

Current Debates in the Field of Mass Communication Research: An African Viewpoint

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Abstract

This paper discusses the kind of mass communication research that is required in Africa. After a thorough review of the controversy between the adherents of the (American) administrative and (European) critical research schools, the author argues that as far as African mass communication research is concerned, the problem is not only that of conceptualization but also that of social research process and administration. The paper registers a general dissatisfaction with African social research based on foreign theoretical and methodological assumptions. It ends with a call for 'back to our roots', having outlined four major research agenda for African mass communication researchers.

Resume

Cet article traite du type de recherche dans le domaine de la communication de masse dont l'Afrique a besoin. Après un examen approfondi de la controverse entre les adeptes des écoles de recherche administrative (américaines) et critique (européennes) l'auteur démontre que la recherche en matière de communication de masse en Afrique est confrontée non seulement à un problème de conceptualisation mais également à un problème d'administration et aussi de processus social de recherche. L'article reflète une dissatisfaction générale en ce qui concerne la recherche sociale en Afrique basée sur des assumptions théoriques et méthodologiques étrangères. Il lance un appel pour "un retour à nos sources" et énonce quatre programmes de recherche importants pour les chercheurs africains des communications de masse.

INTRODUCTION:

Communication research is relatively a new area of study compared with other areas of the social sciences. It is also an area which contemporarily attracts the largest volume of intellectual controversy. Some theorists have contended that communication research itself has not yet matured into a discipline and should be regarded as a field (Schramm, 1959). Others have dismissed as banal any attempt at theory construction in communication, claiming that "we do not need a theory of mass communications but a theory of society" to generate guiding propositions in mass communication research (Golden and Murdock, 1978). Barelson (1959) was of the opinion that the current "immaturity" of mass communication research stemmed from the desertion of the seminal thinkers of the field to newer, more exciting areas¹. There is also the claim that the weakness of the field is as a result of the underlying idealism in the simple idea that communication means human relations. Another weakness is that mass communication research in contrast with research in social sciences has been remarkably free of active efforts at reanalysis and replication (Hirach, 1980).

Administrative vs Critical Concepts

But so far the sharpest controversy has been the choice between the so-called administrative research strategy of the American and the critical research of the European. Current "Year Book" and Journals of communication research have devoted several pages to this debate. Peter Golding and Graham Murdock of the Centre for Mass Communication Research of the University of Leicester characterize a current and typical European voice.

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Their major contention is that American mass media researchers fall prey to a concentration on the integrative effect of mass communication. They tend to ignore its cultural stratification which would seek the ways in which the media are conceived as functional institutions of socialisation, not part of a legitimization apparatus in an egalitarian social order (Golden and Murdock, 1978). The Europeans, most of them proletarian sociologists, further contend that the practical concern with manipulation, effects and influence were not without a theoretical yield, especially at the level of social psychology. But later, observers started noticing that these interests were administering rather than theoretical and invited elaboration of quantitative techniques to measure effects rather than more general elucidation of communication theory. Also there is the obsession with methods which betray a theoretical vacuum in which the paucity of ideas is masked by a dazzling display of empirical ingenuity.

The African researcher might see the so-called administrative research, especially "mass media for national development" and "diffusion of innovation" research as favouring the effects of the communication media where development is defined in ethno-centric terms and a realization of western economic and mechanical standards. As Hamelink (1976) well noted, in such circumstances, "social change is usually conceived as individual enlightenment rather than structural social change and diffusion of innovation is usually idealistically understood as the diffusion of new ideas (on a two-step flow). There is a proneness to consider the technological advantages of mass communication rather than understand the part the media play in society from the point of view of their processes within appropriate contexts. There is also the tendency for theorists to fail to substantiate their ideas with any extensive and systematic data. Few are equipped with enough range of questionnaires or projective tests. Results cast doubt on the theory that dependency typifies personality. Instead we have reports from which it is not easy to disentangle the pre-conditions of researcher or author.

Kurt Lang (1979) and to some extent, Jay G. Blumer (1981) speak strongly in favour of American Mass Communication research. Paul Lazarsfeld has shared more of the blames of the Critical School as being the father of administrative research. Lang (1979) apologetically replies that where research has been designed to

answer a particular event, a practical purpose, research must be enriched and vitalized by the incorporation of perspectives derived from formulations by critical theorists about how general trends in society effect the way mass media function and affect certain basic values. He contends, "Lazarsfeld welcomes critical theory as a potentially vitalizing influence on administrative research." He goes on to elucidate the objective of administrative research as practised by Lasarsfeld. Such research is based on the idea that modern media of communication are tools handled by people or agencies for given purposes. It centres on a more or less standardized set of problems, including the nature of the audience, the impact of message content and how the one affects the other. Because these things are not obvious, in order to gain an understanding of them, one requires empirically grounded knowledge. Such knowledge is pertinent if one needs to understand the more general role of the media of communication in present social system. The empirical validation of theory, as Lang well points out, is a tricky business for those intent on developing skill in this area. They ought to be denigrated because there is less sharp incompatibility between administrative and critical research.

Blumler (1981) notes that Europe is undoubtedly providing a congenial proving ground for the development of much critically oriented mass communications enquiry, albeit based on self evident truths, yet "a shocking indictment of the field in Europe" is the paltry "cumulative traditions of effect research that can stand comparison with American work in such areas as knowledge gap, agenda-setting, trust in government and social construction of reality (particularly the Annenberg social indicators and cultivation analysis studies). He warns that such a neglect should no longer be tolerated, for the study of mass communication as a process, without systematic investigation of audience response, is like a sexology that ignores the orgasm. Blumler also notes that the current American mass communication research scene appears to lack its pioneering synthesis and binding quality. What he sees is a spectacle more like a boxing gym in which each individual is doing his own thing - some people are skipping rope, some are punching bags, some lifting weights, some sparring, some taking showers and some just having a rest. Blumler finally comes to the conclusion that American mass communication studies are unrivaled in theoretical precision, methodological rigour, technical imagination and sophisticated data handling, but they are shaky in philosophical underpinning.

Annenberg Cultural Indicators

One major study which has attracted controversy among social researchers across the world is the Annenberg Cultural Indicators Projects especially its theory of cultivation led by Professors George Gerbner and Larry Gross of the University of Pennsylvania.

The design of the cultural indicators profile study consists of the interrelated parts of message system analysis and cultivation analysis (Gerbner et al., 1980). Message system analysis is the annual monitoring of samples of prime-time and weekend day time network dramatic programming. This includes series, other plays, comedies, movies, and cartoons. Cultivation analysis investigates the conceptions of the viewer in regard to social realities associated with the most recurrent features of the world of television.

The Annenberg project attracted great attention by its repeated measurement of incidents of violence on American television. Gerbner's definition of violence is "the overt expression of physical force (with or without a weapon, against self, or others) compelling action, against one's will on pain of being hurt and/or killed or threatened to be so victimized as part of a plot." Part of the study's theoretical thrust is the consideration of television plays as assembly-line drama rather than unique works of craftsmanship. The study also claims (Gerbner et al., 1978) that viewers do absorb "broad facts" from their experience of many hours in the world of television irrespective of whether or not they believe any specific plot. The Gerbner group maps out a cultivation differential in which "the world" of a group of heavy viewers was compared with that of light viewers.

Their verdict is that "heavy viewers have internalized a certain view of society and a tense of values and norms coupled with it - a logic of winning and losing, a system of victims and aggressors, a certain role-partition, idea about the risks in life and the price that should be paid for breaking the law".

Gerbner roots his theoretical formulation on the conception that "the industrial revolution reveals itself in the domain of the production of messages," (as a result), mass media produce a short-circuit in the other field of social communication (and experience),

hence ideology develops mainly and with all its consequences, through the mass media particularly through the machinery of television. The claim is that the cultivation analysis provides support for the theory of pervasive cultivation of mistrust, apprehension, danger and exaggerated "mean world" perceptions. It suggests that television viewing is associated with a cultural "mainstream", which tends to assimilate groups that diverge from it and the salience of certain real-life circumstances is likely to boost television cultivation potentials. There is also the conception that environmental factors may "resonate" with television messages and even augment them. A unique reasoning in my estimation.

Promise of Cultural Indicators

Halloran (1978) sees promise in Gerbner's cultural indicators approach owing to its sensitivity to the possibility that televised violence can be used to legitimize and maintain elitist power. The Annenberg approach appears more realistic and serious than previous individual modelling behavioural approaches used in experiments. Other researchers have been equally impressed by the Annenberg model.

A notable adaptation of the model is the Swedish Symbol System undertaken by Professor Krarl Erik Rosengren and his colleagues in 1977. The purpose of that study was to construct standardized instruments for measuring various aspects of the symbol in the cultural environment of Sweden as conceived in a broad perspective so as to indicate society's predominant opinions, values, attitudes and beliefs, to wit, those cultural factors which interact with more material factors to contribute to the shaping of society. Like the Gerbner study, measurement was by means of several time series of cultural indicators, covering not only television but also the areas of domestic politics, foreign policy, religion, advertising, literature and sex role structures. The optimal objective was to relate the various time series to each other and to other relevant times series (economic, social and political) in the overall summary. Unlike Gerbner, Rosengren notes the distinction between indicators intended to measure actual conditions and those intended to measure experiences or attitudes towards those conditions. The physical standard of living (material resources) and the quality of life (personal relationships) do not seem to be the decisive factor in how one perceives his standard of living or the quality of his life. In other words, a person can be displeased while

in an apparent state of well-being, and happiness is possible in an apparent state of misfortune.

Even the most vocal and more involved critics of the Annenberg work have very good things to say about its distinctiveness. Newcomb (1978) describes the study as "most significant particularly in its contribution in the careful mapping of television's social world. It is also agreed that in current mass communication research, the Annenberg projects have strongly influenced research agendas and theoretical bases. Graduate students and professional researchers seldom launch a project about television without first seeking to relate it to the Annenberg results and/or adopting its paradigms (Hirsch, 1980). The innovativeness of the Gerbner-Gross projects is acclaimed for its foresight in the collection of data on a systematic, long-term basis and moving out of the laboratory and away from the closed experimental model. Poecke (1980) regards as persuasive Gerbner's global vision of the relation of media, culture and society. The most out-spoken critic of the Annenberg study, Professor Paul M. Hirsch of the University of Chicago, is full of praise for the efforts of Gerbner and his team to link content analysis empirically to audience perceptions. This he regards as an important and systematic contribution to communication research.

Criticisms

Hirsch decided in 1980 to do a reanalysis of the work of Gerbner and his colleagues in the area of "Cultivation Analysis". The purpose of this reanalysis was stated as "to open a scholarly dialogue on the virtues and defects of the Annenberg group's cultural indicators project and to point out a need of more and expanded research frameworks to study the role and impact of television in society (Hirsch, 1980)."

It will be important here to list a few of the major objections to and disagreements with the Annenberg projects. Paul Hirsch's disagreements are mainly on its methodological significance. First is that most of the findings reported by Gerbner and his group in their "Cultivation Analysis" as their strongest, "virtually evaporate" on exposure to multiple classification analysis. Second, Gerbner and his group failed to ensure sample comparability,

introduce multiple controls and report items where data do not support the argument for the television's cultivation of beliefs and attitudes. Third, on many of the items, the scores of "nonviewers are higher than those of television's "light, medium, heavy and/or extreme viewers". In other words, what small relationships there are between viewing and other variables are non-linear wherever people who watch no television turn out to be more fearful, alienate or anomic than those classified as "light", "medium" or "heavy" viewers. Fourth, it was surprising to find that the scores of non-viewers" on all of the items analysed for television viewers have not been reported or discussed in the Annenberg group's articles on the cultivation hypothesis. This, according to Hirsch, is not because non-viewers' responses were excluded in their analysis of the NORC and CPS data, rather because in both cases, "nonviewers" have been defined as "light viewers" and their scores coded into that category and besides the NORC data, properly analysed, contain very little which can be found to support cultivation analysis. The cultivation theory, Hirsch concludes, is incomplete, anomalous and needs further development.

Apart from this methodological gauntlet, a humanistic challenge was also put forward against the work of Gerbner and his team. Horace Newcomb (1978) asserts plausibly that from the humanistic angle, it would be both more cautious and useful to try to determine a meaning of violence as it is understood by the characters themselves in the fictional world of television. One could then compare the definition with others, commonly understood, in order to take the first interpretative step towards understanding Gerbner and Gross measure the incidence of violence as the impute have defined it, aesthetic and behavioural effects to the incidence so measured, and then interpret the world of television in the light of that effect. According to Newcomb, the Gerbner-Gross analysis operates, at least in its definitions, with a monosemic and univocal theory of symbols and this puts it into trouble.

Also, there is a leap from the measured incidence of violence (or any other dramatic element for that matter) to the assertion that the dramatic world is ruled by the single particular dramatic factor in which the researcher is most interested. Newcomb notes that the definitions, procedures and reports of results place the violence profile work of Gerbner firmly in the realm of transportation theory. Suggesting that research on the meaning of symbols must begin with the complex of previous meanings associated with such symbols, he cautions that researchers would have to recognize the

fact that for Americans, violence has had many meanings and uses. A symbolic analysis that takes this into consideration would thus begin with conventional "history of ideas" with the focus on the symbolic nature adding a dimension that approaches a sort of "archeology of ideas". There is a need to develop techniques for audience ethnography for the collection of data on long-term bases for understanding the variations of human response to art, and entertainment.

Another critic, Lue Van Poecke (1980) accuses Gerbner of an obsession for measures and numbers as a reassuring guarantee for truthfulness of the scientific discourse. He goes on,

It is not that one regards culture as a sacred cow that might choke on a computer programme, or that one considers the idea that culture can be measured economically as an infamous attack on the human richness and complexity of our culture. It is striking though that Gerbner's research strategy shows once more the idea that the concrete analysis should be quantifying results in the simplification of the theoretical problem.

Poecke observes that the starting point of the model is quantitative and this influences the whole theoretical base, weakening its interpretative power so as to provide figures for concrete analysis and so leaves so many problems unsolved. One of such problems is the unclarity of the system character of symbols; another is the exclusion of rhetoric from structural theory. He questions in conclusion,

"... how much value has an analysis of the television drama when one does not have insight into the specific logic that rules the story and the laws that characterize each genre?"

The Problem in Africa

In Africa, the problem is not only that of conceptualization but also that of process and administration of social research. Many areas of social research in Africa have until recently suffered in part from erratic conclusions, wild generalizations and foreign dominance. Sometimes quite erroneous results have been drawn from data analyzed by academics who have had little or no experience of Africa. Others have suffered patently contradictory conclusions (for revealing examples of both of these categories in one field - psychology - see, for example, the cases discussed in Wober, 1975). The extent to which the communication field in the Third World has been defined and dominated by researchers from

the West has been described as 'striking' by Hamelink (1976). He writes:

The need for Third World communication research has been (and continues to be) largely defined by the interests in operational effectiveness and audience feedback, conveniently leaving aside the gigantic problem of communication media carriers of Western domination. Questions about methodology, cultural differentiations and the validity of research schemes and models are often posed by scientists from the West.

'But this point of view,' continues Hamelink, 'seems to neglect the possibility that such generally valid schemes raise serious science-philosophical questions for critical research.'

The most disturbing area of field research in the Third World in communication studies happens to be diffusion studies, with agricultural and health extension work and are therefore accompanied by a messianic/cultural invasion. There should be a de-emphasis on 'communication and national development' approaches of the Wilbur Schramm, Daniel Lerner and Everett Rogers types which were carried out with paramount academic qualifications but not necessarily with social relevance.

In Africa, for example, communication research should emphasize case studies and observational approaches. Imported models should be put to the test first and carefully selected and adapted. There is, therefore, a dire need for the parallel development of indigenous technology of communication and concepts of national development. As in all Third World countries, four major problems militate against communication research in Africa.

The first is the lack of trained and locally socialized indigenous researchers. The second is the absence of developments in the area of innovative and adaptable research methodologies for communication problems. The third is the lack of awareness and response by policymakers and research institutes of the need for communication and social research in the process of development. The fourth is the inability of interested researchers to attract financial and moral support either nationally or internationally. So, for communication researchers in Africa, the story is one of despondency and endless frustration.

Africa also shares some of the field problems which have been noted for Asia. The use of pad and pencil or a tape recorder by the field worker militates against the assurance of confidentiality to respondents and therefore makes it difficult to collect field data,

especially where feedback requires free answers and depth responses. The question becomes: what kind of approaches, distinctly African, will aid in minimizing the disenchantment of interviewers and avoid the contamination of the responses?

Other problems that crop up are the unavoidable use of urban-oriented interviewers, the relative deprivation of respondents, the weakness of questionnaire as the best instrument for tapping accurate field responses, the unworkability of the sampling procedure which limits the power of generalizations and the official involvement of untrustworthy village leaders in the conducting of surveys.

The nebulous but dangerous underestimating of the importance of communication research and its implications for national planning led to an emergency meeting of researchers under the auspices of UNESCO in Nairobi in August 1981. The meeting was summoned 'to take stock of the communication research capabilities of the African region, to define research needs and priorities and to propose concrete actions for developing and strengthening regional capabilities' (UNESCO, 1981).

The meeting resolved that the interplay between communication processes and the forces of Africa's culture and history was bound to give communication in Africa a different profile from that in other regions of the world. As a result it was valid for communication researchers in Africa to arrive at different sets of problems and research priorities than those which interest their colleagues elsewhere. The meeting took four assumptions as the guidelines for its recommendations:

- (1) the fact that the overwhelming majority of Africans live in a rural setting;
- (2) the need to examine the role and effect of communication within the context of development objectives and activities;
- (3) the need to focus on different communication modalities and styles, values underlying different communication structures, constraints inherent or imposed on communication; and
- (4) the need to achieve regional self-reliance in the development of communication research. Recommendations or proposals for communication research activities were advanced as follows on these agreed areas:
 1. **Traditional (indigenous) communication** which will require:
 - (a) a comprehensive annotated bibliography on the use of traditional media needed to permit a meaningful

approach to the development of problem statements for research;

- (b) an inventory of folk media systems and structures showing their origins and purpose, their mode (language or process), their format, their technology, their adaptability or convertibility and their possible use for development; this is required on a basis of inter-African research collaboration so as to identify similarities and differences in folk media forms on the continent;
- (c) specific case studies of important folk media structures or processes, e.g. a case study of the village gongman;
- (d) studies which involve possible integration of folk media forms with modern mass media or group media; such studies could be centred around normal events including development campaigns which are regular features in most African countries;
- (e) effectiveness studies which would compare one folk media structure with another or with a mass medium, such as radio, against a folk media system or group of systems.

2. **Communication in rural areas** which will involve:

- (a) compiling an inventory of communication facilities in the rural areas, e.g., number of radio sets in an area and access to these, and to communal listening and viewing facilities;
- (b) discovering sources of information in rural areas, so as to ascertain the major primary sources of information on various topics for rural people, and the relative importance of sources such as radio, press, extension workers, government information officers, opinion leaders, traditional leaders and other categories of interpersonal channels;
- (c) assessing the perception and credibility of mass-media messages among the rural populations - reliability, trustworthiness and dependability of sources; correlation of rural and urban-oriented messages in terms of communality of interests;
- (d) examining broadcasting in rural areas to understand its structure for the rural clientele in content of programmes, media consumption patterns, audience reaction and media credibility;

- (e) studying rural newspapers in terms of comparative studies of content and relevance to community needs, their use in development campaigns and their attempts at being financially self-sufficient;
 - (f) evaluating problems of language policy and language use in the mass media of rural areas, the problem of giving fair and equal representation to local languages in the media versus the need for national integration;
 - (g) developing evaluation and effectiveness studies which measure the impact of media influences on target audiences.
3. **The concept of a New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO)** requires research which will examine some of the implications of NWICO, namely the existence of communication imperialism, media dependence, infringement of national sovereignty. It will also need to assess charges that NWICO is in fact a dubious concept in view of the absence of an **existing** international communication order. Priority concerns of research should be:
- (a) the international flow of information. In this area research would focus on the interchange of communication between the urban and rural sectors of the nation and on policy questions behind media decentralization, media language development and grassroots broadcasting;
 - (b) inter-African information flows with research tools examining the flow of information and ideas between different regions of the continent, e.g. between Anglophone and Francophone, between Francophone and Lusophone and between Lusophone and Anglophone countries with emphasis on news structures, movement of media personnel and political actors, slants of news reports in terms of attitude, time and space, movement of books and other media such as films and recorded software;
 - (c) the flow of information between Africa and the Diaspora (Black America, West Indies and Black Britain) along the lines indicated above;
 - (d) human carriers: communication arising from human movements found in migration, tourism and 'refugeeism' - studies would be interdisciplinary involving historians, anthropologists, sociologists, experts in

communication, psychologists and geographers, involving questions on the impact of such human movements on national character, culture and communication;

- (e) problems posed to communication in the training of African media personnel in non-African countries involving a profile on professionalism including the question of press freedom and information flow in the context of culture;
- (f) the 'Principles for a New World Information and Communication Order' as espoused by the UNESCO General Conference, Resolution No. 8, adopted the Belgrade on the McBride Commission and raised a number of issues which required research to assess the precise nature of the forces involved. These included:
 - the elimination of the negative effects of certain monopolies and excessive concentration;
 - the removal of internal and external obstacles to a free flow of information, and wider and better balanced dissemination of information and ideas;
 - a plurality of sources and channels of information;
 - the freedom of the press and information;
 - the capacity of developing countries to achieve improvement of their own situations, notably by providing their own equipment, by training their own personnel, by improving their infrastructures and by making their information and communication means suitable to their needs and aspirations;
 - respect for each people's cultural identity and the right of each nation to inform the world public about its interests, its aspirations and its social and cultural values;
 - respect for the right of the public, of ethnic and social groups and of individuals to have access to information sources and to participate actively in the communication process.

4 New communication technologies: their implications and impact. Because Africa's access to the new technologies is fraught with various problems, which are of interest to research, investigations would address the following problem areas:

- (a) surveys and case studies on the introduction of these technologies with a view to presenting a picture of the

- situation and making an in-depth evaluation of their social impact in particular well-defined contexts;
- (b) studies involving research, development and manufacture of appropriate communication hardware in Africa;
 - (c) technological, sociological and legal studies concerning the impact of external technologies, especially satellite communication, on the psychology and cultural identity of African peoples;
 - (d) studies on the use of 'big media' for regional integration and cultural education cooperation in Africa;
 - (e) detailed studies to provide information on the quality distribution, content and impact of audio and video cassettes, video discs, etc., and of similar programme recording and reproduction systems.

The direction of the above studies would explore:

- existing legislation concerning copyright and its applicability to new technologies;
- the consequences of the introduction of these media on the development of other media, e.g., cinema, television, etc.
- the feasibility of using these new media for educational purposes;
- the ways and means of integrating these new technologies into rural community development and cultural policies and grassroots communication programmes;
- problems related to the recording, preservation and presentation of oral tradition and other aspects of the indigenous cultural heritage, through these new media.

Conclusion:

There seem to be some meat in the criticisms of the Annenberg projects but the fact that projects have attracted worldwide attention is a fitting credit to its significance. The Annenberg team themselves have vigorously defended their strategy and adduced evidence to show the superiority of their methods and the replication and validation of their findings (Gerbner et al., 1980). Should one reanalysis be different from the other one can rest assured that the debate is continuous and more reanalyses are on the waiting list. The most important issue is the general application of the theoretical concepts of the Annenberg study. One is also impressed by the huge size of the study and the ingenuity in data handling. One cannot speak for the United States where television, according to Gerbner, "has become a key member of the

family" telling most of the stories to form a coherent analytical world in every US home. But for an African home television does not dominate the symbolic environment even in most of the cities, it rather competes poorly with other more effective symbols, therefore that concept might not in the meantime apply to our continent.

Nonetheless, Gerbner's general framework and methodology can be adapted just as was the case in Sweden, mentioned above, for the construction of cultural indicators and the explanation of some social realities. This writer has personally understudied the Annenberg projects and sees great merit in it and plans are at a stage to test some of its findings in the city of Lagos which could be described as "the media city of Nigeria".

The violence issue in Gerbner's reports seems to me a bit troublesome. As Halloran (1978) points out,

..... the Surgeon General's report is really cautious, in its conclusions (about television violence). It refers to a tentative indication of a casual relation between viewing violence on television and aggressive behaviour, operating only on some children who are predisposed to be aggressive and only in circumstances recognizing that both heavy viewing of violence and violent or aggressive behaviour could be joint products of some other common source, symptoms of wider condition.

Wober (1978) in challenging the cross-cultural implication of Gerbner's work insists that the thesis has not been demonstrated convincingly enough in the US and the effect exists neither there nor in Britain.

These observations point out the need for further work and more replications and reanalysis of the work by other researchers. Gerbner properly noted, in his reaction to Horace Newcomb's points, that criticisms of his work are welcome and he and his group are ready to give serious attention and to be "more precise, cautious and clear" in their further analysis. One feels impressed by the contribution of the Annenberg model to communication research. This is the kind of model required for building a bridge between the so-called administrative and critical concepts, the type that Blumler (1978) has invited, a model which in his words is neither thorough-goingly pragmatic nor fiercely Platonic (somewhat) Aristotelian in spirit, meliorative in aim and diagnostic and formative in approach." The debate continues. But for Africa, specifically, it is back to our roots.

NOTES:

1. Berelson was referring to pioneer researchers such as Hovland, Lasswell, Lazarfeld and Lewin.

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