from leukemia. So please excuse any torturedness of expression as the scene is unbelievably hellish. On another matter, we received a brief note from Tren Anderson at Longman to the effect that "Annenberg" wanted an outside review of our monograph. I take it that that means you. We look forward to hearing back on the review. I have received some brief feedback from Eliha Katz, and look forward to getting critical comments from Jay Blumler who was kind enough to say that he would read the manuscript as well as from Peter Clarke and other Annenberg-West people who have the manuscript and have asked me to give a "brown bag" on it in mid-November.

I also look forward to seeing your work on the political history of the study of "violence." I continue to be amazed at how you continue your parapetic life with such vigor and productivity. Regards to Ilona.

Cordially,

S. J. Ball-Rokeach
by dhl

S. J. Ball-Rokeach
Professor of Sociology

SJB-R:d1

VITA

SANDRA J. BALL-ROKEACH

Professor
Department of Sociology
Washington State University
Pullman, Washington 99164-4020

Office phone: (509) 335-1511
Home phone: (509) 332-1980

Born: October 27, 1941, Ottawa, Canada. Citizenship: U.S.A., 1948.
Ph.D.: University of Washington, 1968.

Publications

Books

R. K. Baker and S. J. Ball (Eds.), Violence and the Media.
Washington, DC: G.P.O. (1969).

M. L. DeFleur and S. J. Ball-Rokeach, Theories of Mass Communication
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Values Test: Influencing Behavior and Belief through Television
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Structure. Beverly Hills: Sage.

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Articles

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S. J. Ball-Rokeach (with J. Tarnai, J. Durante), An application of the computer-assisted telephone interview method to content analysis of print media.

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- S. J. Ball-Rokeach and L. B. DeFleur, Media and crime. In S. H. Kadish (Ed.), Encyclopedia of Crime and Justice. New York: Macmillan (1983).
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- S. J. Ball-Rokeach, The media and the fabric of sociology: Comment and Review. To be published In J. F. Short, Jr., (Ed.), The Social Fabric: Dimensions and Issues. Beverly Hills: Sage
- P. L. Hirschburg, D. A. Dillman, and S. J. Ball-Rokeach, An empirical test of media system dependency theory: responses to the eruption of Mt. St. Helens. In S. J. Ball-Rokeach and M. G. Cantor (Eds.), Media, Audience and Social Structure. Beverly Hills: Sage
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Book Reviews

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- S. J. Ball-Rokeach, The Development of Pro-Social Behavior by N. Eisenberg (Ed.), Academic Press. Contemporary Sociology 13:1:106 (1984).

Television Production

- S. J. Ball-Rokeach, Co-producer (with M. Rokeach). The Great American Values Test: A Television Program Aired on ABC, NBC, and CBS in Washington State in February, 1979 for research on long term media effects.

Papers Presented at Professional Meetings

- S. J. Ball, "Violence: Television and Reality." Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Pacific Sociological Association, Seattle, 1969.
- S. J. Ball-Rokeach, "The Violence Commission Revisited: Implications for Social Science Policy and Research." Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Association for Public Opinion Research, Pasadena, 1971.
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- S. J. Ball-Rokeach, "The Subculture of Violence and Social Class as Determinants of Interpersonal Violence." Presented at the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Mexico City, 1973.
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- S. J. Ball-Rokeach, "The Information Perspective." Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association, Montreal, 1974.
- S. J. Ball-Rokeach, Presider and Organizer, Mass Media and Public Opinion Session, Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association, San Francisco, 1975.
- S. J. Ball-Rokeach, Toward an Integrated Theory of Mass Media Effects. Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Western Speech-Communication Association, Seattle, 1975.
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- S. J. Ball-Rokeach (with S. Araji), The Effects of Socio-structural Variables and Values on Individuals' Habitation Preferences and Attitudes Toward Marriage and Family Sex Roles. Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Pacific Sociological Association, San Diego, 1976.
- S. J. Ball-Rokeach, The Impact of Commissions on the Sociological Enterprise, Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Pacific Sociological Association, San Francisco, 1980.
- M. Rokeach, S. J. Ball-Rokeach, and J. W. Grube, Experimental Modification of Values, Attitudes, and Behavior Via Television, Presented at the Annual Meetings of the International Society for Political Psychology, 1980.

- S. J. Ball-Rokeach, Presider and Organizer, Popular Culture Session, Annual Meeting of the Pacific Sociological Association, Portland, 1981.
- S. J. Ball-Rokeach, Invited Scholars Conference, Annenberg School of Communications, University of Southern California, March, 1984.
- S. J. Ball-Rokeach, Presider and Organizer, Thematic Session on Media Linkages of the Social Fabric, Annual Meetings of the American Sociological Association, San Antonio, 1984.
- S. J. Ball-Rokeach, M. Rokeach, and J. W. Grube, The Great American Values Test: Influencing Behavior and Belief Through Television, Presented at the Annual Meetings of the American Sociological Association, San Antonio, 1984.
- S. J. Ball-Rokeach, Self Education: A Different Conception of A Two-Step Flow Process To Enhance Media Effects. Presented at The Conference on Long-Term Effects of Mass Media. School of Communications, University of Washington: May, 1985.
- S. J. Ball-Rokeach, Overcoming Structural and Epistemological Barriers To A Communications Discipline. Keynote Address, Presented at the Annual Meetings of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Memphis: August, 1985.
- (forthcoming)
- S. J. Ball-Rokeach, Participant in the Invited Scholars Conference, Annenberg School of Communication, March, 1986.
- S. J. Ball-Rokeach, Presider and Organizer, Mass Media Session, Annual Meetings of the Pacific Sociological Association, Denver, April, 1986.

Administrative Positions

- Co-Director, Mass Media and Violence Task Force, National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence. Washington, DC: 1968-1969.
- Associate Director, Social Research Center, Washington State University, Pullman, WA: 1976-1978.

Present Research Activities

- S. J. Ball-Rokeach, A sociology of knowledge approach to media-social science relations with an emphasis on the portrayal of social science and social scientists. Funded by the Russell Sage Foundation and the American Sociological Association.
- S. J. Ball-Rokeach, Information, Family, and Personal Resources for Effective Health Problem Solving Grant proposal to be submitted to the National Cancer Institute.

S. J. Ball-Rokeach, Smoking Cessation As A Function of Motivation Enhancement and Social Control. Under review by the National Institute of Drug Abuse.

Honors

N.I.M.H. Fellow (1963-1967)
Outstanding Young Women in America (1976)
Fulbright Fellow, Hebrew University (1979-80)
Rockefeller Fellow, Bellagio Study Center (1979)

Professional Associations and Offices

American Sociological Association: Nominations Committee (1978-1980);
Council of Social Psychology Section (1978-1980; 1984-1986);
Committee on Freedom of Research and Teaching (1980-1982);
1984 Program Committee; Media and Sociology Task force.
Pacific Sociological Association: Committee on the Status of Women
(1975-1976); Vice President, Northern Division (1978); Program
Co-Chair (1982).
Sociologists for Women in Society
Society For The Study of Social Problems
American Association of Public Opinion Research
International Communication Association

November 6, 1993

Dear Sandra:

Quickly, between trips, classes, and overdue deadlines, a few minor points.

Elihu Katz is now full-time prof on our faculty (p. 5).

Your summary of two-step flow, etc. (p. 4) fails to note the controversy and revision of the theory. Especially important, I think, is the fact that the methods dictated the results: emphasis on change instead of stability (as in cultivation theory) and asking respondents to recall specific impetus for change, which demands the most memorable (personal) rather than most pervasive and ever-present (media) influence recall. Same for Klapper, though at the end of his book he recognizes what the theory missed.

On TV violence, you may wish to note that our main conclusion is its effect on feelings of victimization, risk, vulnerability - i.e. the "mean world syndrome."

Aside from these minor points, you have a powerful and to me convincing demonstration of MSD theory. FYI and possible comment, or use in your new report, I am enclosing a draft of our latest Violence Profile, a new statement on cultivation theory, and a report on Women and Minorities on Television.

Thank you for the opportunity to preview your article.

With best regards,

George Gerbner
Professor and Dean Emeritus

Patterns of response

Evidence of cultivation is likely to be modest in terms of absolute size. Even light viewers may be watching a fair amount of television, and, in any case, live in the same cultural environment as heavy viewers; what they do not get through television they get through others who do watch more.

Accordingly, we should not dismiss what appear to be small effects. As the cards are stacked against large differences, small effects in a large field may have profound significance. For example, a single percentage point difference in ratings is worth many millions of dollars in advertising revenue. A range of 3 to 15 percent margins (typical of most differences between light and heavy viewers) in a large and otherwise stable field often signals a landslide, a market takeover, or an epidemic, and it certainly tips the scale of any closely balanced decision or election.

The cultivation analyses reported here use data from several sources including the annual General Social Surveys conducted by the National Opinion Research Center, the Monitoring the Future Surveys conducted by the Survey Research Center of the University of Michigan, and a national survey conducted for us by the Roper Organization in 1990. Questions from these surveys measure conceptions of violence, victimization, and safety, as well as interpersonal mistrust (what we call the Mean World Index) and alienation.

Cross-tabulations of these measures were run with reported amount of daily television exposure, independently controlling for important background variables (e.g., sex, age, education, etc.). Respondents were classified into light (under 2 hours each day), medium (2 to 4 hours per day), and heavy (over 4 hours each day) television viewing groups. (There are minor variations in these viewing time distinctions across surveys; the important factor is not the absolute amount of viewing but the relative differences in viewing levels.) Respondents were compared in terms of the Cultivation Differential (CD) -- the percent of heavy viewers minus the percent of light viewers who give a specific response. The degree of the relationship, within each subgroup, was measured using the gamma statistic, with significance level:

The "Mean World" Sy:

Data from name
(reported in detail
Bibliography) indic

October 4, 1993

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Dr. George Gerbner
 Annenberg School for Communication
 University of Pennsylvania
 3620 Walnut Street
 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19104-6220

Dear George,

I have a favor to ask of you with regard to the draft of a paper (enclosed) that I have been working on for some time. I would be most appreciative of any criticisms, comments, or suggestions that you could give, especially with respect to oversights (e.g., literature that should be cited), tone and clarity of argument, points that should be added, deleted, condensed, or elaborated, and your overall response to basic points.

I expect that this piece will elicit controversy and resistance, so I need all the help I can get from friends and respected colleagues. Please do not concern yourself with pulling your punches. I would consider it a personal favor for you to be as tough as your time and energy allows. It may help you to know that Elihu has encouraged me to write this piece -- he has a copy and I look forward to receiving his reactions.

I know I impose with this request. All I can say is thank you for whatever reactions you can give me.

Cordially,

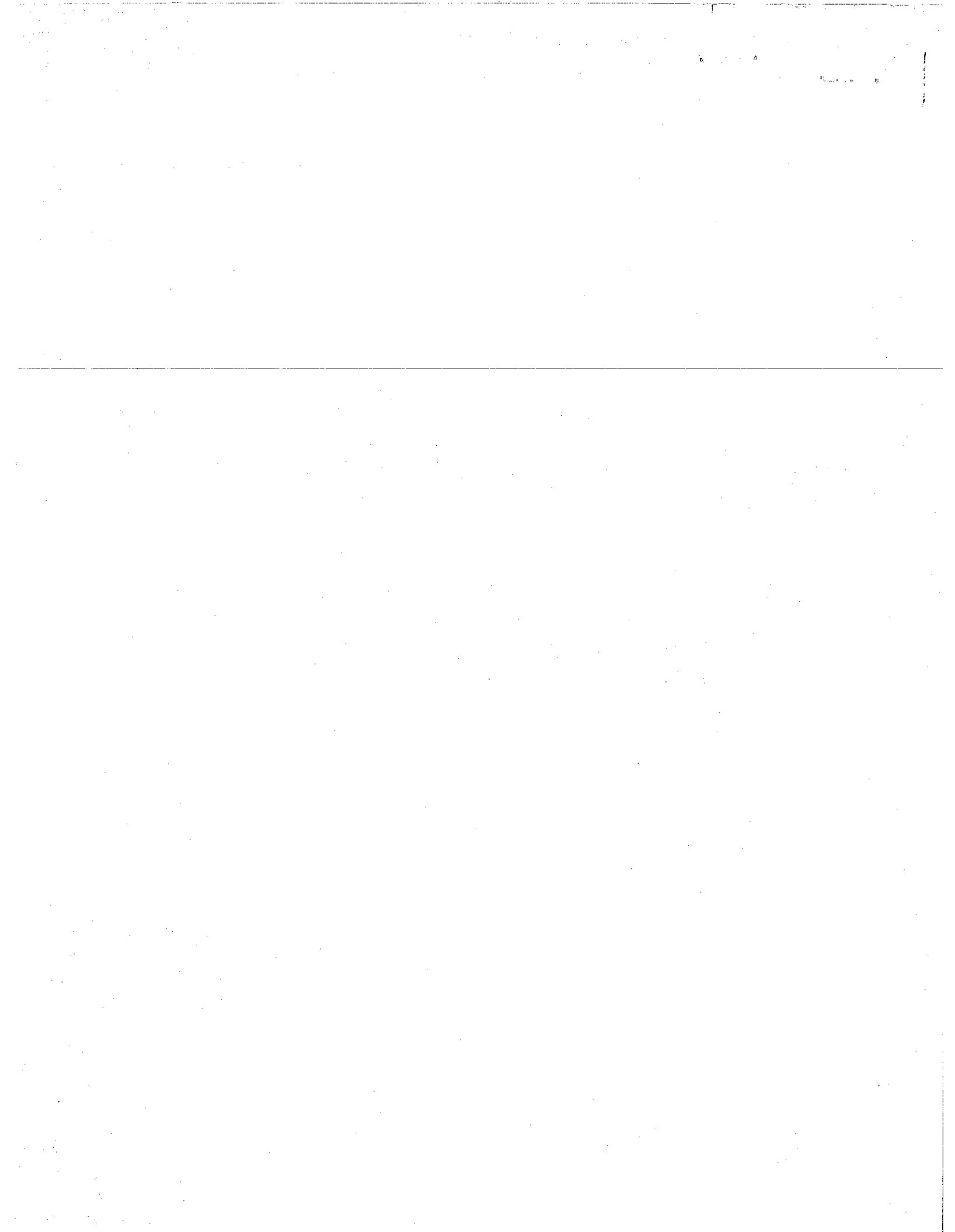
Sandra

Sandra J. Ball-Rokeach
 Professor

SJBR/jmc
 enclosure

P.S. I have been asked to write a policy-oriented paper for the Eisenhower Foundation re: Media & Violence in TV & Film -- an update 25 years (can you imagine!) after the Violence Commission Report. I would want to be in touch with you on this one.

S.



DRAFT: For personal distribution and comment only.

**A Theory of Media Power and a Theory of Media Use:
Different Stories, Questions, and Ways of Thinking**

S. J. Ball-Rokeach
August 4, 1993

The aims of this paper are to explicate media system dependency (MSD) theory at the macro level of analysis and to compare its assumptions, concepts, and propositions with those of micro Uses and Gratifications (U&G) theory. The tendency in the literature to regard MSD as a macro theory that reduces to U&G at the micro level (eg., Rubin & Windahl, 1986) suggests that past attempts to distinguish these theoretical approaches have been too circumscribed. For purposes of comparison, I have selected Katz's version of U&G because it played central historical roles in the formulation of the U&G perspective and in the development of MSD theory as well. The paper is divided into three sections. In the first, I discuss U&G and MSD with regard to their theoretical and phenomenological origins, spending considerably more time on the less well known MSD story. To contextualize epistemological aspects, I have gone into more biographical detail than is customary in journal articles. Central MSD assumptions, concepts, and hypotheses are presented in the second section. MSD and U&G are compared along historical, conceptual, and methodological dimensions in the third and concluding section.

Part I.A: ORIGINS OF USES AND GRATIFICATIONS A LA KATZ

U&G theory grew out of functionalist social psychological traditions of research on perception (Bruner & Goodman, 1947; Asch, 1940, 1952; Bartlett, 1947), attitudes (D. Katz, 1949; D. Katz et al., 1954; Hovland, et al., 1953), norm formation (Sherif,

1936, 1952), and diffusion (Lasen & Hill, 1954; Katz & Menzel, 1955-56, et. al., 1957; Katz, et. al., 1959). The contributions of these traditions to the progressive development of U&G are summarized below. (For more extensive reviews of the early influences, see Riley and Riley, 1959, and Wright, 1986).

Selectivity, The Social Nature of Perception

From the perception literature (e.g., Bruner & Goodman, 1947) came the basic notion of selective perception or the idea that individuals' needs and interests affect what they select out of an environment to perceive. The fundamental proposition that individual differences result in different subjective apprehensions of the same objective environment was applied to the perception of media messages. The same media message would be perceived differently by individuals with differing needs and interests. Salient message features would be apprehended and features lacking need salience would not be perceived. Perception is thus functional; it serves (gratifies) needs. Evidence of selective recall was frequently employed to demonstrate the operation of selective perception (e.g., Allport & Postman, 1940; Levine & Murphy, 1947). Selective exposure to media messages followed in the classic and innovative study, The People's Choice (Lazarsfeld, et al., 1948). During this general period, attitude research was on the rise. Attitudes were incorporated as an important individual difference affecting selectivity processes, for example, in American soldiers' perceptual responses to movie propaganda (Stouffer & others, 1949). Commenting on Berelson's (1948-9) study of individual responses to a newspaper strike, Wolfe and Fiske's (1948-9) examination of comic books as a source of ego development, Herzog's (1942-43) well-known study of soap opera consumers, and Waples, Berelson, and Bradshaw's (1940) observation that message appeal is heightened by problem relevance, Riley and Riley (1959), Note: "One line of research analyzes the motivations for the mass communication response or the gratifications

obtained." (p. 544). With the publication of Katz and Lazarsfeld's Personal Influence in 1956, the idea that selectivity processes empowered individuals or disempowered media text makers soon received broad acceptance. The combined processes of selective exposure, perception, and retention were regarded as buffers against direct media influence on individuals (Klapper, 1949; 1957-58; 1960). This view stood in an historical context in which mass society theories has sway. Claims that isolated individuals were easily manipulated by media messages and, therefore, standardized media content could homogenize culture (eg., early conceptions of hegemony and commodification) received much attention at the time (Ball-Rokeach, 1988). Mass society theory (eg., Mills, 1956) thus served as a catalyst for coupling selectivity with a social psychological framework, the "two-step flow model of media effects" (Katz, 1957).

Opinion Leadership and Interpersonal Influence

Of the research traditions that guided the development of the two-step flow model, perhaps most important was research on the influence of social norms on individuals. Building upon earlier work by Asch (1940)¹, Sherif (1952) demonstrated the tendency of a significant minority of individuals faced with a discrepancy between their own and a group's perceptual estimates to defer to group norms. A flurry of work on group dynamics and social norms ensued (eg., Cartwright, 1951; Cartwright & Zander, 1953; Lippitt & Whyte, 1947). The basic idea emerged that individuals' group associations were important determinants of their perceptual, attitudinal, and behavioral characteristics. Persuasion studies (Kelley & Volkart, 1952; Hovland, et al., 1953) were particularly germane. Media (as well as interpersonal) channels of message delivery were employed and the social anchoredness of individual attitudes was demonstrated.

Katz and his mentor, Lazarsfeld (1956), developed the idea of "opinion leadership" as a way of articulating the role of interpersonal influence in the media effects process (Moreno, 1934). This led to the "two-step" flow idea that opinion leaders pass along their interpretations of media messages (reconstructions reflecting the full force of selectivity processes) to their interpersonal associates. This conception of media effects took the wind out of the sails of mass society theorists' powerful effects claims. It fit well with the more general emphasis in social psychology upon the anchoredness of individuals in groups and the influence of groups upon their attitudes and behavior. The two-step flow idea also gained high visibility in the public sphere; for example, serving to rebut governmental and citizen groups' chronic tendencies to investigate the "power" of the dominant mass medium of the day as a cause of everything from juvenile delinquency to family breakdown. -

Less well-known is Katz's pathbreaking role in diffusion research. Katz, in collaboration with Menzel (1955-56) and Coleman (Katz, et al., 1957, 1959) found a two-step and, then, a multi-step flow process of adoption of innovations. They demonstrated that the media, alone, could not serve as a "magic bullet" diffusion agent. The structure of interpersonal influence had to be understood and respected in efforts to promote an innovation in the same way that it had to be taken into account in efforts to employ the media for political or any other persuasion purpose. The important node of contact between the media and the structure of interpersonal influence was the opinion leader or the early adopter. The diffusion process would be initiated only if media or other promotional materials made it through opinion leaders' powers of selectivity. Once initiated, it slowly filtered through the interpersonal influence structure.

Verstehen concept of change -
people - but what for? -
Not immediate

Revised as Now
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The Question Shifts

U&G theory and research emerged when the question shifted from why don't the media have effects to what do individuals do with the media? It is not, I think, coincidental that the first major article reflecting this shift in focus was written by Israelis about Israelis' "use of the media for important things" (Katz, Gurevitch, & Haas, 1973). Again, Katz's role is pivotal. Having moved to Israel in 1967 where he was (and still is) a professor at Hebrew University, Katz accepted the challenge of setting up Israeli television. It makes sense that Katz's media theory would be affected by having to think in terms of the everyday needs of Israelis living a tense and challenging life so that he could design a functional (useful) television system. It also makes sense that Katz would not be moved by these conditions to either a macro or a powerful media effects perspective. He had come of academic age as a participant in framing micro arguments against macro and Marxist mass society theories of media effects. Moreover, Israel retained a certain gemeinschaft mode of social organization where the intelligentsia and the state were / are not highly differentiated. It is my guess that it would have been discordant for Katz to regard control over media system resources in geshellschaft terms of differentiation, particularly differentiation from the needs of the then more culturally homogeneous Israeli community.

Pursuit of answers to the question of what individuals do with the media led Katz and others in the more compatible direction of the humanities (Katz, 1979). The initial instrumental functionalism (Katz, et al., 1974; Blumler & Katz, 1974) was expanded to include expressive and interpretive dimensions. There was a fairly conscious attempt (Katz, 1979) to connect U&G to concerns in the humanities for symbolic interaction processes between readers and texts. This was fertile ground for further development of the psychological premise of selectivity. The distinctive U&G line of research became the study of individuals' symbolic interpretations of media

texts to serve or gratify their conscious and unconscious needs (Katz & Liebes, 1990; Katz, 1990; Dayan & Katz, 1992). The two-step flow emphasis upon the connection between the media and the structure of interpersonal influence was supplanted by a conception of text-recreating individuals and communities.

Part I.B: ORIGINS OF MEDIA DEPENDENCY THEORY

The emergence of U&G theory literally served as a counterpoint for the development of the MSD perspective. I was as dissatisfied with mechanical models of media effects and their conception of passive audience members as were Katz, Blumler and others who were developing the U&G perspective. However, the move to an active individual who employs interpretative powers to override the influence of creators of media texts was not the kind of active individual that I saw around me.

Ambiguity and Sociological Social Psychology

I saw individuals full of ambiguity due to conditions of structural alienation, conflict and change over which they had no direct control. In my 1967-68 dissertation work on structural and psychological ambiguity (parts of which were published in 1973), I had come to see individual and social reality as precarious and volatile. How could individuals or, for that matter, interpersonal networks be "masters" of their own reality construction of media or any other texts? I saw the personal experience of ambiguity as an informational and affective problem largely created by social environments that did not (could not) communicate coherent patterns of social relations with which individuals could define their worlds. This ecological view of dynamic macro-micro ambiguity processes and their creation of information and stress management goals was apparent in my 1974 paper, "The information perspective." I suggested a conception of the media system as an information system

central to the adaptive conduct of societal and personal life as a point of departure for theory development.

This work was influenced by a different kind of social psychology than had influenced the development of the two-step flow model. While Asch's work on responses to ambiguous stimuli was relevant, more direct influence came from research on rumor processes and the authoritarian personality. With regard to rumor, classic psychological studies of serial information distortion as a function of selectivity processes (e.g., Allport & Postman, 1940) were less relevant than sociological symbolic interactionist conceptions (e.g., Cooley, 1909; Thomas & Znaniecki, 1947). Most influential was Shibutani's (1966) conception of rumor as "improvised news." For Shibutani, rumors were definitions of ambiguous events or situations created among active information processing individuals. In the absence of ambiguity-resolving information from the media, individuals pooled their information resources to collectively define their situation. Such news improvisation, however, spoke as much to the pressure to resolve ambiguity as it did to collective reality construction resources; that is, symbolic interactionism. As Shibutani suggested two basic conclusions -- reality was constructed and reality had to be constructed in order for people to act with meaning. People thus employ whatever information system they can and, under most conditions, media are available and central to reality construction.

The Authoritarian Personality

Of the many lines of research that constituted The Authoritarian Personality (Adorno, et al., 1950), the most important influences came from Frenkel-Brunswik's conception of rigidity due to intolerance of ambiguity and Adorno's conception of the sociological origins of authoritarianism in cultural / structure incongruity or structural alienation. The intolerance of ambiguity idea stimulated thinking about

the stressfulness of the ambiguity experience that motivated most people, but not the severely neurotic / psychotic, to resolve it as soon as possible. Eventually, this thinking would be extended to suggest a fundamental reason why people living in ambiguous times develop and maintain dependency relations with the media. Frenkel-Brunswik's work also triggered an effort to identify differences in people's modes of adaptation to ambiguity (Ball-Rokeach, 1973). Later, these modes of adaptation influenced my conception of the types of dependency relations that individuals develop with the media (e.g., cycling between informational aspects of the problem -- understanding and orientation -- and stress aspects -- play).

Basic to Adorno's analysis of fascism, and to critical theory more generally (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1977), is the assumed vulnerability of individuals' psychological states to influence by macro structural forces, forces that individuals may not be able to see and certainly cannot control. A disjuncture, for example, between cultural belief systems (eg., ideology) and the way resources are actually allocated to form social structures, creates a condition of structural alienation evidenced, among other things, in psychological alienation (Kenniston & Flacks, 19 ---). In some respects, this is similar to Durkheim's (1951) and later, Merton's (1957) account of the macro sources of the micro experience of anomie. Both ideas suggested limits on the capacity of individuals and, even more importantly, of interpersonal networks to create unambiguous social worlds. For individuals experiencing problems, such as alienation, ambiguity, or anomie, the source of the problem and the resources required to resolve it are frequently beyond the interpersonal network. My tentative conclusion was that in ambiguous worlds of conflict and change, where fundamental issues of legitimacy and identity are contested, neither opinion leaders nor individuals have the same selectivity powers as they may have in more stable worlds.

This obviously led me to critically evaluate the contemporary relevance of the two-step flow model of media effects. The prototypical person described in the 1944 volume, The People's Choice (Lazarsfeld, et al.) had stable family-based party identification as a lens through which selectivity could operate. By the late 1960s, however, structural connections between the family, the local political organization, and the national party had weakened considerably (Alexander, 1981). The electoral process had become a carefully orchestrated, but hard to know, process of symbolic manipulation created for and through the mass media (Edelman, 1964). Opinion leaders and their interpersonal networks were more disconnected from the process than they had been in the 40s. As such, their political attitudes could not be firmly rooted in political structures independent of the media. Under these macro conditions, I wondered, how could the micro lens through which selectivity operates be well focused?

Violence and The Times

On the other hand, I grew to academic age in the late 60's, being heavily influenced by Klapper's (1949; 1960) codification of the two-step flow process of media effects. I, therefore, was not inclined to adopt the mass society logic that it had debunked. Nor was I inclined to adopt elite theory notions of a media system as an undifferentiated "handmaiden" servicing the control needs of elites (Mills, 1956). From a sociology of knowledge point of view, I was stuck. I could not articulate a satisfying conception of media effects that corresponded with the phenomenological reality of daily life in the late 60's and early 70's. This was an era in which social scientists, called upon to explain the racism and violence of the day, found themselves with no ready explanations. Called upon to address the issue of Violence and The Media (Baker & Ball, 1969), I found a literature dominated by psychological theories of media effects. I concluded with some finality in my 1969-70 work with The

Violence Commission, that the questions that such theories could address were not the questions that needed answers. Being asked were questions about short-term effects of aggressive media stimuli upon individuals. The effects questions that needed answers were about macro-level processes of legitimization and delegitimization of violence, processes having micro-level consequences for people's endorsement of violent means of achieving social control and social change (Ball-Rokeach, 1971). These questions bore some similarity to Gerbner's (1970) early "cultivation" concerns. (See: for example, one of the first reports of their cultural indicators project in Baker & Ball, 1969, pp. 314-329).

Violence questions further stimulated my search for a conceptual apparatus to account for the way in which the media system had become more central to the conduct of societal and personal life. Intuitively, it seemed that such centrality was the generic condition of media effects. However, the theory development challenge was so overwhelming that I left media studies for a time to research and conceptualize a conflict approach to violence (Ball-Rokeach, 1974, 1980; Ball-Rokeach & Short, 1985). This work proved pivotal to the subsequent development of MSD theory. I found myself objecting, on the one hand, to psychological theories of violence and, on the other, to sociological theories that suggested that some cultural or economic deficit caused violence. These objections paralleled those I had with regard to psychological theories of media effects, and with the related notion that it was only socially or psychologically deprived individuals who would be directly affected by the media (Klapper, 1960). Exchange theory influences, evident in my theorizing about violence, remained when I turned back to media studies.

Power-Dependence Theory

The version of exchange most directly influencing MSD theory was Emerson's (1962; 1964) power-dependence theory. Emerson, a mentor of mine, wanted to

understand not only how and why power was accrued and exercised, but also how and why it was lost or successfully constrained. He saw power, first and foremost, as a relational phenomenon. Power was in relationships, not in people or positions per se. The relationship that centered his theory was the power-dependence relationship. According to Emerson, the flip side of power is dependence, meaning power cannot be determined by observing only the relative distribution of resources controlled by each party to a relation. The extent to which resources engender dependence also must be determined. Resources accrue power only when, and to the extent that, one party to the relation must seek access to the other's resources. In a dyad, for example, one person may have more resources, but the other may have alternative access routes to those resources or may not value them very highly. Moreover, the resource-rich person may become vested in resources controlled by the other (e.g., continuation of the relationship). Thus, power is best understood as a product of power-dependence relations, dynamic relations responsive to change in resources, motivational investment, access, and other features of the environment. Until his untimely death in 1982, Emerson sought to develop a theory of power applicable across micro and macro levels of analysis (1972). Emerson's theory-building efforts influenced the development of MSD theory in four ways in particular. First, I became convinced that a media effects theory had to be able to explain both the occurrence and the nonoccurrence of media effects, and, second, the theory had to have cross-level applicability (Pan & McLeod, 1991; McLeod & Pan, 1989) because media effects at macro levels had consequences for micro levels and vice versa. Third, Emerson's mode of conceptualizing power had a critical influence on the development of the central organizing concept of MSD theory, the media system dependency relation. Finally, MSD theory is a theory of media power.

One reason why Emerson did not fully succeed in developing a macro-micro theory of power relations was that he began with dyadic relations and tried to move

up from there to more macro level relations (Turner, 1987). Cognizant of this, my strategy was to lay out the general macro framework of MSD analysis first (Ball-Rokeach, 1974; Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976), then turn to empirical micro analysis, before fully explicating and researching the macro level. This strategy created as many problems as it solved. The major reason for going quickly to the micro level was to engage discourse at the level where it was taking place. I went on a Fulbright to Hebrew University in 1979-80 specifically to engage Elihu Katz, and to clarify for myself whether or not MSD thinking was a difference that made a difference at the micro level of analysis. At the same time, the research that contained the first micro statement and test of MSD was underway and was subsequently reported in Ball-Rokeach, Rokeach & Grube, 1984. Later attempts to embed micro analyses in the macro conceptual frame (eg., Grant, et al., 1991) were met with resistance and confusion. This was understandable because the ecological assumptions that connected macro and micro levels of analysis had not been explicated in published form. The ecological nature of the thinking remained sufficiently obscure that it was often misinterpreted in systems theory (eg., McLeod & McDonald, 1985) or powerful effects terms (eg., Katz, 1980; Severin & Tankard, 1987).

Origins in Social Ecology

The view that micro dependency relations are set in a dynamic context of relations at progressively higher levels of analysis is a conception drawn from social ecology (eg., Hawley, 1950; Lynd & Lynd, 1929, 1937; Park, 1922, 1925). Hawley (1950), for example, examined communities and cities as macro units that influenced the capacities and nature of constituent and smaller units (eg., districts and suburbs). Park, in his classic works, The Immigrant Press and Its Control (1922) and The City (1925), and the Lynds (1929, 1937) in their studies of Middletown, specifically

examined the media and mass communications from ecological points of view. Media were regarded as mechanisms of ecological integration, and the interface between mass and interpersonal communication was conceived as a key linkage between macro and micro units in community and city life. These linkages were adaptive; they afforded individuals and interpersonal networks the knowledge required to participate in, and adjust to change in, their larger social worlds. In search of a way to link media production (macro) with consumption (micro or macro), I returned to this sociological root. Doing so, allowed me to place mass and interpersonal communication in the same ecology, thereby overcoming my learned tendency to view them as separable and competitive (Chaffee, 1982). Opinion leaders, defined in part by their more intense relations with the media (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1956), went from being at the nexus of an independent interpersonal communication system to being the most observable point of convergence between mass and interpersonal communication forces (Hawkins, et. al., 1988).

Observing constructions of the reality of the Vietnamese War further extended my ecological thinking to see macro relations as constraints and activators of both interpersonal and individual media relations. Individual and interpersonal network constructions of the meaning of the war, and those who protested against it (eg., Gitlin, 1980), were fundamentally constrained by media constructions. Media constructions were, in turn, fundamentally constrained by media system relations with the state and its military arm. Early in the war, the media system operated in an unfavorable asymmetric relation with the state; it was less powerful because state resources were the basis of war coverage (eg., press conferences, releases, and interviews). It was when the media system began to employ its own information resources to create knowledge about the war (eg., sending in large numbers of its own correspondents, Halberstam, 1979) that its state / military relation began to assume symmetry. I vividly remember Howard K. Smith, a national TV correspondent,

undergoing a pronounced conversion when he relied on his organization's (ABC) information gathering, creating, and processing resources, rather than those of the state. His support of the war was transformed into questioning of its effectiveness and legitimacy. In contrast to many lonely correspondents who covered the war several years earlier (Halberstam, 1979), Smith and many others got their stories disseminated in prime-time and on the front pages. The larger change in relationship between the media and the state fundamentally affected organizational (eg., the Congress), interpersonal, and individual reality construction. The communications ecology had shifted from one dominated by the state construction of the war as a legitimate exercise of power to one where ambiguity was introduced as to its legitimacy. Shifts in public opinion from majority support to majority opposition were, in my mind, a direct product of the altered dependency relations between the state and the media. Evidently the "state" agrees, as it has never since allowed media such unconstrained deployment of its information resources. The more general ecological point was that changes in macro relations had brought changes in individual relations, through changes in interpersonal network dependency relations. As the legitimacy of the war became more open to question or problematic, individual and interpersonal network relations intensified, because individuals and groups required access to media information resources to resolve their ambiguities about the meaning of the war.

Part II: MICRO MSD THEORY: MAJOR ASSUMPTIONS, CONCEPTS, PROPOSITIONS, AND MACRO LINKAGES

MSD theory is not so much a theory of powerful or weak effects as it is a theory of media power. The theory concerns the conditions that give rise to media power and the conditions that constrain media power. MSD relations may be conceived as

relations of production that give rise to text, including relations that bound and influence text reconstruction. For individuals, the most proximate condition for media power is intense and broad-scoped implication of media system resources in individuals' goal attainment. This condition, however, cannot be fully understood without reference to the ecology of macro dependency relations between the media and other organizations and systems. These macro relations determine the structural centrality of the media system -- its information resources and their application in the production of knowledge. Thus, the fact that media are central in personal knowledge construction is, in large part but not entirely, a function of their centrality in social knowledge construction.

Underlying Assumptions

In their discussion of multilevel analysis, Pan & McLeod (1991), state:

First, mass communication theories must explicitly convey propositions or assumptions about both production and consumption of media content. It is theoretically beneficial to the field to state these propositions clearly at multiple levels. Second, all theories of mass communication, regardless of their units of analysis, contain stated or unstated propositions about how both societies and individuals work. p. 152.

In accordance with these exhortations, the following assumptions specify much of the rationale underlying micro MSD concepts and propositions, including basic notions of production and consumption and society and the individual.

Nature of Society

- 1) Society is an organism that can only be understood by knowing the relationships between its parts.
- 2) Interdependent relations between the parts produce both cooperation and conflict.

Nature of Human Motivation

- 1) Survival and growth are fundamental human needs manifested in universal motivations to achieve understanding, orientation, and play goals.

- 2) Individuals and groups are motivated to not only maintain, but also to enhance themselves.
- 3) Social actors in control of prized resources will seek to achieve monopoly resource control and to keep access to these resources scarce.

Information As A Power Source

- 1) Because information is a necessary resource for goal attainment, it is an essential resource for survival of the human specie and its societies.
- 2) The more exclusive the control over goal-attaining information resources, the more the power accrual from their control.

The Nature and Power of the Media System

- 1) A media system is necessary for development, maintenance, and change of modern societies.
- 2) "The media system is conceived to be an information system (Ball-Rokeach, 1974). Its germane resources are the gathering or creating, processing, and dissemination of information. Information refers to all information that is, in some way, produced by the media system (eg., entertainment, news, fiction and non-fiction). More than the material apparatus required for mass communication, a media system has goals, values, roles, and technologies that differentiate it from political, religious, and other systems. Depending on the problem under investigation, MSD relations may be conceived to involve the whole media system or one of its empirical parts (eg., television, radio, etc.," (Ball-Rokeach, et.al., 1990, p. 250).
- 3) Its power derives from control over information resources that others -- individuals, groups, organizations, social systems, societies -- must access to attain their goals.
- 4) The more complex (specialized) the society and differentiated its culture (i.e., modern), the broader the scope of personal and social goals that require access to media information resources.

Formation and Change of Macro MSD Relations

- 1) The media system and its implementing organizations enter into relatively enduring dependency relations with other systems and organizations, each to gain access to resources necessary to achieve system survival and growth as well as organizational goals.
- 2) The ecology of media dependency relations is such that change in structure, intensity or scope of one dependency relation ramifies upon related dependency relations at the same and lower levels of analysis.
- 3) Dependency relations between the media and other parts of the social organism must undergo development or change to reflect (a) evolutionary development of the media and its dependency relation partners, and (b) changes in the social ecology of those relations.
- 4) Macro media relations produce (a) cooperation motivated by mutual interest and (b) conflict motivated by self interest; the resultant strain produces an instability in the relation with each party seeking to increase its power position toward greater symmetry (equalize power) or asymmetry (greater power advantage).

Media and Cross-Level Knowledge Construction

- 1) Media information resources are essential to knowledge construction at macro and, therefore, at micro levels of analysis.
- 2) The larger the unit of social action, the more likely it is to seek control over knowledge construction and knowledge truncation processes.
- 3) The more the social units seek to control or truncate media knowledge construction processes, the greater the resource scope of their media relations -- that is, relations spanning information creating, gathering, processing as well as dissemination resources.
- 4) Individuals and interpersonal networks, per se, rarely control resources that motivate media or other macro actors to open access to their knowledge construction resources.
- 5) Thus, resource scope of individual and interpersonal network media relations is usually invariant, i.e., limited to the media dissemination resource.

Ecology of Production and Consumption

- 1) Negotiation of media production processes takes place in (and is influenced by) the ecology of macro MSD relations.
- 2) Macro relations thus constrain the ecology of micro MSD relations that underlie consumption of media products.

Invariant Structure of Micro Relations

- 1) The structure of macro and micro media dependency relations is, in the final analysis, a product of (a) the distribution of resources and (b) the implication of those resources in the goal attainment activities of each party to the relation, and (c) the place of a relation in the ecology of higher-order dependency relations.
- 2) Individuals and interpersonal networks per se do not control resources that directly implicate the survival or welfare of the media system or its implementing organizations.
- 3) The media system controls resources that are directly implicated in the individual's and the interpersonal network's pursuit of understanding, orientation, and play goals.
- 4) Therefore, the structure of the individual and the interpersonal network MSD relation is asymmetric.

Central Organizing Concept: The Micro MSD Relation

For purposes of comparison with the U&G perspective, the following discussion is phrased in terms of individual referents. However, with appropriate revision, the logic extends to interpersonal network referents. Figure 1 contains the major MSD hypotheses at the individual level of analysis. Intentionally placed at the center of the figure are the characteristics of the individual MSD relation, because they carry the burden of explanation. Micro MSD is a theory about the determinants and the

consequences of this relation: its formation, variation across individuals, time, and situation, and its consequences. Arrows leading to MSD relation box are conceived as determinants and arrows leading away are hypothesized as consequences. The cross-level link (Pan & McLeod, 1991) between micro and macro levels of analysis is the MSD relation. A comparable sketch of macro MSD theory would contain quite different elements, but the theoretical centrality of the MSD relation would not change. Micro MSD relations are defined as:

The extent to which attainment of an individual's goals is contingent upon access to the information resources of the media system, relative to the extent to which attainment of media system goals is contingent upon the resources controlled by individuals.

Micro relations are conceived to be less variable than macro relations, varying in three of five conceptual dimensions -- intensity, goal scope, and referent scope -- and invariant with respect to resource scope and structure. Macro relations are conceived to vary along all five dimensions.

Structure: Degree of asymmetry in control over dependency-engendering resources.

Intensity: Perceived exclusivity of resources for goal attainment. For individuals, intensity is operationally defined as the "perceived helpfulness" of media in attainment of personal goals.

Goal scope: Range of goals implicated in a MSD relation. For individuals, this refers to goals of understanding (social and self) orientation (interaction and action), and play (social and solitary).

Referent scope: Number of units party to a relation. From the individual side of the relation, this refers to the number of media forms implicated in a relation.

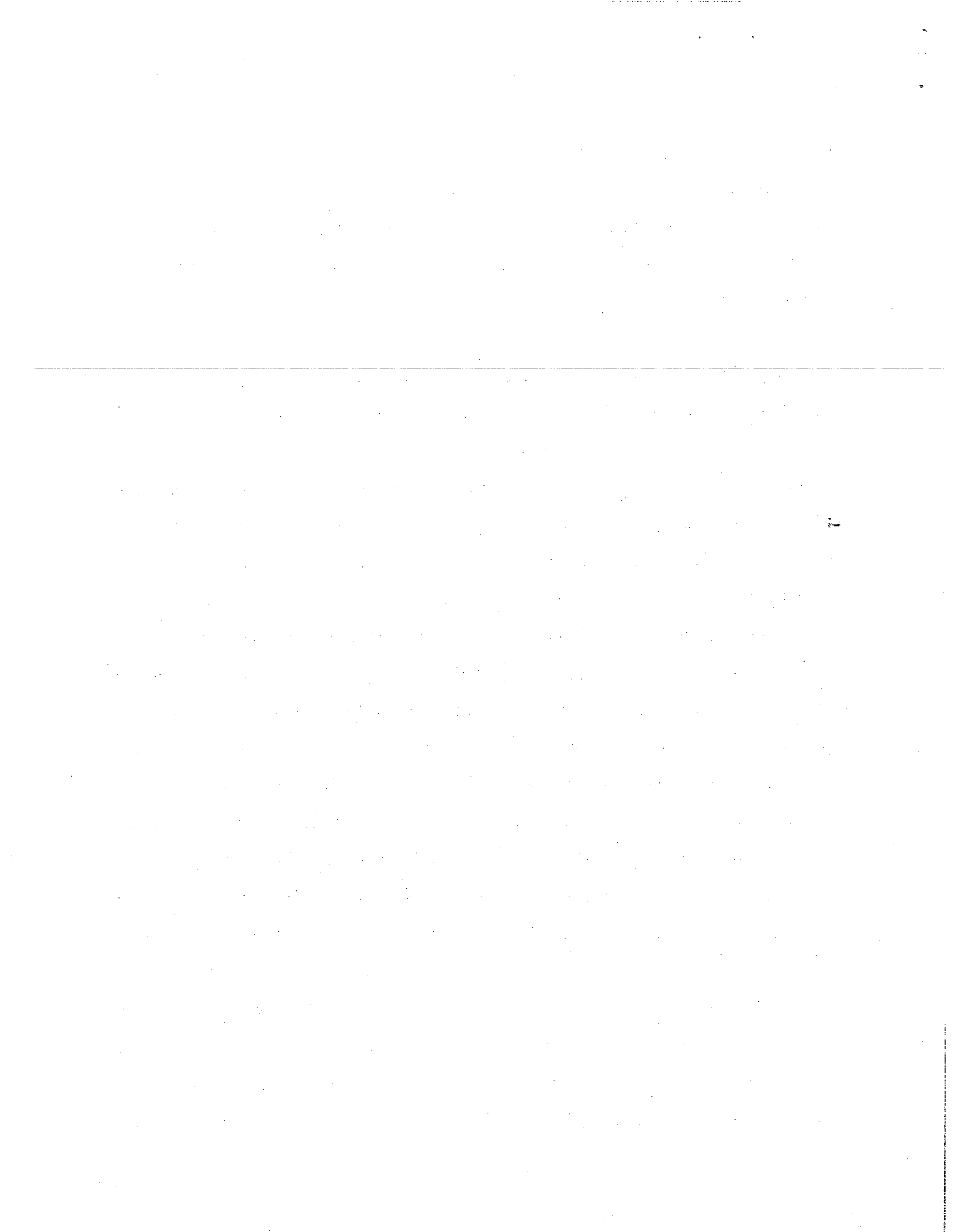
Resource scope: Range of resources implicated in a relation.

Media visualize relations with "audiences" or aggregates of individuals, such that the single individual has conceptual, but not empirical, standing in his / her relations with the media. As a result, all of the variation in the micro MSD relation is from the individual, not the media side of the relation.

Major Hypotheses

Discussion of the hypotheses presented in Figure 1 is limited to the most important and empirically observable variable relations at the micro level of analysis. Logics of other hypothesized connections should be implied by this and foregoing discussions.

Sources of Variation in MSD Relations Via Personal Goals: Three types of personal variables are conceived to directly or indirectly affect the intensity and scope characteristics of individuals' MSD relations via personal goals. Individuals' personal environs are hypothesized to affect these characteristics through their effects on personal goals. Particularly important is whether personal environs are relatively problematic, evidenced by the experience of ambiguity and / or the perception of threat (Withey, 1962) or are non-problematic (i.e., no felt difficulty in understanding and acting). Problematic environs intensify and broaden micro MSD relations by increasing motivational investment in understanding, orientation, and play goals. Dervin's (1989) "sense-making" work on the role of "discontinuity" in people's media behavior is consistent with this logic. Threat and ambiguity may arise out of personal circumstances, such as acute or chronic economic, health, family, or work-related problems. Persons also may experience problematic environs because the larger social environs are made problematic by relatively high rates of conflict and change (Ball-Rokeach, 1985). Examples include the threat and ambiguity that individuals experience under acute conditions of civil unrest or chronic conditions of a changing social world pregnant with discontinuities between "what is" and "what was," or "what should be" and "what is." Given the assumption of a media system that is central to the living of everyday personal and social life, problematic conditions further intensify and broaden the necessary implication of media information resources in individuals' witting or unwitting efforts to attain



understanding goals (eg., make sense of external and internal worlds), orientation goals (eg., interact and act effectively) and play goals (eg., reduce stress and have fun alone or with others). Hirshburg, et.al. (1986) provide some supporting evidence in the case of an acute problematic environment (the eruption of Mt. St. Helens). Loges (in press) provides supportive evidence for increased intensity under chronic conditions of personal and social threat. He, however, found a reduction in goal scope with increases in perceived threat. It is not clear from his findings how such narrowing occurs. Much remains to be done to empirically assess the validity of these hypotheses.

Individual differences are included as sources of direct variation in MSD relation characteristics and indirect variation through personal goals. Much of the research on the socio-demographic and psychographic correlates of media use behavior, including U&G studies, lacks theory-based explanations for empirically-observed correlations (Loges & Ball-Rokeach, 1993). The MSD strategy is to identify only those personal or social attributes that the theory suggests as meaningful distinctions between individuals with respect to their a) personal goals, b) their perception of the utility of media resources and c) their access to alternative information resources. Accordingly, both psychological and structural location variables are germane. The broken line from "Individual Differences" to "Characteristics of the MSD relation" in Figure 1 reflects the expectation that their direct effect will be weaker than their indirect effect through personal goals. Psychological variables, such as interests and values, should affect personal goals, and psychological variables, such as perceived utility (Ball-Rokeach, et. al., 1984) or expectancy (Van Leuven, 1981; Palmgreen & Rayburn, 1982) and credibility of media resources should affect MSD relations. Structural location variables include any attribute that affects life chances or opportunities for resource accrual. Examples of structural location variables that should meaningfully affect variation in personal

goals include socio-economic status, life cycle stage, and life style. The major structural location variable that should affect characteristics of MSD relations is access to alternative information systems, such as alternative media (Downing, 1984), expert networks, or interpersonal networks. To date, obtained individual differences data concern the typical demographic variables employed in survey research. These data suggest that demographic variables have little explanatory power with respect to the intensity and / or scope of micro MSD relations (Grant, et. al., 1991; Loges & Ball-Rokeach, 1993; Ball-Rokeach, et. al. in preparation). A study by Halpren (1992) suggests that, under totalitarian conditions, structural location (indicated by access to alternative oppositional media) is not a powerful determinant of intensity of relations with the dominant media. While much remains to be empirically examined, the theory suggests that individual differences should be a, but not a big, source of direct variation in people's MSD relations. Of the many reasons for this expectation, the most important are that micro relations are invariant in structure and resource scope, and individuals share dynamic and structural features of their social environs.

Interpersonal Environs and Variations In Micro MSD Relations: The MSD relations of an individual's interpersonal networks are hypothesized as relatively powerful sources of variation in individual MSD relations. Agenda setting concepts are incorporated into this hypothesis. Especially important is the idea that media agendas set interpersonal network agendas and that both, in combination, set personal agendas (Chaffee, 1982; McLeod, et. al., 1974; Weaver, et. al., 1992; Brosius & Kepplinger, 1992). A key mechanism in this process is anticipation of interpersonal discussion. Anticipation of future discussion of a topic is directly correlated with information seeking behavior (Chaffee & McLeod, 1973; Levy & Windahl, 1984; Salmon, 1986). Similarly, when people think that others are

interested in a topic, they tend to be more interested (Wanta & Wu, 1992) or involved (Weaver, et. al., 1992), especially if they anticipate future interaction (Petty, 1988). Consistent with these findings is the idea that network members observe each others' media relations; for example, the media forms (eg., TV) and content genres implicated in friends', co-workers', or family members' understanding, orientation, or play relations. It seems reasonable to assume adaptive pressures toward similarity of MSD relations to achieve effective and satisfying group membership. For example, individuals can more readily participate in network "talk" when they share media experiences, and these shared experiences are organized by shared patterns of media dependency relations. Similarly, individuals experiencing ambiguity due to media stories about a problematic feature of the social environs, will find it easier to build a consensual definition with friends if they have common media experiences (eg., Erbring, et. al., 1980). Of course, the relationship between individual and network MSD relations is reciprocal; that is, individual relations affect network relations as well. Moreover, the correspondence between any one network's and its members' MSD relations should not be perfect. This is due to individual differences and the fact that friends, family, or co-workers who share one network membership, do not usually share the same set of multiple network memberships.

Social Environs and Production as Sources of Variation in Micro MSD Relations: The characteristics of both individual and interpersonal network MSD relations are hypothesized to be a function of the ecological structure of macro MSD relations. The parameters, or potential empirical range, of MSD relations available to individuals and interpersonal networks are set by organizational and system-level MSD relations. This hypothesis follows from another concerning the relationship between macro MSD relations and production characteristics; namely, that macro MSD relations directly affect the range of texts that the media produce. For example,

people today can develop historically broader and deeper self understanding MSD relations, particularly with television, magazines, books, radio and telelogic (Ball-Rokeach & Reardon, 1988) or new media, where texts concerning personal development, identity, and expression abound. This was not the case when family and religious systems had less unfavorable asymmetric MSD relations because they were more coherent socialization systems in greater control over socialization resources. The Catholic Church, for example, could enforce censorship upon the movie industry in the 1930s and 40s, but negotiation of control over media socialization resources has since shifted to media-state MSD relations (Parker, 1986). These relatively symmetric relations afford the media system greater control over socialization and related self understanding information resources.

Consumption Characteristics and Consumption Effects: While consumption is conceived to operate at multiple levels (eg., interpersonal, organizational, as well as individual) only micro consumption characteristics are considered here. Perhaps the most important hypothesis is that selectivity -- of exposure, perception, and retention -- is a function of the characteristics of individuals' and interpersonal networks' MSD relations. Selectivity may be unwitting in that people follow media routines, routines organized by habitual MSD relations. Or selectivity may be conscious choice-behavior. Individual, interpersonal, or social forces can activate habitual into conscious selectivity. Selectivity is more readily conceived as a characteristic that is open to change when it is treated as a product of MSD relations than when viewed as a product of individual needs. As previously noted, the MSD relations may change in response to changes in personal environs, psychological conditions, structural location, interpersonal environs, social environs dynamics and structures, and production characteristics. The majority of research to date, has examined synchronic correlations between the intensity and scope of one or more of the six

conceptual dimensions of micro MSD relations and a) self-reported exposure to a medium or to a particular media text, b) cognitive and affective arousal during exposure, and the c) post-exposure behavior (Ball-Rokeach, et. al., 1984, 1990; Colman, 1990; Grant, et. al., 1991; Halpren, 1992; Loges, in press; Loges & Ball-Rokeach, 1993; Madison, 199--). Still in need of research attention are hypotheses with respect to change in MSD relations and hypotheses with respect to the consequences of MSD relations for post-exposure involvement, personal (eg., mulling over a text) and social (eg., discoursing about a text). The evidence thus far suggests that the micro MSD approach to media effects holds promise.

Cross-Level Effects Hypotheses: MSD theory forces consideration of effects in ecological terms, where effects on individuals mix with effects on interpersonal networks which, in turn mix with organizational effects, which, in turn mix with system level effects. As indicated in Figure 1, the dynamics of the micro to macro flow of effects differs from the hypothesized dynamics of macro to micro effects. In Pan & McLeod's (1991) terms, MSD theory opts more for "society-center" than "individual-centered" assumptions and assumes that "constraint" operates more forcefully from macro to micro levels than from micro to macro levels. While macro levels influence micro levels more strongly, there is considerable movement from individual to interpersonal, less from interpersonal to organization, and still less from organizational to system levels. The interplay between macro units is a subject for another paper.

Connections to Public Opinion Structures and Processes: Public opinion processes illustrate the convergence of micro and macro forces in a relevant heuristic. In the "classical" tradition, publics are conceived as more than aggregates of individuals, because they share a common focus of attention about which they have opinions and

which they express in deliberative communication acts (Blumer, 1946; Price, 1992; Turner & Killian, 1972). Deliberative communication acts require at least two publics with differing opinions about which they discourse, often through the media. The conception of interpersonal network agendas at the nexus between media and individual agendas, is elaborated to include publics. As shown in Figure 2, publics are conceived as having agendas and MSD relations that liaison between media and interpersonal network agendas. This way of thinking takes an analytical leap to conceive of the social world at any one point in time as having a big P and little p publics. The big P public is the multiplicative product of all the little publics, each with their own issue focus, and each competing for dominance in the minds of individuals, the discourse of interpersonal networks, in media discourse, and in resource allocation discourses of policy makers. Multiplicative product because publics interact in discourse (directly or indirectly through the media) and in competition for scarce resources, and because publics often overlap (e.g., the same person or network participating in more than one little p public). This view is generally similar to Noelle-Neumann's (1984) "social pressure" view of the public (Price, 1992).

MSD relations play a key theoretical cross-level role; they are the dynamic that brings interpersonal network discourse into the Public force field and into the interplay between Public and media system. The changing composition of Public, for example, may be understood, in part, as a consequence of changes in the ecology of MSD relations that includes interpersonal networks, little p publics, and the media. "Talk radio" (Kohut, et. al., 1993) and "talk TV" suggest this ecology. Studies of the Public, as defined by such "talk" publics, for example, could afford a non-reactive way to a) unveil little p publics and b) their MSD relations, c) establish the issue agenda of the big P Public and d) its change.

Opting Out of MBO Ecologies: Opportunities and Limits: Individuals retain the option of attaining their goals through other information systems when available and as credible. Of course, these other information systems do not exist in a vacuum. They are usually intimately linked to the media system, as, for example, in the case of interpersonal networks (Chaffee & Mutz, 1988; Reardon & Rogers, 1989). Expert networks may be less linked to the media, but these are not generally accessible or available to the lay public except through the media (e.g., health, economic, etc. experts who participate in media production by being interviewed, writing a column, and so on). Another option that individuals retain is to lower the importance of a particular goal, the achievement of which requires access to media resources. For example, people who, in the language of the 60s, "drop out" constrain media power by decreasing the importance of social understanding as a personal goal. Of course there are social constraints that limit the freedom of most people under most conditions to reduce the importance of many goals (e.g., many people have to stay on top of the celebrity world, politics, and sports in order to have something to talk about with others). Finally, individuals may process media information in a debunking, literate, or creative manner. They may, for example, process "news" for purposes of play, decode media stories in terms of their understandings of the distortions of the media production process (critical decoding, Hall, 1980), or recreate media stories by imposing their version of reality (Liebes & Livingstone, 1992; Liebes & Katz, 1990; Livingstone, 1990; Morley, 1980, 1989). Such processing of media stories does not, of course, constrain media power to focus or "prime" (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987) individuals' debunking, decoding, or interpretative activities. Moreover, these activities require time and effort (e.g., critical attention), resources in over-demand in the lives of all but a few.

These modes of defusing media power are similar in form to the ways people defuse another's power as described by Emerson (1962). He suggests another as well,

coalition formation. For present considerations of the conditions that gives rise to and constrain media power vis a vis individuals and interpersonal networks, coalition formation could be translated into the collective creation of an alternative information system. Alternative media include oppositional information systems (Downing, 1984) and subcultural media (Ball-Rokeach, et. al., 1993). This general subject is also one for another paper. Suffice it to say that it is extremely important when the media system is apparently becoming more fragmented into economies of scale media production (eg., narrowcasting), to study the dynamic interplay between dominant and alternative media (their MSD relations, if you will) and its consequences for the intensity and scope of micro and macro MSD relations.

A COMPARISON OF U&G AND MSD AT THE MICRO LEVEL OF ANALYSIS

The major differences between U&G and MSD theory are summarized in Table 1. Discussion in previous sections of this paper has directly or indirectly addressed many of these differences. In hopes of avoiding as much repetition as possible, I focus this discussion on the most basic or troublesome differences.

Conception of Audience Members

While U&G and MSD theorists view the audience member as active, the activity that they respectively target as the most theoretically interesting is very different. The activity of primary concern for U&G theorists is the individual's molding of media content to gratify needs. The end product is called a use. Ideosyncrasy in use, or the degree to which individuals' interpretive activities are conceived to be unconstrained, varies by theorist. Katz's version of U&G, for example, suggests less constraint than Blumler's (1979) where the constraining effects of social category membership and roles are given more attention.

Nonetheless, U&G theorists tend to be silent on questions concerning the constraining effects of macro relations of production. Such silence is consistent with the central interest in psychological mechanisms operating in the individuals' use of media.

In the MSD conception, the audience member's behavior vis a vis the media is more constrained and determined by social forces. In part, this is due to the conception of audience members as habitual or conscious goal seekers. Intuitively, goals are more susceptible to social influence than needs. The preference for goals over needs also reflects a social ecology conception of human motivation. The audience member is conceived as a problem solver where the problem or goal is to understand, orient, or play in a social environs where the media system controls essential information resources. In this insistence on keeping the audience member social as well as psychological, MSD theory differs from U&G. The personal and social forces that influence individuals' goals, and thereby influence the intensity and scope of their MSD relations were previously identified in the discussion of Figure 1. Also discussed was the macro ecology of MSD relations underlying media production and their constraining effect upon the nature of individuals' MSD relations. In short, U&G and MSD conceptions of the audience member differ because:

U&G theorists focus on psychological and socio-demographic origins of differences in media use. This leads them to be impressed with the variability of text interpretation. Such variability suggests an audience member in charge of the text. For example, a recent conference including representatives of this tradition was entitled: "The Viewer as TV-Director. Understanding Individual Patterns of Exposure and Interpretation" (Hans-Bredow-Institut, Hamburg, 1992).

MSD theorists focus upon psychological, interpersonal, and sociological origins of differences in micro MSD relations, as well as the macro MSD relations that constrain media text production and, in so doing, constrain (or create similarities between) individuals' MSD relations. This leads us to be impressed with both the responsiveness of micro MSD relations to environmental conditions and the ecological constraints upon media production

and consumption. A priori, the audience member is neither in charge of the text nor controlled by the text. That can only be predicted if we know his or her MSD relations in context of the ecology of macro relations.

Conceptions of Interpersonal Networks and Interpersonal Communication

The difference between U&G and MSD conceptions of interpersonal networks and interpersonal communication have been addressed or implied throughout. By way of summary, U&G theorists emphasize the role of interpersonal communication in the distortion of media messages and of networks as interpretive communities. In this conception, interpersonal networks serve almost as a safety net or guard against the cultural apparatus of the media and its partners. The earliest formulation of this role was identified by Moreno (1934) and was later touted as the "rediscovery of the primary group" (Riley & Riley, 1959). Traditional and contemporary U&G conceptions may be called optimistic. They emphasize the contribution of interpersonal networks to individual "agency." The "networked" individual is empowered to manipulate media texts, not to be manipulated by them.

The MSD conception is compatible with the U&G conception up to a point. Briefly stated, the U&G conception is only part of a much larger story. Much of that larger story is lost when individual personal network relations are abstracted out of their macro structural and cultural environs, especially the macro MSD relations of production that affect individual and interpersonal network conditions of consumption. Consistent with the MSD conceptions of the individual member of the active media audience, the interpersonal network is similarly active; it is conceived to have MSD relations and consumption of media is selective according to the characteristics of these relations. Interpersonal networks play big, but constrained, roles in MSD theory. They link the individual to Publics and they link and influence the nature of the individual's relations with the media system. The typology of individual relations is applicable, I think, to network relations. That typology,

however, is a starting and not an ending point for future development and specification of individuals' and their networks' relations with the media.

Conception of The Media System and of Media Power

U&G theorists in the psychological tradition a la Katz tend to conceive of the media system as creators of tentative texts subject to multiple reconstructions (eg., Liebes & Katz, 1990; Liebes & Livingstone, 1992). Put in the micro-functionalist terms that still affect this thinking, the media system is functional to the extent that it provides individuals with uses or ways to gratify needs. The MSD conception is somewhat closer to macro functionalist versions of U&G, such as Wright's (1985) and Rosengren's (1986, 1992) and colleagues (Rosengren, et. al., 1985). MSD shares the macro functionalist concern for the media's interdependence with other social and cultural systems and its functioning as a key structure for vertical and horizontal integration of society (Rosengren, 1986). However, the MSD viewpoint connects even more closely to cultural studies traditions in its central concern for structural relations of control over information resources that generate the power to create social realities and, in so doing, to negotiate social conflict and social change (Hall, 1977). That control is not benign; rather it is just as likely to produce conflict and disintegration as it is to produce cooperation and integration. Moreover, media system agents do what they must to maintain, if not enhance, their power position vis a vis other systems and organizations. It is sometimes the case that macro units are powerful at macro levels and weak at micro levels, judicial and law enforcement systems, for example. The reason why this is not the case for the media, at least in the MSD perspective, is the informational nature of media resources in combination with the ecology of macro MSD relations. This combination places the media system in a relatively powerful knowledge construction position at macro levels. Under the contemporary chronic conditions of problematic personal and social environs, that

position is likely to extend to micro levels. This view sharply contrasts with micro U&G which speaks to the ways that individuals dissemble media power.

Methods of Observation, Analysis and Interpretation

As previously noted, the media side of the individual-media relation is not observable. Media actors do not (cannot) articulate their relations in terms of any particular individual, because individuals PER SE are not perceived by media actors to control resources that can be exchanged. As a result, the individual-media relation must be a hypothetical construct. It takes phenomenologically concrete form only on the individual side of the relation where individuals can articulate media resources that are necessary to the attainment of their personal goals. Individuals' relations with media are inferred from individuals' self reports of the helpfulness of media for their attainment of understanding, orientation, and play goals. These self reports are tracers, not direct observations, of individual's MSD relation.

It is, perhaps, the similarity in specific methods of observing individuals "uses" or MSD "relations" that most misleads the casual reader into thinking that micro U&G and micro MSD are essentially the same. In both cases, questions are posed in the general form: how helpful is X media form for a series of X outcomes? Such linguistic similarity between data collection methods is very misleading. While both U&G and MSD researchers ask similar questions of individuals, they do so for very different reasons. Those differences are reflected most clearly in a) the logics of hypothesis formation, b) item and scale construction (See: Ball-Rokeach, et. al., forthcoming), c) modes of data analysis, and e) interpretations of findings. The MSD theorist begins with a priori hypotheses about which characteristics of the MSD relation should logically be related to another variable as determinant, consequence, or covariant. Much of the a priori logic is couched in the micro and macro contextual variables presented in Figure 1. Thus, hypothesis formation necessarily reflects the

cross-level nature of the theory. The U&G theorist tends to form hypotheses of the order X should differ from Y in uses or individuals who use the media for G should exhibit T, while individuals who use the media for R should exhibit Z. U&G hypotheses are generally limited to psychological level endogenous variables and include socio-demographic or psychographic variables as endogenous, but usually exogenous variables. Their logics are drawn largely from psychological theories of cognition and information processing and, sometimes, from personality theory (For reviews of research, see: Rosengren, et. al., 1985; Rosengren & Windahl, 1989).

The MSD logic is driven by the conceptual typology of individual MSD relations and by the conception of the micro MSD relation and its characteristics (i.e., invariant asymmetric structure, invariant resource scope, and variant intensity, goal scope and referent scope). U&G logics vary from development of items to reflect informal typologies (eg., Katz, 1979) to induction of factors that are interpretable as different types of media uses or motives (eg., Rubin's, 1984 instrumental and ritual factors). These differing logics produce differences in data analysis. Most obvious is that MSD researchers seek to employ the same conceptual types of micro MSD relations (understanding, orientation, and play), and the same micro MSD relation characteristics as either independent, dependent, or intervening variables. One of the first tests en route is a confirmatory factor analysis to establish the validity of the conceptual typology for any particular population, time, or situation. Factor analyses in the U&G tradition tend to be undertaken to establish the empirical replicability of induced factors. U&G data analyses generally evaluate the validity of predicted relationships between media uses or motives and information processing variables such as involvement and affect (eg., Perse, 1990).

With such differences in mode of observation and analysis, it is necessarily the case that there are differences in modes of interpretation. The MSD researcher essentially wants to know the micro and macro determinants of stability and change

in micro MSD relations in order to learn something about their cross-level consequences for individuals' and their interpersonal networks' -- the dynamics of their inner worlds and of their living in social worlds. The implications of invariant and asymmetric structure and resource scope are always part of the interpretation frame. The over-riding challenge is to figure out the nature and context of media power vis a vis individuals and their networks. Parallel concerns in U&G are quite different. The U&G theorist wants to learn something about the individual's attraction to media texts and the interaction between text and reader in order to better understand the contributions of reader characteristics to text processing. The differences between micro U&G and micro MSD are, thus, in their theories and in their missions.

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Figure 1

The Ecology of Individual Media System Dependency Relations in Context of the Ecology of Media Consumption and Production

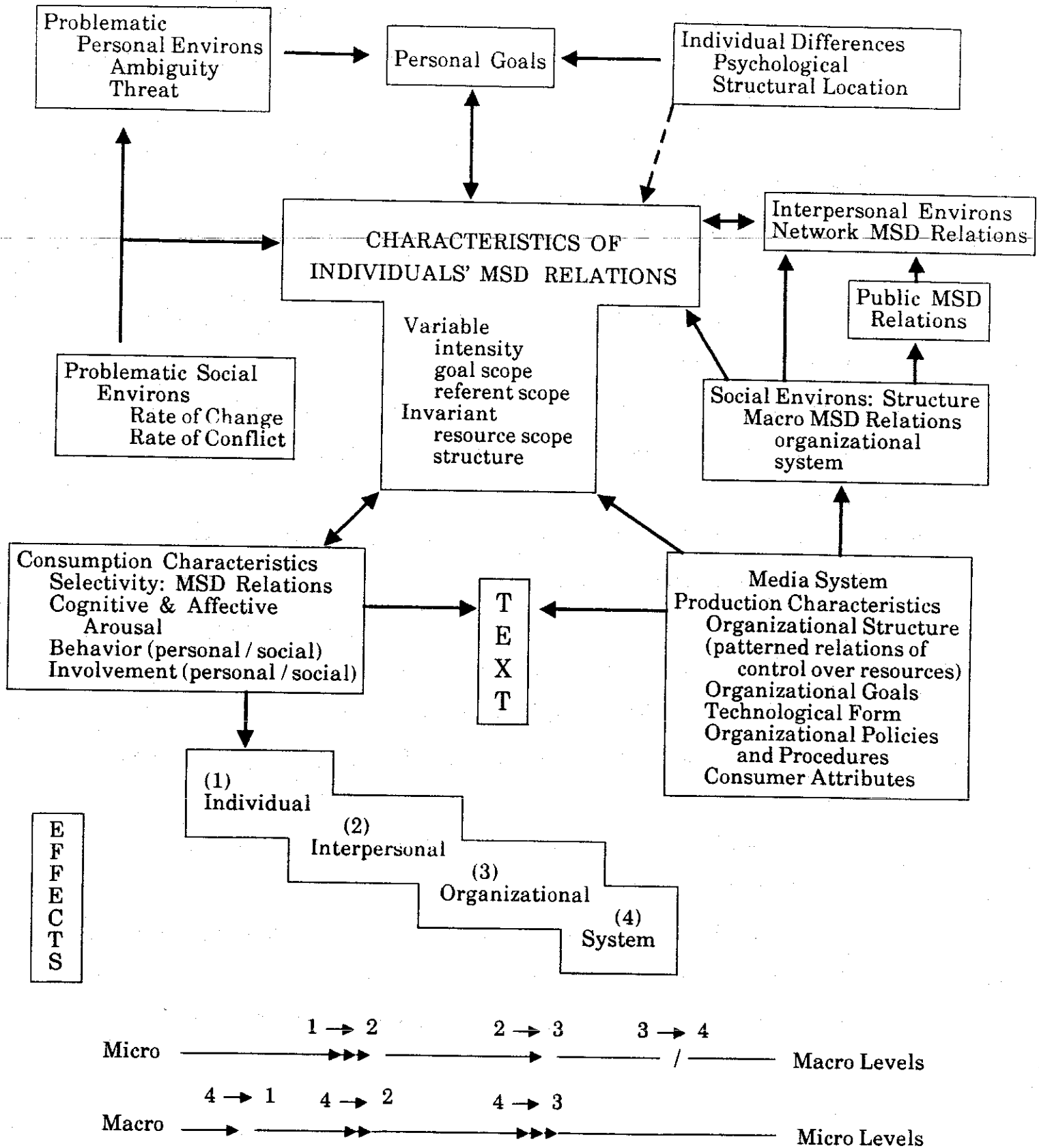


Figure 2

**An Ecology of MSD Relations
in Public Opinion Formation and Change**

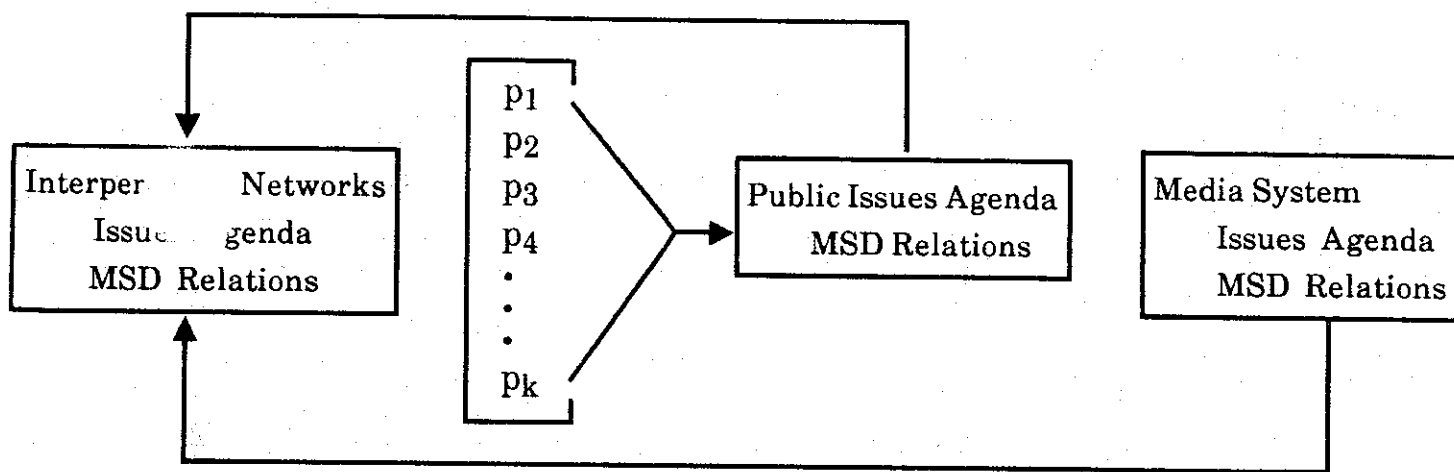


Table 1

Summary of Differences Between Uses and Gratifications and Media System Dependency Theory at the Micro Level of Analysis

	USES AND GRATIFICATIONS	MEDIA SYSTEM DEPENDENCY RELATIONS
Theoretical Origins	Perception, Attitude, & Diffusion Theories	Power-Dependence Theory Social Ecology Theory
Experiential Origins	The life & issues of the 40's & 50's	The life & issues of the 60's & 70's
Central Question	How do individuals, alone or in small communities, reconstruct media texts to gratify their needs?	Why, when & how are media powerful re: individuals & interpersonal networks & with what consequences?
Central Concept	Selectivity	MSD relation
Analysis Units	Individual & Network	Individual, Network & Macro
Locus: Knowledge Construction	Individual in interpersonal environs	Interpersonal networks in ecology of macro MSD relations
Interpersonal vis a vis Mass Communication	Interpersonal affects processing of mass texts	Mass affects interpersonal text creation & interpersonal affects processing of mass texts
Individual Differences	Major source of variation in use	Minor source of variation in characteristics of MSD relations
CONCEPTION OF:		
Audience Members	Active text interpreter grounded in interpersonal environs & unconstrained by macro production forces	Active text interpreter grounded in personal, interpersonal, & social environs, constrained by macro MSD relations of production
Media Systems	Text creators	Information system central to conduct of personal & social life
Media Power	NA	Control of dependency-engendering information resources
Production	NA	Determined by ecology of macro MSD relations
Consumption	Selective by individual needs	Selective by MSD relations
Interpersonal Networks	Co-interpreters & buffers of media influence	Hold MSD relations that affect individual MSD relations
METHODS OF:		
Observation	Ask people about uses a la empirical factors	Ask people about MSD relations a la conceptual typology
Analysis	Factor analysis & regression; reception analysis	Confirmatory factor analysis & regression
Interpretation	Individual differences situated in demographic & interpersonal	MSD Relation Differences situated in personal / social environs & in macro

COMMUNICATION RESEARCH

Sandra J. Ball-Rokeach
Co-Editor

March 28, 1994

Dr. George Gerbner
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University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, PA 19104

Dear Dr. Gerbner.

(1) No CA - trying blind on unsubs. - has
(2) No total unit - write how CA
new, but not used in met name CA
dep res - CA or even net. to
Lomel - (1) No re may see by
#M... (2) u...
George
Neh...
V.V.

I have received the enclosed manuscript for review, "Television and Viewer Perceptions of the Police." Would you be willing to review it for me and make recommendations with regard to publication in *Communication Research*?

Our new review format involves three components. First, would you complete the Reviewer's Report, ensuring you answer all questions. Second, in Comments for the Editors, please provide us with your frank comments and criticisms about this manuscript. Both of these are confidential and will not be shared with author(s) or other reviewers.

Third, in Comments for the Author(s), please provide your type-written feedback for the author(s). Give the reasons for your recommendation and any concrete suggestions you have for improving the paper. Present your views of the work's main strengths and weaknesses and try to distinguish between correctable and inherent problems. In these comments, I would ask you not to suggest the author(s) do a different kind of study just because you would have done it differently; and be honest but as considerate as possible while conveying your comments and criticisms. Finally, could you make recommendations about how the author(s) could bridge to other literatures in ways that enhance breadth and depth of conceptual/theoretical argument or sharpen implications for social issues.

Please remember not to copy, quote, or use this manuscript in any way without permission of the author.

I would like to receive your review by April 18. Please send me the enclosed note in the self-addressed, stamped envelope indicating that you have received the manuscript and whether you can provide me with your review by or near that date.

Your colleagues and I thank you for your willingness to participate in this collective effort to advance the publication of theory-based research that engages issues of importance to a variety of communication scholars.

Sincerely,

Sandra
Sandra J. Ball-Rokeach

Thank you for your comments re: the draft paper. Hope you are well.
Sandra

(enclosures)
SJBR/mjm

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COMMUNICATION RESEARCH

Sandra J. Ball-Rokeach
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June 7, 1994

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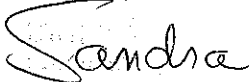
Dear Dr. Gerbner:

Thank you for your review of the manuscript entitled, "Television and Viewer Perceptions of the Police." We particularly appreciate the questions that you raised regarding the author's understanding of cultivation analysis.

After consideration of your comments and those by the other reviewer, we have decided not to accept the manuscript for publication. We have enclosed the comments of the other reviewer for your perusal.

Thank you for your time and for your careful attention to the manuscript.

Sincerely,



Sandra J. Ball-Rokeach

Thank you for your
comments on my draft paper
and for copies of yours. Hope
you are well. Sandra

(enclosure)
SJBR/eg

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Review of "Television and Viewer Perceptions of the Police"

Comments to the author:

This paper has an awful lot of problems: weak theory, problems with the data, uncertain analyses, excessive and confusing tables. I frankly do not think this is retrievable as a journal article, certainly not at the level of CR. And we would probably be better off not burdening the literature with such pieces. The one redeeming feature is that the data set is decent. Perhaps it could be reanalyzed in a couple of years when the author has had time to further develop some theory.

Some example problems:

writing: bizarre punctuation in middle of abstract

bottom p. 1: note the questionable (at least) and unclear way in which the estimate of # households for each of these broadcasts is generated!

p. 2 theory summary: so why should displaying "the elements of disaster the confront us all" make us love cops?

p. 3: presentation of cultivation is off. "Cultivate misconceptions of reality" is a sometime test but not the theory at all. "Results in an altered cognitive frame" is fuzzy. The author simply doesn't understand the theory ostensibly being applied.

p. 4: "light viewers less susceptible" -- incorrectly stated.

tenuous connections between literature cited and points being made.

p. 8: "logically follow" -- often, as here, a synonym for not developing theory for what one intuitively occurs.

the division of the police shows into fiction and non-fiction seems artificial and misses the point that the actual character of these programs probably varies as much within each group and that the two overlap in real symbolic meaning. p. 15: "program accuracy" -- oh, sure! The caveat that follows should be taken seriously. We won't learn anything about effects if we don't know what the message contains. (and then there are the interpretive issues that remind us that knowing content is not enough, but we can't even get to that stage in this paper).

p. 16: correlations between the parts and the whole don't tell me much about validity.

p. 17: the bottom of this page is properly an empirical question for the content of the messages first, not the direction of the relation to beliefs.

Many tables not needed. Others undecipherable. Some missing stuff text says they will have. Sloppy.

Table 10: talking about but not testing differences in correlations.

p. 27 and footnote 14 is an appalling lack of thought: To assert logically what is an empirical question and then not even think about the logic of the argument shocks me. I would in fact bet you the opposite, based on my limited experience with research subjects in poor neighborhoods: they all have some kind of TV, but many have no phone (we had to pay to install during the study). The reason is that you have to pay the phone company repeatedly every month. But once you buy a beat-up black and white for \$25 (or get one handed down), it's "free" (well, ok it adds a couple bucks a month to the utility bill, but that's an order of magnitude below the phone bill). Frankly, the casualness of this footnote makes me unwilling to trust the author in much of anything.

IN the questionnaire, I would worry that #s 21 and 22 contaminate answers to all the crucial questions that follow.

COMMUNICATION RESEARCH

BALL-ROKEACH

Sandra J. Ball-Rokeach
Co-Editor

November 28, 1995

Professor George Gerbner
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Dear Dr. Gerbner:

Thank you for your frank review of the manuscript entitled, "Humorous Violence on Television." We particularly appreciate your sensitive, yet firm recommendations.

After consideration of your comments and those of the other reviewers, we have decided not to accept the manuscript for publication. We have enclosed the comments of the other reviewers for your perusal, and at your request, we will not forward your comments to the author(s).

Thank you for your time and careful attention to the manuscript.

Sincerely,

Sandra
Sandra J. Ball-Rokeach

I did not send your review to the authors. Also, I tried to e-mail you back, but the message would not go through. I hope you and those you care well,
S.

(enclosure)
SJBR/mm

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5. Comments for the Author(s)

Manuscript number/title: 342/Humorous Violence on Television

This manuscript addresses an interesting and important topic. Moreover, it provides potentially useful perspectives and data on television violence. The authors are to be commended for their attempts to develop more detailed and subtle measures of television violence, measures that explore rather than ignore the diverse program contexts and program formats in which violence occurs. Unfortunately, this manuscript suffers from a number of serious flaws. It is neither well argued nor well written. The authors must do more to convince readers of the importance of this study and to justify the sometimes seemingly peculiar methodological choices they have made.

The authors do not adequately defend their methodological choices. It is useful to expand the definition of television violence to include non-physical violence, but the authors have embraced a very broad concept of violence, one that includes lying, showing suspicion, and even fixing parking tickets. The authors need to do more to justify this definition, keeping in mind that it is likely to be controversial. That is, *the decision to define all antisocial behavior as violence will seem peculiar to many readers*. Why not just call it all antisocial behavior? A better theoretical rationale is needed for the authors' decisions and definitions. For example, the authors might do more to establish why they elaborated Greenberg et al's already broad four-component definition of antisocial behavior. Why do we need eight categories? And why should we describe this expanded definition with a term with relatively specific meaning--*violence*--rather than stick with the broader phrase *antisocial behavior*?

While I would suggest that the authors do a better job of defending their choices, they should also take care to do so concisely. At twelve and one-half pages, the rationale section is just too long.

The authors could also do a better job of helping the reader see what results are most important. The authors use ten variables, several of which have several values. This generates enough cells to produce four rather dense tables. Yet the Results section is less than two pages in length. The authors could do a better job of showing us what results are most important. Also, the authors might consider statistical techniques that go beyond the mere reporting of two-way table percentages. This is not necessary, but the authors must do more to highlight the most salient findings. To their credit, the authors' variables cover a lot of ground, including measures of program type, intent, type of harm, and several other interesting aspects of television violence. But the Results and Discussion sections and the tables present little more than a routine variable-by-variable report.

The final section, "Harm to Viewers?" could profitably be shortened. It is interesting to consider the findings in light of three effects theories regarding humorous violence, but this is not an effects study. I would prefer to see the

authors offer more discussion of the implications of their approach and their findings for content analysis research programs.

Throughout the manuscript, the writing is seldom graceful and often downright clunky. An example:

It can be argued that this gunshot is not violent, because there is no lasting harm to the duck and that the duck himself regards this as humorous by the silly look on his face. (p. 3)

Also, the authors should be more careful in writing about the opinions of viewers and the likely effects of violence on viewers, since the authors have investigated only the content. For example, instead of asking "Why do viewers discount violence when it is presented in a humorous context?" (p. 3), the authors might try "Why are viewers seemingly unconcerned about violence when it is presented in a humorous context?" In general, I wish the authors would write more carefully and elegantly.

The authors seem to have carefully collected much potentially valuable data, but they fail to offer a concise, compelling, and careful account of their research. I think the topic is important enough and the authors' skills solid enough to encourage the authors to revise and resubmit this manuscript, but the revision would have to be substantial to merit publication in *Communication Research*.

Reviewer

This paper reports a study of violence on television which comprised a content analysis of peak-time evening programme output on the four major US networks covering 28 nights over a 3-4 month period.

The study measured the volume of violence in terms of numbers of violent acts occurring in the programmes monitored. There were two particular features of this study I liked. First, the author(s) distinguished between different types of aggression rather than treating violence as a homogeneous entity. The second was the way in which there was an attempt to interweave research evidence from audience perceptions research and media violence effects research into the rationale behind the design of the coding frame and subsequently into the interpretation of the results. I have long held the view that content analysis descriptions of television violence divorced completely from audience research input are of limited value. Assessing the meaning of content profiles, patterns of portrayals and attributes of actions requires some reference to the way viewers respond to these things.

There are, however, some points I would wish to raise about this study which will need to be addressed before the paper is ready for publication.

Although the author(s) go to some length to elaborate how they arrived at a taxonomy of different types of violent act and argue the case for doing so succinctly, there remains a question unexplained in this account (and one which characterizes much research in this area) of how a violent act was defined, not in terms of the nature of the behaviour being displayed, but in terms of its physical boundaries for coders. Thus, did coders count every punch in a fist-fight, or every shot in a gun-fight, as separate violent acts, or was such an approach found to be unmanageable necessitating a carefully defined and thought through rubric for coders? Can we have some more explanation of this point since it is vitally important to the core measure of violence used here.

Another related point I would wish to raise with the author(s), given that my own experience of content analysis has led me to realise that defining the physical boundaries of 'violent acts' can be difficult to achieve in practice in any consistent sense, given the varied nature of televised violent portrayals, is whether the measure of violence in terms of numbers of acts is really the most robust and representative one available. Might it, in some ways, be somewhat misleading. For example, if we consider that one violent act might occupy more time than another violent act, this could mean that two programmes with the same violent act count might in fact contain different amounts of violence in terms of minutage occupied by violence. I accept, of course, that such data may not have been collected, but nevertheless, I feel it is an important point to raise.

The other measure which is of some importance and on which the authors almost certainly should have data to hand is the percentage of programmes monitored which contained any violence at all. What I find consistently misleading in studies which focus on average numbers of violent acts occurring per hour or per programme is that they falsely give the impression that all television is permeated by violence. This may not be true. It could be the case, for instance, that some programmes contribute disproportionately towards the total violence count, while others may contain no violence at all. This is an important contextual factor which ought to be reported. Recent research in the UK, for example, found that 37% of programmes on the major TV channels contained some violence, but that only around 1%

of programme running time was occupied by violent content, and that on some channels, 1-2% of programmes contributed half the total amount of violence on those channels.

On page 8, reference is made to 'accidents' as one form of violence. This is an aspect which Gerbner et al typically included in their analysis of TV violence but I don't believe it belongs in the same category as violence which involves an intention to do harm and is of an interpersonal nature within the context of a particular storyline.

On page 25, the author(s) suggest that viewers will learn to imitate violence where the perpetrator shows no remorse and when there is no serious harm to the victim(s). Surely this depends upon how viewers classify and perceive the programme in terms of its realism. It may also be mediated by the extent to which viewers identify with the characters and events of which they are a part. It is unwise to use such blanket statements to infer possible audience reactions when research has already shown that there are often many qualifying factors.

On page 26, again, when discussing levels of violence in different categories of programme, we should also be told the extent to which such programmes were likely to contain any violent content at all.

I have noted that there are some references missing in the bibliography. On my copy of the paper, references are incomplete for Jensen (1991), Prerost (1987) and Sommers-Flanagan et al (1993). On p.3 van der Voort is given as 1968, when it is in fact 1986.

Note on p.5, para.3, line 6, '...yearly content, yearly content..' repetition.

Reviewer 1
Reviewer 2
Reviewer 3

Sandra Ball

December 6, 1992

Prof. Sandra Ball-Rokeach
The Annenberg School for Communication
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ENTERED

Dear Sandra:

This is a very belated note to thank you for sending me your article in the ASA Newsletter (which hit home in more ways than one!) and to recall the good talks Ilona and I had with you in Budapest.

Your article also reminded me that yes you started it all! Enclosed are a few recent fruits and some other things of possible interest. I am still teaching and working on research projects more than full time. Currently completing a study of violence in cable-originated programming, and another study of women and minorities on TV -- the last 10 years - for the Screen Actors Guild.

How ARE things at ASC-USC?? And how are you? We would enjoy hearing from you. Meanwhile Ilona and I are sending you best wishes for the holiday season.

Sincerely yours,

George Gerbner
Professor of Communication and Dean Emeritus

SO, WHAT'S NEW AND WHY DON'T WE KNOW IT?

Sandra Ball-Rokeach

University of Southern California

Sandra Ball-Rokeach is applying her media dependency system research program to the study of organizational change and resistance among ethnic and racial subcultures in Central Europe.

We all knew it was coming, but did we? Does social science data inform us about the conflicts that manifested themselves in the Los Angeles riot of May 1992? Can we point to the Sociology of Culture literature to say we told you so? These questions haunt me as I am thrown by events back to when I was a brand new Ph.D. in 1968. Then I argued with dear friends that change within the system was possible and sociology could inform that change. The combination of the Vietnamese War, urban rebellions, civil rights struggles, and assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr., Medgar Evers, Malcolm X, and then Bobby Kennedy compelled me to test my change-is-possible and sociology-is-informing claims by becoming a co-director of the Media and Violence Task Force of the Violence Commission. Our efforts to reframe the violence and media issue in critical socio-political terms and away from the inherently conservative psychological frame met with only limited success. We did work with George Gerbner and we gave the first funding to his cultural indicators project. We reached conclusions about media effects on individuals that, as Leo Bogart correctly noted, were only reiterated by the Surgeon General's Television reports; we reiterated the Kerner and McCone Commission Reports with regard to media coverage of race conflicts and riots; and we fought off incredible political intrusions into the study of the mass media and to the study of violence.

For me, the experience was a critical event. It led me to question every extant theory of violence as well as the dominant psychological approach to mass media effects, questions that have guided most of my professional work since. In a 1985 paper coauthored with Jim Short, Jr., I asked whether the theories that had emerged after the social sciences were found with their intellectual pants down, having failed to predict the collective violence of the 60s, could explain the relative absence of such violence in the 70s to the mid-80s. Our answer was a debilitating "no". The only theory that seemed to have been validated was a conservative version of social control that suggested "gulaging the ghetto."

Sitting here now with my USC workplace in the middle of South Central LA and my home not two miles away from the most far-reaching "incurSION" of riot activity into white West LA, I feel in the eye of two hurricanes. The riot hurricane does not feel as if it is over. The other hurricane is the swirl of media air polluted with politicians, law enforcement agents, community leaders, and a few social scientists whipping up post-hoc explanations. This hurricane is not over either. In the remainder of this essay, I discuss only two of the questions that disturb me about sociology's relation to the social world in general and to urban conflict and racism in particular. The first is why the sociologi-

cal literature in general and the sociology of culture literature in particular is lacking as sources of prediction or explanation of the 1992 LA urban rebellion and those that are sure to follow. The second question concerns the study of belief: Why do quantitative survey research results lead some to conclude that racism and ideology have systematically declined in the US population, when other value-based theory and research leads to the opposite conclusion? Perhaps, raising these questions is more important than the brief answers that I can give here.

Thelma McCormack (1986) raised part of my first question with her charge that communications scholars had lost their initial drive to understand change and had become preoccupied with understanding social control. I would add that no theory of social control through culture control can inform us about urban rebellions until the theory includes social change and manifest conflict as parts of the theory project. It is not enough to account for why change and manifest conflict do not occur in terms of how specific texts or, more generally, culture are controlled through media and other communication mechanisms. I think that our studies would be made more powerful and informing if we posed questions of control in deep integration with questions of change and conflict. My belief emerges from the conviction that we study culture in order to understand behavior, not just why it does not occur, but also when and why behavior does occur. I do not see much concern with behavior in contemporary cultural analyses. Specifically, I do not see concern for understanding change-oriented behavior undertaken by groups or collectives to express, protest, and resolve the fundamental social, cultural, economic and political conflicts of our time. Perhaps I am looking in the wrong places, but the primary emphasis upon behavior that I encounter is in the work of reception theorists. This is not the kind of behavior that I have in mind. Text interpretive behavior that empowers individuals to decode texts, separately or together in loose communities, is no more socially empowering than the experience of non-critical clinical therapies that encourage people to gain "control" over their lives by treating themselves as texts. Neither interpretive power is, or is intended as, a way of "making the personal political." Perhaps the text-focus with the greatest potential for connectedness to social change-oriented behaviors is, ironically enough, the text construction behaviors of critical artists; most notable for urban rebellion are "rapp" and related music forms that speak for the street. I conclude this response to my first question with the observation that the people of South Central

(continued to page 4)

(continued from page 4)

meets prevailing statistical criteria of excellence, but lacks phenomenological correspondence. The method does not replicate the belief choice or prioritizing condition in which behavior choice requirements of everyday life elicit belief priorities, priorities that symbolically capture the meaning of the choice and guide its making. In sum, I do not find data produced in this fashion sufficiently convincing to give up on the belief-behavior relation because this data was restricted to attitudes and thus ignores the more central belief universe of values, it is produced by methods that lack phenomenological correspondence, and because there is evidence of value-choice/behavior-choice relations that I do find convincing.

This brings me back to the 1992 Los Angeles riot and its connectedness to ideology, belief-behavior relations, and racism. Several years ago, in response to publications that suggested a progressive decline of racist attitudes in the American "public" over the last several decades, Rokeach and I (1989) argued that the data upon which such claims were based were flawed. They were flawed because (1) they employed largely non-choice measures of attitudes and (2) they were inconsistent findings obtained over a similar time period based upon choice-based value measures. Perhaps more important, our observations of relevant choices made by the state, the corporate sector, and groups and individuals in our every-

day lives simply did not accord with the premise that Americans and America had become less racist in belief. The key feature of the data we reported was that they showed a systematic decline in the relative importance of Equality in American adults' value systems. [There is considerable evidence for the Rokeach "two-value model of politics" claim that the relative importance of two terminal values, Equality and Freedom, captures the major ideologies. Their relative importance also affords theory-based predictions of political attitudes and behavior, including racism.] Thus, our key empirical observation was that Equality's systematic decline must be seen in context of no decline in the relative importance of Freedom. Out of 18 terminal values or end states of existence, Equality declined from a high of 4th most important in 1968 to 12th in importance in 1981, while Freedom remained 3rd in importance throughout this period. We believed we could reasonably argue, from what we knew of the relevant literature, that these data supported an increase, not a decrease, in racism. I now add that these findings also stand in clear contradiction to the end of ideology argument. Rather, they support the thesis that Americans had been influenced by the Reagan era to adopt a more crystallized capitalist ideology. Capitalist ideologues rank Equality at the bottom and Freedom at the top of their terminal value priorities.

Because they represent contextualized choices, values and value priorities are

more than data that speak for themselves. As an analyst of everyday life, I see the virtual absence of the word, Equality, in political discourse to be the most telling indicator of what was happening in this country since the 60s, particularly with respect to racism. I do not think that it is the "L" word's departure from positively sanctioned discourse that matters; it is only a code for far more fundamental discourse and resource allocation phenomena—individual and collective moves away from the ideal and the behavior necessary to produce real racial equality. Need I say more?

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- McCormack, T. 1986. "Reflections on the Lost Vision of Communication Theory." In *Media, Audience, and Social Structure*, eds. S.J. Ball-Rokeach and M.G. Cantor. Sage.
- Rokeach, M. and S.J. Ball-Rokeach. 1989. "Stability and Change in American Value Priorities, 1968-1981." *American Psychologist* 44.

—Suggested Readings?—

We would be pleased to include a section in every issue for references to *articles/books/other-media-items* that, for whatever reason, you feel would be of interest to other section members. Please send any suggestions to us at the newsletter address.

Judith Higgins Balfé (CUNY-Graduate Center) writes to recommend the following news article by (section member) Todd Gitlin (U.Ca.Berkeley): "World Leaders: Mickey et al" *New York Times*, May 3 1992, sec. 2, p.1.

SOUND BYTE IN REPOSE TO OTHER SOUND BYTES

--excerpt from "Public TV's Myopic Critics" by television critic Tom Shales, *Washington Post* 21 May 1992:D1:5—"What can't be blamed on the Great Society programs of the '60s is blamed on the television programs of the 90s. Bush and Quayle can be dismissed as hapless politicians looking desperately for scapegoats. But there are other amateur TV critics in Washington who seem considerably more dangerous. They're the new coalition of right-wingers joined together to wage an insane war against public television.... Some senators are opposing the latest authorization bill for public TV funding (through the Corporation for Public Broadcasting) and are attempting to weigh it down with imbecilic amendments.... Why screw around with, of all things, public TV? As Sen. Al Gore (D-Tenn.) has said, 'This is one thing that works in this country.'"



UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

22 January, 1996

Professor George Gerbner
University City Science Center
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Dear George,

WOW, have you ever been working! I received packets from you with regard to the founding convention of the Cultural Environment Movement in mid-March of this year. You and your colleagues have assembled an incredible array of persons and organizations and conceived a comprehensive set of working groups. Unfortunately, I have a prior commitment over the convention period that I cannot cancel. I would like to pass along the materials to several colleagues whom I think would be interested. Also, I enclose a check to support the enterprise.

I am on sabbatical all this academic year, but the journal, research efforts, and doctoral students take up a great deal of my time. The first four months of the sabbatical (from May through August) were devoted entirely to taking care of my parents. On the last day of classes last April, they were in a near-fatal car crash. The awfulness of it all has been replaced by sheer amazement at their recovery to independent living. They live in Huntsville, Alabama and the crash happened in Guntersville where images from the movie, Deliverance, permeated my mind. Like it or not, my rather frequent visits to this part of the South, are forcing me to deal more directly than I would otherwise with mentalities that scare and disturb me. I am learning much in the process.

Much of my time these days is devoted to support of an indigenous effort to create an institute in South Central Los Angeles designed as a first step toward creating a state of the "art" information infrastructure in the area. I am working with talented savvy people from the non-profit and political sectors. I am primarily involved on the evaluation research side, designing and funding. It is the first change/building effort I have encountered in LA that raises my spirits as it holds at least some promise of working to at least some extent. I view your activities on a national level in the same way. That is why I am pleased to have the opportunity to support it, and regret that I am unable to attend.

Personal Regards,



Sandra J. Ball-Rokeach
Professor of Communication
and Sociology

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Ball-Roberts

19 July, 1991

Dear George,

I got home from Budapest and turned around, before getting over jet lag, to leave again for another trip from which I have just returned. I did get chance to look over the prospectus for a Cultural Environment Movement and have been giving it some thought. I think you have well identified the heart of the problem, one that I must admit has caused me to feel debilitated with a sense that we have already lost the battle. My defeatism makes me all the more admiring of your undauntedness. I sense a more general defeatism among my generation wrought by the facile undoing of hard-won civil rights struggles. ~~The fact, for example, that control of the court system is embedded for the foreseeable future in hands of "cultural commodifiers" depresses me, and I suspect many others.~~

What your proposal may be able to achieve is reactivation of people like me who have focused whatever oppositional energies that remain in their local work settings. The reason, at least for me, that your proposal may activate where others fail, is that you have articulated the battle in its generic form. Power lies in participation in the making of the culture that legitimates structure and process.

There are two related activities in which I have been tangentially involved that I can see as suggestive of ways of proceeding. One is a magazine that you may know of -- Media and Values -- spearheaded by Liz Thoman in LA and the other is a project that you may have heard about at IAMCR spearheaded by Howard Frederick, Liz Thoman, and others -- a project designed to affect the nature and substance of the political discourse in the 1992 California electoral campaign. I wonder how many "culture literacy" magazines and newsletters are in existence that could be pulled together to form a network. In other words, if such magazines and newsletters were identified, their staffs might be brought together on a city or statewide basis to a) form an alternative media network (perhaps an alternative media library carried in electronic networks) that b) joins to form a "cultural literacy" action group. The Frederick, et.al., project suggests the organizational development and mobilization potential of electronic networks such as PeaceNet. Again, I wonder how many relevant and established electronic networks there are that might be brought together for the same organizational and action purposes (eg., link largely middle class electronic networks to alternative media (particularly those serving lower and underclass populations) and to public access information networks.

I suppose I am suggesting that one place to begin a cultural environment movement is by coopting and coordinating already existing networks. Such would require rather tedious mapping and assessment of the appropriateness of existing networks. The more successful women's equality organizations seem to have resulted from "positive" cooptation of old networks through the establishment of communication nets. My sense is that you are correct in your timing; that is, there is a widespread, albeit unarticulated, sense that democratic values are obfuscated at every turn in the service of untethered empowerment of multinational corporations which control the mechanisms for commodification so

essential to their operation.

I worry that agreement on the debunking required to pierce through the cultural curtain could be built, but that it would end there or would end in different subcultural groups warring with each other to control their shared cultural environs. I guess the specter of ethnic and racial hatred in Central Europe (and so many other places, including the Berkeley schools where my step-daughter is a schoolboard member) has really upset me. How do we avoid the setting apart -- the fueling of racism -- in the negotiation of culture? The most I can think of at the moment is that we focus upon the process (legal and normative) for participation in culture creation. In essence, I suppose that is what you are proposing. You seem to be going beyond Barron's right to be heard (as opposed to speech) to the right to participate in the creation of the cultural environment in which diverse communities live.

I do not know that I have suggested or mused anything that you have not already said. Nonetheless, I do hope that my meanderings indicate interest in what you have said.

I was very glad to have become reacquainted with you and Ilona in Budapest. I feel good about that.

Sincerely,
Sandra

P.S. I enclose a copy of the Frederick, Thoman, et.al. proposal.