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## On the Use of the Mass Media for Important Things

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## On the Use of the Mass Media for Important Things

### Abstract

The mass media are ranked with respect to their perceived helpfulness in satisfying clusters of needs arising from social roles and individual dispositions. For example, integration into the sociopolitical order is best served by newspaper; while "knowing oneself" is best served by books. Cinema and books are more helpful as means of "escape" than is television. Primary relations, holidays and other cultural activities are often more important than the mass media in satisfying needs.

Television is the least specialized medium, serving many different personal and political needs. The "interchangeability" of the media over a variety of functions orders televisions, radio, newspapers, books, and cinema in a circumplex. We speculate about which attributes of the media explain the social and psychological needs they serve best. The data, drawn from an Israeli survey, are presented as a basis for cross-cultural comparison.

### Disciplines

Communication | Social and Behavioral Sciences

# ON THE USE OF THE MASS MEDIA FOR IMPORTANT THINGS \*

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*Television is the least specialized medium, serving many different personal and political needs. The "interchangeability" of the media over a variety of functions orders televisions, radio, newspapers, books, and cinema in a circumplex. We speculate about which attributes of the media explain the social and psychological needs they serve best. The data, drawn from an Israeli survey, are presented as a basis for cross-cultural comparison.*

Early in the history of communications research (Cantril, 1942), an approach was developed to studying the "gratifications" which attract and hold audiences to the kinds of media and the types of content which satisfy their social and psychological needs. Although its career has been chequered, and it has been much overshadowed by the study of "campaigns" to change opinions and attitudes, this approach has persisted, grown in sophistication, and even undergone something of a revival lately.<sup>1</sup> What deserves emphasis, however, is that these studies of media "uses and gratifications" are not only interesting in themselves; but they are, ultimately, an effort to understand "effects."<sup>2</sup>

• This paper was prepared for the Symposium on the Effects of the Mass Media of Communication at the XXth International Congress of Psychology, held in Tokyo in August 1972. The data are from a national survey on the use of leisure in Israel under the direction of Elihu Katz and Michael Gurevitch, commissioned by the Ministry of Education and Culture. Additional analysis in the area of mass communication was supported by a grant from the Israel Foundation Trustees, a subsidiary of the Ford Foundation. The authors acknowledge with thanks the assistance and advice offered by Hanna Adoni, Gila Brand, Leah Isaac and Oved Cohen, fellow members of the project team, and by Professor Louis Guttman and Mrs. Tsiyona Peled. Helpful comments were offered by Dr. Akira Fujitake, of the NHK Theoretical Research Center, who served as discussant at the Tokyo Symposium, and by Professors Jay G. Blumler and Herbert Menzel.

<sup>1</sup> The early studies are essentially based on lists of functions suggested or confirmed by respondents. The best known examples are Cantril's (1942) analysis of quiz programs; Herzog's (1954) and Warner and Henry's (1948) studies of the functions of the daytime serial; Waples' *et al.* (1940) study of the functions of reading and Berelson's (1954) study of what the newspaper means to its readers. More recent studies compare the media use of different groups. See Riley and Riley (1951), and Johnstone (1961). Current studies are centered in a number of European countries as well as the U.S. See Blumler and McQuail (1968); McQuail et al. (1972); Emmett (1968); BBC Audience Research (1972); Rosengren and Win dahl (1972); Lundberg and Iulten (1968); Mendelsohn (1966); Stephenson (1966); Escarpit (1966); Robinson (1972); and Nordenstreng (1969).

<sup>2</sup> Contrary to what some people think, the recent studies of the immediate effects on children of seeing violence on the screen still find, by and large, that aggressive responses are confined to children who are previously disposed. Imitative effects, even here, are confined to the predisposed, to smaller children, and particularly to the laboratory situation. See Comstock, Rubinstein and Murray, eds. (1972). In an ingenious field experiment of the imitation of anti-social behavior seen on television, Milgram (1972) finds no effect among adolescents or adults.

This approach to mass communications is essentially functional (Wright, 1959). It argues that people bend the media to their needs more readily than the media overpower them; that the media are at least as much agents of diversion and entertainment as of information and influence. It argues, moreover, that the selection of media and content, and the uses to which they are put, are considerably influenced by social role and psychological predisposition.

Viewing the media in this way permits one to ask not only how the media gratify and influence individuals but how and why they are differentially integrated into social institutions. Thus, if individuals select certain media, or certain types of content, in their roles as citizens, or consumers, or church members, we gain insight into the relationship between the attributes of the media (real or perceived) and the social and psychological functions which they serve. When Richard Crossman (1968) suggests, for example, that print is the medium most appropriate to democracy—referring to the preference of print for issues over personalities, and the relative ease with which a reader can detach himself emotionally from what he is reading—he is suggesting an hypothesis concerning the compatibility between the attributes of a medium and the social institution of politics. The same thing holds true in the realm of the family when Donald Bogue (1962) suggests that print is the medium appropriate to the dissemination of family planning information—referring to the durability of print and, the privacy in which it is consumed. Jean Cazeneuve (1972) suggests that the attributes of television provide modern man with the means to satisfy his primitive needs for taboo, magic and religion. These are hypotheses, of course, and do not mean, necessarily, that people act in these ways; they are questions for empirical research.

These are the kinds of questions to which this paper is addressed. It reports, first, on the "needs" which different people consider important. It then clusters these needs both a priori and empirically. Next it assesses the relative contribution of the several mass media to gratifying each group of needs and asks whether persons differently "located" in society satisfy the same needs in different ways. Finally, it evaluates the contribution of the mass media to each type of need relative to the gratifications obtained from other, non-media sources.

The "needs" selected come from a variety of institutional areas—politics, family, religion and education—and from the areas of self-identity, self-growth and self-gratification. The media examined are radio, television, newspapers, books and film; and some effort is made to distinguish among the gratifications provided by the *attributes*, the characteristic *content*, and the social and physical *contexts* with which each medium is typically associated.<sup>3</sup> The population studied is a representative sample of 1,500 Israeli adults; but the intent of the study, substantively and methodologically, is to serve as a basis for extrapolation and cross-cultural comparison, hence its explicit self-consciousness about the assumptions and possible pitfalls in the procedures used.

### *Research Procedure*

We began by assembling as comprehensive a list as possible of social and psychological needs said to be satisfied by exposure to the mass media. This list, taken from the literature, was

<sup>3</sup> For example, Berelson's (1954) reference to the newspaper as a "tool for daily living" relates to content; while the "ritualistic and near-compulsive character" of newspaper reading appears to be an attribute. Similarly, radio provides "vicarious and identificatory participation in newsworthy happenings" on the one hand, and "companionship" on the other (Mendelsohn, 1964). While these functions are analytically distinguishable, it is not clear to what extent members of the audience conceive of the media separately from their characteristic content. One wonders whether different content would affect popular images of television as "escapist," newspapers as "informative" and books as providers of "culture"-functions which will be discussed below. We do not claim to have succeeded in separating these different aspects of the media in the questions which were addressed to respondents. The analysis, at a number of points, attempts to sort out the three types of functions, however.

supplemented by additional items, based on our own insights into the specific functions of the media in Israel. The list was then pilot-tested and subsequently reduced to thirty-five "need statements" of the form: "How important is it for you to spend time with your family?" or, "How important is it for you to understand the true quality of our leaders?" The list was put in an interview to the 1,500 respondents, and a three-pronged investigation was conducted for each of the "need statements."

An example will make the procedure clear: We asked, "How important is it for you to keep up with the way the government performs its functions?" Respondents who answered that this need was "very important" or "somewhat important" for them, were asked "How much does listening to the radio help you to keep up with the way the government performs its functions?" The same question was repeated five times—for radio listening, TV viewing, newspaper reading, book reading and movie going. (If a respondent said in the course of the interview that he was never exposed to a particular medium, he was not asked about the functions of that medium.) If the respondent's reply indicated that a given medium "does not help," interviewers were instructed to discover whether the medium simply does not help or whether it "hinders" satisfaction of the particular need. In this way we tried to take cognizance of the possible dysfunctions of each of the media as well. Finally, we asked, "Is there something else besides these media which helps you to keep up with the way the government performs its functions?" This last was an open-ended question.

In sum, our object was first to identify the felt needs of the population and subgroups within it. Then, for those respondents who answered that a given need was at least "somewhat important," we sought to identify the extent to which each of the five media functions to fulfill these needs.

Finally, we sought to compare the relative importance of the media with other means of fulfilling each need.

### *Facets for the Classification of Needs*

As has been noted, the list of needs came from the (largely speculative) literature on the social and psychological functions of the mass media. After compiling the list, we attempted to classify it. The scheme, consisting of three facets, is presented in Table 1; while Table 2 codes each item in terms of the scheme.<sup>4</sup>

Classifying the thirty-five needs according to their resource and mode (Facets 1 and 2), we form what seem to us five meaningful groupings.

1. Needs related to strengthening information, knowledge, and understanding—these can be called cognitive needs;
2. Needs related to strengthening aesthetic, pleasurable and emotional experience—or affective needs;
3. Needs related to strengthening credibility, confidence, stability, and status—these combine both cognitive and affective elements and can be labeled integrative needs;
4. Needs related to strengthening contact with family, friends, and the world. These can also be seen as performing an integrative function;
5. Needs related to escape or tension-release which we define in terms of the weakening of contact with self and one's social roles.

<sup>4</sup> The three facets taken together yield eighty-four possible combinations. The coding of the thirty-five needs by these three facets filled nineteen of the eighty-four three-dimensional boxes, with eight boxes containing two or more items. Thus, for example, the need "to understand what is going on in Israel and in the world" (item 1) is coded A1, B1, C4; the need to "learn how to behave among others" (item 23) is coded A3, B1, C3; the need to "escape from the reality of everyday life" (item 9) is coded A2, B4, C1. This' a priori coding of all items is reported in the left-hand column of Table 2 with minor amendments, as given in footnote 7 below.

Table 1. Classification of Media-related Needs

A. Mode	B. Connection	C. Referent
1. To strengthen	1. Information, knowledge, understanding	1. Self
2. To weaken	2. Gratification, emotional experience	2. Family
3. To acquire	3. Credibility, confidence, stability, status	3. Friends
	4. Contact	4. State, society
		5. Tradition, culture
		6. World
		7. Others, negative reference groups

The third facet, the frame of reference, when added, skews the list heavily toward two "frames of reference"—the self and the socio-political collectivity. This, however, may not be accidental, since most functions served by the media for the audience member are related either to the self or his relations with his social environment and society. Nonetheless, it is unfortunate that the scheme was distilled only after the list was completed and the larger study, of which the present report is a part, had gone into the field. Otherwise, we might have attempted to experiment with the missing elements.

#### *The Needs' Hierarchy of Importance*

We turn now to the question of how important these needs are. Listing them by their relative importance to respondents yields roughly three groups based on percentage cutting points. The list is headed by the need "to feel pride that we have a state" (item 8), which was deemed "very important" by 90 percent of the sample. Indeed, the first group of eight items (8, 1, 14, 6, 35, 33, 26, 18) which were endorsed by 70 percent or more of the respondents is dominated by what might be described as "collectivity-oriented" needs, pertaining to the state, the nation (or the national tradition) and the family. Only two of the eight needs in this group—"to raise my morale" and "to feel that I am utilizing my time well"—can be described as personal.

Lowest on the list is the need to "escape everyday reality" (item 9), which was rated as "very important" by only 16 percent of the respondents. Those who know Israel will not be surprised to learn that Israelis are high on national pride, familialism and reality orientation; while the counterpart of these attitudes is a somewhat restrained—some would even say puritanical—attitude toward self-indulgence.

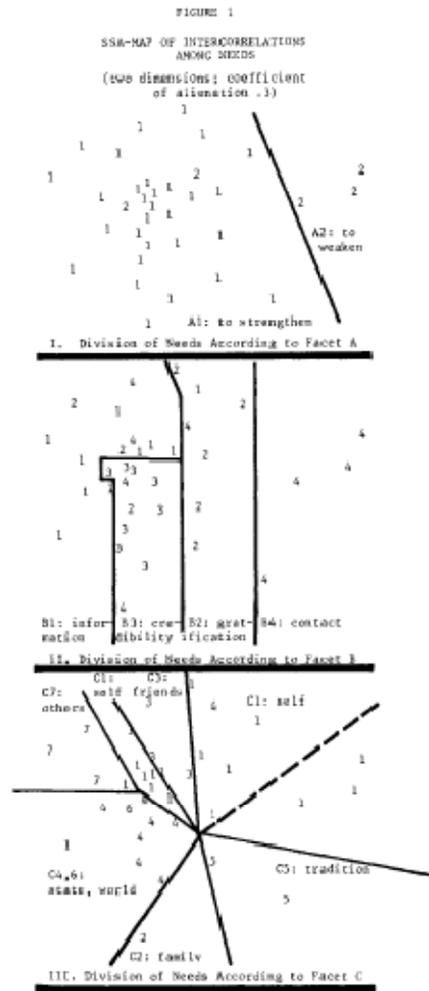
Background factors are, of course, related to the varying importance attributed to needs by respondents. Thus, the higher the level of education, the larger the number of needs rated as "very important." Of the thirty-five items on the list, twenty-seven won higher endorsements from respondents of middle and high education as compared with the lesser educated. Only two needs were found to be negatively correlated with education, i.e. a higher percentage of the least educated than of the others considered them "very important": these are the need to "get closer to Jewish tradition" (item 21) and to "strive for a higher standard of living" (item 32). Six other needs were related to level of education in a curvilinear way—respondents with medium

(elementary) education rated them as "very important" more often than either the lower or the higher educated.

There are similar connections with age. For example, the need to "learn how to behave among others," or the need to "get to know the true qualities of our leaders" are negatively related to age; that is to say, younger people attribute greater importance to these and other socializing needs than do older people. The same thing holds true for the group of needs associated with aesthetic and emotional experience.

*The Interrelationships among the Needs*

Our next step beyond merely viewing their relative importance, was to examine the items' interrelationships, as they emerge from the data. Specifically, we wanted to see the extent to which items coded a priori as similar actually cluster empirically.



To this end we performed a factor analysis and also mapped the matrix of intercorrelations, using Guttman's method for smallest space analysis (SSA).<sup>5</sup> The two-dimensional mapping is barely adequate according to Guttman's criteria, and the results appear as Figure 1.

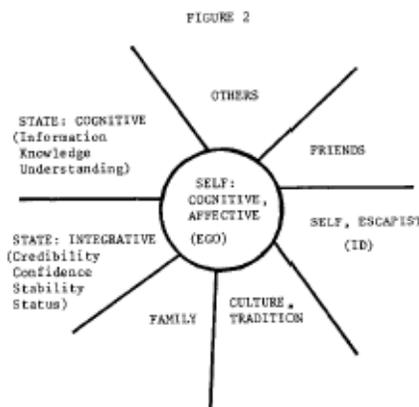
Close study of Figure 1 yields three observations:

1. Facet 1, the "mode," divides the map vertically, in that category A2, which denotes the "weakening" mode of media use and which includes items 4, 5, 7 and 9 (see Table 2), appears on the right hand side. Of this group of "escapist" items, only item 7 ("release tension"), is located at some distance and appears to differ from the others.<sup>6</sup>
2. Facet 2 also divides the map in roughly vertical chunks in that the left hand side of the map deals with cognitive matters (B1), and proceeds via the integrative concerns of B3 (credibility, confidence, stability, status) to affectivity (B2) and contact (B4).
3. But probably Facet 3, the frame of reference, constitutes the most important division of the map of intercorrelations. The spokes of a wheel divide the clustered frames of reference. Two of the clusters refer to self (C1). Viewed in conjunction with the other facets, the right-hand cluster appears to be a more affective self (B2-C1) and the left-hand cluster an integrative-cognitive one (B3-B1, C1). Going one step further, we can think of the "escapist" items (4, 5, 9) as representing the "id." In terms of the coding scheme, indeed, they might have been recorded as strengthening (A1), contact (B4) with one's *other* self rather than A2, B4, C1; and thus perhaps we could abandon the notion of "weakening" (and the first facet) altogether.

Viewing the map as a whole, and considering that the items dealing with self (especially "cognitive self") cluster near the center, we attempt in Figure 2 an idealized representation of the overall structure of interrelations among the thirty-five items.

### *The Functions of the Media*

Altogether, these representations of the empirical intercorrelations among the needs appear to support the a priori classification. The next step is to see whether the different clusters of needs



<sup>5</sup> Briefly, this method graphs the distance between all items in the matrix of intercorrelations as an inverse function of the size of the correlations; the higher the correlation between any two items, the smaller the distance between them in the map. A number of sources of distortion are possible; e.g. two items may fall close to one another, though they are not highly correlated, due to the similarity of their relationships with all other items. More basic is the problem of whether the matrix of correlation is well described in a two (or three) dimensional space. For details see Guttman, (1968). The factor analysis-the starting point for which is the same matrix of intercorrelations used in the Smallest Space Analysis (SSA)-is not presented here. The results obtained correspond rather closely. Throughout, the correlations are monotonic.

<sup>6</sup> It has therefore been reclassified for subsequent analysis; see the following footnote for details. This, taken together with the findings for the different media which serve the "escapist" needs (see Table 2 and discussion in text), raise further questions concerning the dimensionality of the concept of escape. *Note*, too, the large proportion of the population which affirms tension release as an important need, compared to the minorities agreeing to the other "escapist" needs (items 4, 5, 9).

are differently served by the mass media. Table 2 gives the rank order of "helpfulness" attributed to the five media for each of the thirty-five needs, now divided into fourteen clusters.<sup>7</sup>

Consider first the items concerned with self (C1). Here the media perform different functions depending on Facets A and B. Thus, for strengthening one's knowledge or understanding of self (A1, B1, C1) the key medium is the book, and the least important is the film. But the film is the key medium to enjoying oneself (A1, B2, C1) followed by television and the book. In this respect, the newspaper functions least well as a perceived source of enjoyment. As for the need for self-confidence, stability and self-esteem (A1, B3, C1), the newspaper is the most important medium followed by radio and television, books and films.<sup>8</sup>

The striking thing about these findings is their consistency. The theoretical groupings of needs yield almost perfect regularities in the rank order of media helpfulness: Books cultivate the inner self; films and television give pleasure; and newspapers, more than any other medium, give self-confidence and stability. The latter finding seems best interpreted in association with the idea of stability and reinforcement: it gives the day its framework (item 19); it tells me that others think as I do (item 11); it helps me feel influential (item 30).

This consistency in mass media use is not evident in the "escapist" items (A2, B4, C1). Television is judged most helpful for killing time (item 4) followed closely by newspapers and books; films and radio are considered somewhat less helpful for killing time, though, on the whole the media seem to most almost equally useful for this end. The need "to overcome loneliness when I am alone at home" (item 5) obviously puts film at a disadvantage and may do the same for TV, because broadcasting is limited to a few evening hours when in most homes loneliness least prevails. But these two items are less frankly escapist than the need to "escape from reality" (item 9) which is best accomplished through books and films. Notice the similarity of this latter pattern to that of the media which serve the need "to release tension" (item 7) , an item which seemed, a priori, "escapist" but found its way, empirically, to the group of items whose subject is self-gratification (A1, B2, C1). The dimensions of the concept of "escape" obviously require further clarification (Katz and Foulkes, 1962). These data suggest, at least, that managing time on one's hands is rather different from getting away from it all.

These data are also regular in the area of the individual's relationship with state and society. Regardless of whether it is one of understanding or pride, confidence or connectedness, the rank-order of media helpfulness is uniform. Newspapers come first, followed by radio, then television. Books and film are far behind.

This pattern also holds for understanding others, perhaps particularly negative reference groups—Arabs, those who disagree with government policy, and those who disagree with me

<sup>7</sup> Some minor revisions of typology are introduced here. First, we group category A3 ("to acquire") with category A1 ("to strengthen") to reduce the total number of different groupings. Second, we have introduced "corrections" in our coding of three items based on the findings of the SSA and factor analyses. The first of these is in item 7, "to release tension." Originally coded as an "escapist" item (together with items 4, 5, 9) the empirical analysis places it as A1, B2, C1 (to strengthen gratification of self). Item 29, "to feel that I am not always right" has been displaced from A2, B3, C1 (to weaken stability of self) to the present A1, B1, C7 (to strengthen understanding of others). Similarly, item 24, "to participate in discussions with friends," was formerly A1, B4, C3 (to strengthen contact with friends) and is now A1, B1, C3 (to strengthen knowledge of friends).

<sup>8</sup> It will be recalled that questions about the media were put only to those who said that a given need was at least "somewhat important" to them, and that questions about each medium were put only to persons who had minimal accessibility to the particular medium. Thus, persons who did not view television (about 60 percent of the population owned sets at the time of the study; another 25 percent had regular access) were not asked to rate television's helpfulness in achieving any of the needs, just as questions about the helpfulness of books were put only to book readers (22 percent reported that they do not read books at all). In other words, the percentages in Table 2 are based on the total number exposed to each medium; and the base varies, therefore, from medium to medium. The media are then ranked by the percent which considered each medium "very helpful" in achieving the need in question.

(items 31, 28, 29, respectively). It will be recalled that strengthening one's own self-confidence and stability also fit this pattern in the sense that newspapers, radio and television came

Table 2. The Helpfulness of the Media in Satisfying "Important" Needs

Code	Needs	Percentage Claiming Need is "Very Important"	Ranking of Media by Percentage Claiming Medium is "Very Helpful" for Satisfying Need*
A1,B1,C1	Strengthen knowledge, understanding with self		
	(34) To know myself	66	B (31) N (18) R (15) TV(14) C(13)
	(27) To develop good taste	61	B (49) TV(37) R (35) N (34) C(33)
	(22) To want to study	56	B (63) N (39) R (28) TV(27) C(10)
A1,B2,C1	Strengthen gratification, experience with self		
	(35) To raise my morale	77	C (59) TV(52) B (49) R (47) N(34)
	(13) To experience beauty	64	C (55) B (52) TV(48) R (30) N(23)
	(7) To release tension	61	C (51) B (47) TV(43) N (36) R(35)
	(3) To be entertained	54	C (61) TV(58) R (48) B (39) N(32)
	(16) To re-experience events in which I was involved	32	B (36) TV(29) R (27) C (26) N(26)
A1,B3,C1	Strengthen credibility, stability, status with self		
	(33) To feel that I am utilizing my time well	72	N (47) B (46) TV(30) R (30) C(24)
	(19) To order my day	63	N (19) R (17) TV(13) R (12) C(7)
	(32) To strive for a higher standard of living	54	N (53) TV(32) C (27) R (26) B(26)
	(30) To feel that I am influential	47	N (20) R (16) TV(15) B (15) C(9)
	(11) To feel that others think as I do	36	N (44) R (29) TV(27) B (24) C(14)
A2,B4,C1	Weaken contact with self		
	(5) To overcome loneliness when I am alone at home	37	N (63) B (62) R (62) TV(56) C(29)
	(4) To kill time	16	TV(53) N (52) B (50) C (47) R(44)
	(9) To escape from the reality of everyday life	16	B (45) C (44) TV(31) R (25) N(25)
A1,B4,C2	Strengthen contact with family		
	(14) To spend time with the family	85	TV(36) C (23) R (17) N (13) B (8)
A1,B1,C3	Strengthen knowledge, information with friends		
	(24) To participate in discussions with my friends	63	N (56) B (42) TV(37) R (37) C(24)
	(23) To learn how to behave among others	52	B (40) R (35) N (30) TV(29) C(25)
A1,B4,C3	Strengthen contact with friends		
	(10) To spend time with friends	55	C (31) TV(21) N (13) B (11) B(8)

continuation of Table 2

A1,B1,C4	<u>Strengthen knowledge, information, understanding with society, State, world</u>						
	(1) To understand what goes on in Israel and in the world	87	N (91) R (77) TV(59) B (30) C(11)				
	(26) To know what the world thinks about us	70	N (85) R (72) TV(65) B (28) C(18)				
	(25) To keep up with the way the government performs its functions	60	N (84) R (71) TV(66) B (21) C(13)				
	(15) To get to know the true qualities of our leaders	50	N (69) TV(57) R (53) B (24) C(12)				
	(2) To obtain useful information for daily life	47	N (73) R (57) TV(35) B (19) C(8)				
A1,B3,C4	<u>Strengthen credibility, stability, status with society, State</u>						
	(8) To feel pride that we have a State	90	N (68) R (61) TV(56) B (37) C(22)				
	(6) To have confidence in our leaders	77	N (70) R (58) TV(53) B (19) C(10)				
	(12) To feel satisfied with the way of life in Israel as compared with other countries	57	N (52) R (40) TV(40) B (29) C(28)				
A1,B4,C4	<u>Strengthen contact with society, State</u>						
	(17) To feel that I am participating in current events	46	N (58) TV(50) R (49) B (26) C(17)				
A1,B2,C5	<u>Strengthen experience with culture, tradition</u>						
	(18) To be in a festive mood	70	TV(41) R (36) N (28) C (22) B(19)				
A1,B4,C5	<u>Strengthen contact with culture, tradition</u>						
	(21) To get closer to Jewish tradition	51	B (38) TV(31) R (30) N (27) C(9)				
A1,B1,C7	<u>Strengthen knowledge, information, understanding of others</u>						
	(28) To understand those who disagree with government policy	41	N (74) R (55) TV(50) B (21) C(11)				
	(29) To feel that I am not always right	41	N (40) R (28) TV(25) B (25) C(11)				
	(31) To understand how the Arabs feel	33	N (59) TV(43) R (42) B (28) C(13)				
A1,B2,C7	<u>Strengthen gratification, experience with others</u>						
	(20) To participate in the experiences of other people	20	B (37) TV(34) N (33) R (29) C(28)				

\*B = Books; TV = Television; R = Radio; N = Newspaper; C = Cinema.

first. But note that for self-confidence, books play a more important role than they do in the political arena.

Connections with the family (A1, B4, C2) are best fulfilled by television, as expected, just as connections with friends (A1, B4, C3) are best fulfilled by movies. Note that the need "to participate in discussions with my friends" (item 24) is served, first of all, by newspapers and then by books, with television and radio in third place. Here is a difference between medium and message. It is the medium of film or television which contributes to friendship and familial solidarity (cf. Johnstone 1962), but the content of conversation is contributed by newspapers and books. It is more than a little surprising, one should add, to find that people do not give television as much credit as it intuitively seems to deserve as a topic of conversation.

### *Division of Labor Among Media*

Summarizing from a different point of view, we note that the newspaper comes first in satisfying nineteen of the thirty-five needs. It is the most helpful in fulfilling the needs to strengthen both information about and confidence in society. At the same time it satisfies such personal needs as overcoming loneliness or strengthening stability and confidence in the state. It should be noted, however, that the newspaper's primacy may at least in part be a function of the specific socio-political bias of our list. On the other hand, as we have argued, perhaps it truly reflects the range of functions which the newspaper performs (cf. Edelstein, 1972), especially in a country like Israel.

The importance of the printed media for Israelis is demonstrated by the fact that the book is the medium second best able to satisfy needs. Its main uses are to satisfy such cognitive and affective personal needs as to "develop good taste," to "know myself," to "want to study," and to "re-experience events in which I was involved."<sup>9</sup> At the same time books were deemed helpful in escaping "from the reality of everyday life" and getting "closer to Jewish tradition."

Despite its rapid diffusion and popularity during the time of the study, television turned out to be "most helpful" for three needs only; "to kill time," "to spend time with the family" and "to be in a festive mood" (which, as we have seen, has also been perceived as a family-oriented need). The discrepancy between the attention lavished on this medium and its rather limited "uses" may again be the result of the structure of our list, or the fact that exposure to television has not yet assumed a functional importance commensurate with its central position in the leisure time of the Israeli population.

A similar phenomenon occurs with radio. Despite its almost total penetration, not a single need on the list was best served by radio. It came second in serving self-integrative needs, and cognitive and integrative needs related to state and society.

Finally, and not surprisingly, going to the movies was found to serve such personal affective needs as "to be entertained," "to raise my morale," and "to release tension," and the social need "to spend time with friends."

### *The Effect of Education on Uses of the Media*

Since we know that the various needs differ in importance to persons of different levels of education, it is imperative to ask whether educational level is also associated with different patterns of media use. Thus, even though our analysis of media use relates, in each case, only to those persons for whom a given need is important, it may well be that persons of different levels of education rank the helpfulness of the media differently with respect to the same need.

Analysis of media preferences by educational level indicates that the printed media—the book and the newspaper—assume increased importance with increased education, and the electronic media decline in importance. The reverse is true for the lesser educated, who find the electronic and visual media relatively more helpful for satisfying needs. Television, especially, satisfies not only personal-affective needs, as we have seen, but such cognitive needs as the need for information about society and the world, and the wish to study. Television, in that sense, is an "easy way of reading."

<sup>9</sup> This function was probably reinforced by the fact that during the period in which the field work was carried out the Israeli book market was flooded with books reporting the Six Day War.

More important for our purpose, however, is whether the *ranking* of the relative helpfulness of the media with respect to a given need varies by educational level. Here we find far less difference among the educational groups. In six of the fourteen clusters of needs, virtually identical rankings were given by the three educational groups; for example, in needs having to do with understanding, or feeling confident in matters of state, the ranking of the media for all groups was newspaper, radio, television, books and films. For five additional need clusters, the three educational groups ranked the media similarly. The major difference among groups with respect to these latter clusters and the three remaining for which there was a low level of concordance, reflects the differing importance assigned to television and books, as has already been noted. Television is decreasingly helpful with increased education, while books are increasingly helpful. A clear example of this can be seen in the cluster of needs defined as "strengthen [ing] gratification, [and] experience of self," as Table 3 reveals.

The table shows clearly how television moves down and the book moves up the educational ladder. But while this represents an important trend, the rule, as we have noted, is for similarities of rankings to outnumber the differences. In other words, the individuals who indicate that a given need is important to them tend to evaluate the relative helpfulness of the several media in much the same way, regardless of their educational level.

### *SSA Again*

Having established which media are good for what purposes, we wish to look again at an SSA mapping, this time to examine the extent to which persons who name a medium in response to a given need tend to name the same medium in response to another, or conversely, whether people tend to be so highly selective in associating media and needs that low intercorrelations occur with respect to the usefulness of the same medium for different needs. We may find needs equally well served by different media and needs for which one medium but not another are deemed useful.

To answer these questions, we selected eight items from the list of needs—four each from the two polar extremes of the matrix of intercorrelations which formed the basis for Figure 1. Four of these items relate to strengthening information and contact with state and society (items 1, 15, 25, 26: see Table 2), and four relate to self indulgence (items 3, 4, 5, 7). We intentionally chose these two groups since they represent the two major functions performed by the media—connection with society, and gratification of self—and because they give equal weight to the two sets of functions. Had we taken all thirty-five needs—which, as has been noted, may unduly weight the socio-political area—the analysis we are about to undertake would have been biased by the roles ascribed to the media in the socio-political area.

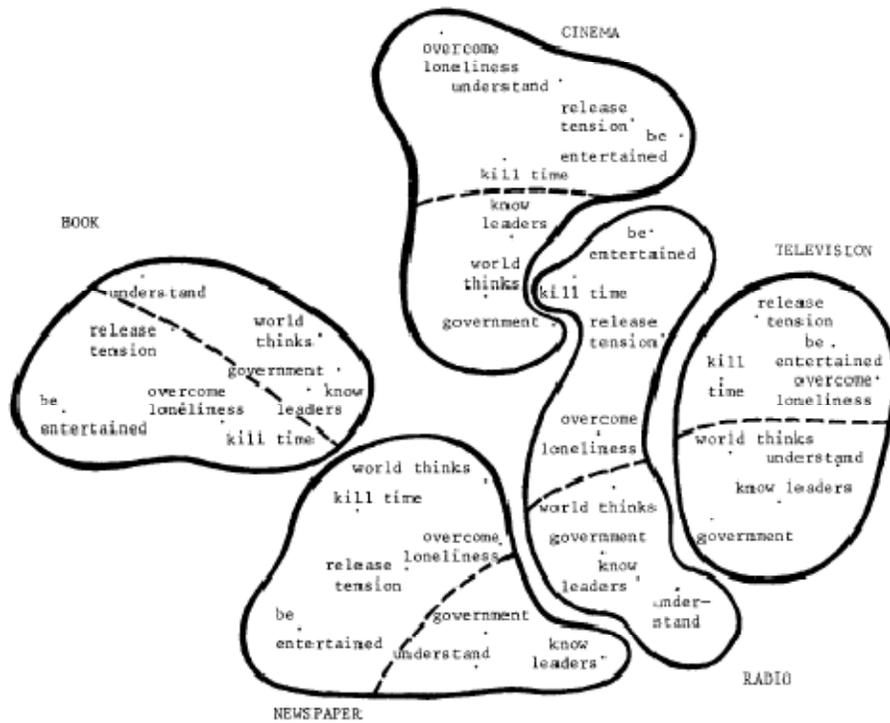
Accordingly, we constructed a matrix of intercorrelations based on the evaluations of the usefulness of each of the five media for each of the eight items. Plotting these intercorrelations by means of the SSA technique (Figure 3) we can now turn to see how the map is organized: If media preferences predominate—that is, if a person who says books help him "to get to know the true qualities of our leaders" also tends to say that books help him "to escape from the reality of everyday life"—then we shall find clusters of correlations organized by media. If, on the other hand, we find that a given need, when it is considered important, is served equally well by all media, we shall find needs at the center of correlational, clusters.

Table 3. Ranking of the Helpfulness of the Media in "Strengthening Gratification, Experience with Self" According to Education

Low Education	Television	Films	Radio	Newspaper	Book
Medium Education	Films	Television	Book	Radio	Newspaper
High Education	Book	Films	Television	Radio	Newspaper

FIGURE 3

SSA-I MAP OF THE MEDIA'S HELPFULNESS FOR SATISFYING 8 NEEDS  
(two dimensions; coefficient of alienation .3)



The map shows both patterns, although one is somewhat stronger than the other. The first pattern shows each medium with a distinct area of its own in which evaluations of the usefulness of that medium for all eight needs clearly cluster. Consider books, for example. Respondents who say that books are very helpful (or not very helpful) for killing time also say that books help (or don't help) in understanding leaders. Moreover, the correlations among the declared usefulness of books over the eight different needs tend to be higher than the correlation among books and the other media fulfilling the same need. This is what makes for the relative isolation of each medium from the others. Some are more isolated: books and television, are the best examples; the others tend to spill over into each other rather more.

But there is a second pattern in this map, too, albeit less visible. Each of the spaces which enclose a medium can be subdivided into two. Half the space, approximately, groups the political items; the other half groups the personal items. In other words, within each cluster which forms about a given medium, the content areas form subclusters, showing that those who say that

television is useful for getting to know one's leaders, for example, are more likely to say that it is also useful for understanding events at home and abroad than that it is useful, say, for reducing tension.

As soon as one notices this fact, another becomes apparent. The political uses of radio, television, and newspapers border on each other. The political uses of films and books are contiguous with each other, but not with those of radio, television, and news

Table 4. . Average Correlation of Helpfulness of Each Medium for All Pairs of Eight Needs: How "Specialized" Are the Media?

Television	.66
Books	.53
Radio	.52
Cinema	.43
Newspaper	.42

papers. The personal uses of radio and television are adjacent. These patterns suggest that (1) both political and personal uses of radio and television are closely allied; (2) the uses of newspapers for political needs are related to the political uses of radio and television, but the personal uses of the newspaper are rather different; (3) books and films are akin in their political uses (or nonuses), but function differently for the self.

Further information can be obtained from the map (or, more exactly, from the matrix of intercorrelations on which the map is based) by averaging the correlations of the helpfulness of each medium for all pairs of needs (twenty-eight in all) and comparing the averages thus obtained.<sup>10</sup> A high average indicates that the medium is more diffuse—that is, that it is considered useful for satisfying both socio-political and personal needs. A low average indicates the "specificity" of the medium, that is, its relevance to a limited and rather homogeneous set of functions. The averaging process yields the figures in Table 4.

These data suggest that television is the most diffuse medium, that is, its users apply it to a wide range of functions; whereas movies and newspapers are the most "specific" media. Books and radio fall in between. These findings also seem to confirm some aspects of popular images of these media, such as the almost universal attractiveness of television for television fans, and the more specific informational function of the newspaper.

Next, we looked at the interchangeability among the media. In other words, we examined the degree to which pairs of media perform similar functions, and therefore function as alternatives. This "index of interchangeability" was computed by averaging the correlations which signify the extent to which media pairs perform similarly for all eight needs. Table 5 presents these averages in matrix form.

The data of Table 5 reveal that television and radio are highly interchangeable, while television and books are least so. In other words, people who say that television is helpful (or not) for each need, are very likely to say that radio is helpful (or not) for the same needs. No such shadowing appears for television and books.

<sup>10</sup>In this and the next table, means were preferred to other measures of central tendency precisely because they permit extreme cases to exert disproportionate influence.

Next to radio, the best substitute for television is the cinema (.57). The visual entertainment function which both media serve apparently leads to this moderate degree of interchangeability. The documentary function of television also makes it somewhat interchangeable with newspapers.

Table 5. Matrix of Average Correlations of Helpfulness of Each Pair of Media for All Eight Needs: Which Media Are Interchangeable with Which?

Media	Television	Radio	Newspapers	Books	Cinema
Television	--	.71	.53	.26	.57
Radio		--	.69	.38	.49
Newspapers			--	.53	.37
Books				--	.51
Cinema					--

This analysis of the interchangeability of television and the other four media provides which shows each medium to be most interchangeable with its two closest neighbors.<sup>11</sup> Thus, radio's best substitutes are television, on the one hand, and newspapers on the other. The newspaper's best substitutes are radio and books. Books are most interchangeable while the best substitutes for cinema are books and television—although it should be noted that books and cinema are more insulated than the other three media.

These relationships among the media appear to reflect the complex ways the media overlap. Thus, the media are classifiable first by their mode of transmission—print versus electronics. Second, they divide according to their mode of reception: television and cinema are received by watching and listening, radio by listening only, newspapers and books by reading. Third, as we have seen, the media differ in the range of their content (documentary, entertainment or both) and consequently in the needs they serve. Thus, for example, books share the element of print with newspapers and the element of entertainment with the cinema. Radio shares both range of content and mode of transmission with television and the documentary coverage of the newspaper.

That television and newspapers are radio's best companions is of interest in the light of the findings reported in Table 6 which showed that people name television as helpful (or not) for various needs but that their use of the newspaper is more restricted. It is remarkable that radio is various needs but that their use of the newspaper is more restricted. It is remarkable that radio is the best substitute for both the most specialized (television) and the least specialized (newspapers) media. Respondents apparently see it both as a substitute for the versatility of television and as the medium that comes closest to fulfilling the newspaper's documentary role.

### *What Else Is Helpful?*

Although the needs we began with were chosen for their presumed relationship to the mass media, it is still an empirical question whether they are also served by other means, and whether the mass media or these other means are more helpful. In other words, even for what we have

<sup>11</sup> The circumplex is also discernible in Figure 3 where the five media fall into the same circular order.

described as media-related needs, functional alternatives to the media surely exist. To find out what these might be we asked, what, if anything, the respondent found more helpful than the mass media for satisfying each need. Our question was open ended, and the list of "functional alternatives" was based on the respondents' answers. It totalled seventeen items, ranging from family and friends to sleep and drugs.

Table 6 presents the findings. Perhaps the first thing to notice is that though the list includes only media-related needs, the media served no single need exclusively. Indeed, only two items mobilized as many as 40 percent of respondents to claim that "nothing else besides the mass media" helps. In other words, even here other sources of gratification taken together equal the mass media in importance. Thus, even media-related needs must be viewed in the larger context of human needs of which they form a small segment, and against the variety of means by which these needs can be and are, satisfied.

Viewing the table again we note that, relatively speaking, the highest percent of endorsements for the mass media as "most helpful" for satisfying a need goes to the group of socio-politically-related needs, both on the cognitive level (strengthening knowledge, information, understanding) and on the integrative level (strengthening confidence and stability). Thus, for example, of those who described as important the need to "know what the world thinks about us," 43 percent claimed that nothing else besides the media helps satisfy that need. A slightly lower, though still quite high vote for the media was given for such sociopolitical needs as to "have confidence in our leaders," "feel satisfied with the way of life in Israel as compared with other countries," "feel that I am participating in current events" and "get to know the true qualities of our leaders." The dominant role of the media in overcoming distance is obvious too. It helps people to understand opposition groups (that is, "understand how the Arabs feel" and "understand those who disagree with government policy"). What is surprising, perhaps, is how often interpersonal communication (friends and lectures) competes with the mass media even here.

For personal needs, the role of the media declines; and face to face contacts, primarily with friends, become more salient. This is especially true of such needs as "to know myself," "to be entertained," "to raise my morale," "to feel that others think as I do" and "to feel that I am influential." Friends are thus the main support for personal confidence and security, while they are also the best outlet for tension and source for "learn[ing] how to behave among others." It is interesting to note that for most of these needs the family, though still mentioned often, lags far behind "friends."

Public lectures are very important in satisfying socio-political needs. They seem a fairly popular substitute for functions commonly attributed to the mass media. Likewise, national and religious holidays serve such integrative functions as the need "to feel pride that we have a state," "to be in a festive mood" or "to get closer to Jewish tradition."

Table 6. Primary Sources of Need Satisfaction

Code	Needs	Is There Anything that Helps More Than the Mass Media? (Open-ended Question)			
		No, Percentage Saying Nothing Helps More than Media	Yes, Percentage Saying Something Helps More (most frequent mentions)*	Yes, Percentage Saying Something Helps More (other mentions)**	Percentage Don't Know or "Nothing Helps"
A1,B1,C1	<u>Strengthen knowledge, understanding with self</u> (34) To know myself	18	Friends 26 Family 15	20	21
	(27) To develop good taste	26	Activi- 20 ties 12 Friends 12	22	20
	(22) To want to study	23	Lecture 31 Work 8	19	19
A1,B2,C1	<u>Strengthen gratification, experience with self</u> (35) To raise my morale	15	Friends 23 Family 18	34	8
	(13) To experience beauty	20	Activi- 26 ties 9 Hobbies 9	30	15
	( 7) To release tension	15	Friends 18 Sport 11	39	10
	( 3) To be entertained	16	Friends 27 Activi- 17 ties 17	33	7
	(16) To re-experience events in which I was involved	21	Friends 36 Family 11	14	18
A1,B3,C1	<u>Strengthen credibility, stability, status with self</u> (33) To feel that I am utilizing my time well	23	Work 15 Family 10	34	18
	(19) To order my day	24	Work 20	26	30
	(32) To strive for a higher standard of living	25	Work 15 Friends 15	19	26
	(30) To feel that I am influential	15	Friends 32 Family 18	17	18
	(11) To feel that others think as I do	23	Friends 44 Family 8	8	17
A2,B4,C1	<u>Weaken contact with self</u> ( 5) To overcome loneliness when I am alone at home	25	Hobbies 15 Friends 12	39	16
	( 4) To kill time	17	Friends 16 Hobbies 10	33	16
	( 9) To escape from the reality of everyday life	25	Friends 15 Sport 7	28	18

continuation of Table 6

A1,B1,C7	<u>Strengthen knowledge, information, understanding of others</u>				
(28)	To understand those who disagree with government policy	35	Friends 27 Lecture 18	4	16
(29)	To feel that I am not always right	19	Friends 42 Family 13	10	16
(31)	To understand how the Arabs feel	33	Lecture 23 Friends 17	9	18
A1,B2,C7	<u>Strengthen gratification, experience with others</u>				
(20)	To participate in the experiences of other people	22	Friends 43 Family 10	11	14

\* "Activities" refers to cultural activities of all kinds (theater, cinema, etc.); "Holidays" includes religious and/or national holidays. Item 18 (A1,B4,C5), "to be in a festive mood," is served equally by religious holidays (24%) and national holidays (22%). Religious holidays exclusively are named for item 21 (A1,B4,C5), "to get closer to Jewish tradition."

\*\* Detailed percentages are given for the two most predominant "functional alternatives." The rest, with lower percentage, have been lumped together as "other."

## Conclusions

The mass communication media are thought to satisfy a variety of needs arising from social roles and psychological dispositions. These needs, typically, take the form of (1) strengthening or weakening, (2) a connection—cognitive, affective, integrative (3) with some referent—self, friends, family and tradition, social and political institutions, others. A group of needs selected for study was found to cluster empirically in these terms.

The object of the study was to identify the uses made of the media in gratifying these clusters of social and psychological needs. The aim, ultimately, is to explore the relationships between the attributes of the media and the functions they serve.

Methodologically, the study rests on the assumption that people are aware of their needs and able to identify their sources of satisfaction. Respondents were asked, in an interview, to indicate the extent to which each of five media helped in gratifying each of the needs in question, and to assess the helpfulness of the media relative to other sources of need-satisfaction.

Substantively, the principal findings are as follows:

1. For all needs examined, the non-media sources (combined) were deemed more gratifying than the mass media. Friends, holidays, lectures and work were often said to be more important sources of gratification.
2. The greater the "distance" from a referent—social, physical or psychological the more important the role of the media. Yet, interpersonal communication—formal and informal—competes even in areas relating to political leadership and negative reference groups.
3. Certain comparative processes—such as striving for a higher standard of living, or satisfying oneself that one's time is well spent or that one's country is a good place to live in—seem well served by the media. So are "escapist" needs. On the whole, however, friends are more important than the mass media for needs having to do with self-gratification, even the need "to be entertained!"
4. For individuals who say that matters of state and society are important to them, the rank-order of media usefulness in serving these needs is entirely consistent, regardless of the

respondent's educational level. Newspapers are the most important medium, followed by radio, then television. Books and films fall far behind. Altogether, the centrality of the newspaper for knowledge and integration in the socio-political arena cannot be overstated.

5. Needs having to do with self are associated with different kinds of media, depending on the specific functions involved. Knowing oneself is best served by books; enjoying oneself is associated with films, television and books; while the newspaper contributes to self-regulation and self-confidence. The individuated character of book-reading, the social character of film and television viewing, and the simultaneity of exposure to the newspaper apparently link these media with the needs they serve best.
6. In satisfying needs associated with self, books are more helpful for the better educated; while television is more helpful for the lesser educated. Particularly in the area of self-gratification, books and television exchange places as educational level increases.
7. Television is useful for killing time, but not as a medium of "escape." Its presence at the hearth apparently prevents it from becoming an insulating agent against the demands of the ego and of others.
8. Film and television, respectively, help maintain friendship and family solidarity. However, the topics of conversation which these relationships engender are provided by newspapers and books.
9. Television is the least specialized of the media: persons who say that it is helpful for one set of needs tend to say that it is helpful for the other. The cinema and newspaper are most specialized in this sense: the one serves self-gratification and sociability, the other, participation in the socio-political order.
10. An examination of the media for their "interchangeability"—that is, for the extent to which they serve similar functions—reveals a circular relationship whereby each medium (as a point on the circle) is most similar to its two nearest neighbors. The circle goes from television to radio, newspapers, books, and cinema, back to television. These overlapping functions may be explained in terms of shared technical attributes, overlapping content, and the social contexts in which the media are consumed.

Finally, it should be noted that media-related needs are not, by and large, generated by the media. Most predate the emergence of the media and, properly, ought to be viewed within the wider range of human needs. As such, they have always been, and remain, satisfied in a variety of ways, most quite unrelated to the mass media. The surprising thing is to realize the extent and range of the media's encroachment on the "older" ways of satisfying social and psychological needs.

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