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The work of Elihu Katz: conceptualizing media effects in context

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The work of Elihu Katz

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Introduction: themes and debates in media research

Over the past four decades, Elihu Katz has made a major contribution to our understanding of the workings of mass communication by analyzing mass media institutions, contents, processes and effects in their social and political contexts. Katz has taken an interdisciplinary and original approach, conducting influential research on an interconnected set of issues which have strongly influenced the agenda for media research, such as relations between individuals, groups and media institutions, the selective and active television viewer, the diffusion of innovation, media effects and media imperialism, among others.

This article offers a critical reading of Katz's work, locating it as part of the shifting set of debates which constitute the culture of mass communications research. My aim is to illuminate Katz's work and its continuing relevance to the field and to read his work as symptomatic of developments and problematics in mass communications research over the past forty years. Many aspects of Katz's work merit an article to themselves, both because of the diversity of his interests and because his key ideas have each generated considerable bodies of work. My main focus will be on the contribution to audience research of Katz's key articles on media theory and of his most influential books, for each of these presents an empirical project which illuminates the intersection of several significant theoretical issues. For an overview of his main works, I refer the reader to the annotated bibliography at the end of this chapter.

Throughout his career, Katz has developed several 'middle range' theories, each of which has made a significant contribution to the course of media research. Furthermore, Katz has always actively participated in research debates, reflecting his continuing interest in the possible convergence of different approaches to media research. To understand Katz's contribution, therefore, I will locate my interpretation of his work within the debates of the field. I would note, however, that it is difficult to do justice to a researcher who has sustained his contribution to these debates over the forty years which also includes most of the history of television and of modern communications research.

I will organize my reading of Katz's work both historically and thematically. The historical narrative traces his developing theories and empirical research over the past 40 years, as marked by the key contributions of *Personal Influence* in 1955, the two diffusion books of 1966 and 1969 -- *Medical Innovation* and *The Politics of Community Conflict*, *The Uses of Mass Communications* in 1974, *The Export of Meaning* in 1990 and *Media Events* in 1992 (although the work for both these two last books was begun during the early 1980s). I will map this narrative onto three themes underlying Katz's work. First, at the level of social problems which invite social scientific research, Katz has always been concerned with the question of media effects. Second, on a more conceptual level, Katz's work can be seen to further, in various ways, our understanding of the complex relations between public opinion, media and social interaction. At a metatheoretical level, Katz has persuasively advanced an agenda of convergence -- among issues, methods, political positions, academic disciplines and research traditions.

Taking these themes in reverse order, Katz's metatheoretical agenda has been to negotiate a convergence in approaches to the study of media processes among different disciplinary orientations. As the new discipline of mass communications emerged as part of the academic expansion of the post-war era, Katz and others drew upon social psychology and sociology to conceptualize the audience, albeit rather differently in his different works. Then and later, Katz has also been interested in the relationship between the now-established discipline of mass communications and other disciplines, particularly the humanities. Recently, the approach to audience research exemplified by *The Export of Meaning* has raised the possibility of convergence between so-called administrative and critical schools of mass communications research, itself part of a broader debate over epistemology and the politics of research. For Katz, concerned with establishing the field of mass communications, his emphasis on convergence

reflects a conviction that ideas evolve best through responding to the challenge of alternative positions, that they become vulgar versions of themselves if they remain within hermetically sealed traditions (he has been critical of uses and gratifications research in this respect), and that the mass communications will develop more productively if divergent tendencies and hostilities are countered.

As regards the conceptual agenda, many of Katz's works reflect different permutations of his long-term fascination with the relations between three domains: media (institutional contexts) -- public opinion (democratic processes) -- conversation (interpersonal networks). A significant aspect of Katz's contribution is the way in which his various works represent different explorations of this conceptual agenda, emphasising a range of ways in which mass media processes are anchored in their psychological, social and political contexts in such a way as still to leave room for manoeuvre for the active audience. Thus *Personal Influence* conceives of the active audience as firmly located in local groups and communities. In *The Uses of Mass Communications* the active viewer is conceptualized primarily in terms of the individual needs which motivate selective exposure. The viewers in *The Export of Meaning* are engaged in divergent reception according to their cultural backgrounds. And in *Media Events* the viewer is participating in domestic conversation as part of the new global public sphere.

Lastly, the focus on media effects is, in one sense, obvious, and reflects one of Katz's central concerns, namely to legitimate the value of academic research for policy purposes. Broadcasters, Government bodies and the public have a long-standing anxiety about possible effects of the media and have often found the conclusions of social scientists to be unsatisfactory. Katz has tried to categorise the findings of media effects research in policy-relevant ways, although at the same time he recognises the complex and contingent nature of the findings. He has addressed the question of effects in diverse ways, from analyzing the social responsibility of broadcasters and the institutional determinants of production to studies of, typically, indirect effects and sources of audience invulnerability.

Katz's concern with media effects is also central to his work in a more complex sense than that of meeting the demands which the public place on social science. Katz began his career during the heyday of the 'minimal effects' approach which argued that social scientific research had largely failed to provide evidence for substantial effects of the media on a vulnerable mass audience, and indeed his work contributed significantly towards establishing this approach. However, forty years ago also saw significant optimism about both social science and the mass media as forces which, if used appropriately, could further the project of the enlightenment, educating the public towards being rational, informed citizens participating a democratic society. The task, then, was to redirect mass communications research in a more productive direction.

In this context, Katz's work represents an attempt to reframe the problem of media effects, separating it from both the hegemony thesis of critical scholars, for whom audiences are far from active participants and by whom empirical social scientific investigation of actual audiences was rejected, and from the mechanistic, individualistic approach of experimentally-based effects theorists for whom, similarly, audiences were passive and vulnerable and by whom the social group was underestimated. Katz has consistently suggested that media effects should be (re)contextualized if we are to appreciate the role of active, empowered audiences within social structures. He thus tries to clear a space within which we can rethink the problem of media effects by drawing particularly on analyses of the activities of the primary group and of everyday contexts of conversation, for these complicate any linear causal theories and posit more complex patterns of audience involvement with the mass media.

Through his reluctance to restrict these diversity of everyday contexts, social factors, and modes of audience involvement which research should consider, leads Katz to engage with broader debates about the contexts and processes of everyday life within which the media operate. These centre on the long-standing and hotly contested debate between critical and administrative schools of mass communication. These two schools of thought both conceive of

this multiplicity of processes in different ways and, moreover, each emphasises some aspects to the neglect of others. Consequently, an account of these debates and of Katz's own role in attempting to bring these schools to a point of convergence or agreement regarding appropriate ways to investigate the mass media, is central to understanding Katz's broader project regarding the contextualizing of media effects, as I elaborate in the next section.

In addition to effects, the other major question policy-makers ask of research concerns public opinion, and Katz's commitment to an integration of academia and policy can also be seen in his substantial body of work on public opinion and attitudes in Israel, as particularly developed through his direction of the Israel Institute of Applied Social Research. Here too, his aim has been to produce high quality social science research which establishes the practical value of good quality academic work over 'quick and dirty', nontheoretical research. It is no mean achievement to sustain credible conversations with both the academic community and decision makers in Government and media organisations. In answer to the question of how one can demonstrate the usefulness of academic research in answering rather than merely complicating policy questions, and of how one can further interdisciplinary convergences in the new discipline of mass communications, Katz's approach has been to produce convincing and methodologically rigorous empirical work rather than to offer 'his' articulated media theory which engages directly with the sociological theory on which his insights so productively draw.

In Katz's work, each substantive empirical demonstration stands alone: from *Personal Influence* to *Media Events*, each study is a one-off, offered as a convincing advocate of Katz's views on both audiences and the conduct of audience research, as I shall elaborate in this chapter. By inspiring others to follow where he has begun, Katz's contribution to the field can be valued for showing a way forward for media research at key points in its history. As noted above, a common thread clearly runs through all his work: this concerns the conversation-opinion-media nexus which, as Peters (1989) has observed, reflects Katz's commitment to using research to further the democratic project. Yet this thread remains largely implicit in Katz's work, with a few exceptions, and is not, for example, referred to in the field as 'Katz's theory'. But while some might regret that he has not also offered more theoretical development and engagement with those theories on which he draws, Katz himself would probably see this as an intellectual sophistication likely to undermine rather than promote the confidence of policy-makers in the usefulness of academic media research.

Early debates in mass communications research as background to Katz's work

Katz is still most cited for his early collaboration with Lazarsfeld. Sills (1981) identifies the three major features of Lazarsfeld's research style as being collaboration with others, creation of research institutes, and the search for a convergence between different intellectual traditions; all of these feature strongly in Katz's own work. Moreover, as for Lazarsfeld, Katz's own history and work reflects the complex relationship between so-called critical and administrative or positivist mass communications. Despite being a beneficiary, broadly speaking, of the American government's post-war policy of funding mass communications research useful to the administration, and despite his consistent attack on the Frankfurt School approach to the media, Katz was directly connected to the Frankfurt School tradition via Lowenthal and he inherited Lazarsfeld's interest in integrating critical and administrative schools of mass communications.

Horkheimer's (1972) essay on traditional and critical theory, published in 1937, set out the epistemological and political framework for the critical theory of the Frankfurt School. In contrast, Lazarsfeld (1941) specified the parameters of administrative (or positivist) research on mass communications, as research which 'is carried through in the service of some kind of administrative agency of public or private character' (p.8). In relation to audience research, critical

researchers 'construe audience members as embodying larger social and political structures ...[while administrative researchers] embrace the liberal-pluralist ideal of democratic life ... [which regards individuals as] potential sites of creativity, novelty, independence, and autonomy' (Swanson, 1992, p.322). Yet at the same time as distinguishing between these approaches, during the late 1930s Paul Lazarsfeld, as director of the Princeton Office of Radio Research (later the Columbia Bureau of Applied Social Research), attempted 'to explain the "critical approach" sympathetically to an American audience' (1941, p.325). He argued that critical research could contribute challenging problems, new concepts, useful interpretations and new data. He saw it to be the task of administrative research to translate these into empirical studies. Yet, in this task, Lazarsfeld saw himself as having failed; certainly this early attempt to integrate critical and administrative research was largely unsuccessful (Jay, 1973; Lazarsfeld, 1969).

At the time, Adorno (1969) favoured the link between critical ideas and empirical research, noting 'one of the most important justifications for empirical research -- that virtually all findings can be explained theoretically once they are in hand, but not conversely' (p.364). Yet he clearly found Lazarsfeld's approach frustrating: 'I considered it to be my fitting and objectively proffered assignment to *interpret* phenomena -- not to ascertain, sift, and classify facts and make them available as information' (Adorno, 1969, p.339), particularly as the Rockefeller Foundation had ruled out the analysis of 'the system itself, its cultural and sociological consequences and its social and economic presuppositions' (p.343) when funding the Princeton radio project. Adorno was also concerned about relying on self-report data (recent developments in audience reception research are consistent with this concern in trying to link audience's subjective reactions with to both text and context). Thus in his audience research, Katz echoes Adorno's recognition that 'it would be naive to take for granted an identity between the social implications to be discerned in the stimuli and those embodied in the "responses"' (1969, p.353) when he says that 'I insist on the confrontation of the latent-message analysis with the question of what gets through to the viewer' (Katz, 1978b, p.137).

In his memoirs, Lowenthal, one of the founder members of the Frankfurt Institute of Social Research, discusses how he found it easier than Adorno 'to combine the theoretical and historical outlook with the empirical requisites of sociological research' (Jay, 1987, p.140), although he also gives examples of how Lazarsfeld 'failed to see the political and analytical meaning of my study [of biographies]' (Jay, 1987, p.132). He adds, 'finally I also learned -- it wasn't particularly difficult -- to assert my own individuality as a sociologist, while at the same time familiarizing myself with what seemed to be significant and important in American social research. Later I attempted to convey this synthesis to my students' (p.141) -- of whom Katz was one.

Maybe the separation of administrative and critical mass communications research has in the past been to the advantage of both schools, for each developed its own strengths. However, recently many, particularly those in audience research, have declared this a stale, even a false, dichotomy -- to be transcended rather than perpetuated -- thus agreeing at last with Katz who has consistently argued for convergence. Katz wrote his first bridge-building article in 1959 when mass communications was being formed into a discipline: it reads today with a strikingly modern feel, yet only now have media researchers caught up with Katz's early vision for the field and begun to overcome their mutual ignorance and hostility (Fejes, 1984). Although Katz's empirical work has mainly contributed to administrative, or functionalist, mass communications, in his more theoretical works, Katz has always looked more broadly.

If we put together Katz's apparent resistance to developing theory with his emphasis on the illustrative empirical study and his informed use, rather than development, of theories from other disciplines, one might infer that Katz regards mass communications as a set of problematics, not as a discipline in its own right, an approach with which I am sympathetic. Katz's work makes a strong case for the importance of drawing on diverse established disciplines to study mass communication processes in context. However, his career spans the period in which mass communications has attempted to establish itself as a separate discipline -- founding new

departments, institutes, doctoral programmes and journals of mass communication, and so is taken to support this move.

Personal Influence: on developing new theoretical frameworks for mass communications

Let us consider Katz's first significant publication. In *Personal Influence*, Katz and Lazarsfeld significantly amend Lasswell's classic question for mass communication research, 'who says what to whom with what content on what channel?', by demonstrating that the hitherto 'direct' flow of mass media influence was fundamentally mediated by pre-existing patterns of interpersonal communication in local communities. The innovative concept of the two-step flow challenged the popularity of the direct effects model, the separate study of mass and interpersonal communications, and the image of the viewer and listener as part of a mindless, homogeneous mass. As a result, *Personal Influence* has generated a research tradition which extends the theory in many new directions. It is also significant for establishing the mould for media research which many have followed as the field has expanded.

At several points, Katz has advocated the social theorist, Tarde, as 'the social theorist of diffusion *par excellence*' (Katz et al, 1966, p.156). Tarde argued for the rationality of public opinion as contrasted with the mindlessness of the masses; Katz sees him as the originator of the active/passive voter/viewer debate and observes similarities between Lazarsfeld's proposal of the two-step flow (Lazarsfeld & Gaudet, 1944) and Tarde's social psychological essay of 1898, 'La conversation' (Katz, 1992b). It is significant for Katz that Tarde's theory may be studied empirically: 'I ... am prepared to wager that Tarde's formulations probably lend themselves more readily than the others to strict, and testable formulation' (Katz, 1992b, p.82). In this, Katz echoes the aims of Lazarsfeld before him to base mass communications theory on the assumptions and methods of an empirical science. As regards the substance of the two-step theory, Katz notes that:

ironically, Tarde's hypothesis anticipates the *revision* that the two-step hypothesis has undergone (and is still undergoing), in its current emphasis on the flow of influence not the flow of information; on the group as a unit of analysis, not the individual; and on the mutuality of conversation, not the relay from leaders. (Katz, 1992b, p.81).

This revision may be seen, in part, as response to the criticisms directed towards the theory (Gitlin, 1978). The theory, it was suggested, advocated minimal effects only because it studied short-term over long-term effects and behavioural over ideological effects. The problem, Gitlin argued, was that Katz and Lazarsfeld only considered effects that could be measured quantitatively and thus neglected the long-term consequences of the media and the possibility of non-change as a media effect, both of which have been hypothesised by ideological traditions of media studies. Methodologically too, criticisms have been made of aspects of the design of the Decatur study and of the limitations imposed by the historical context in which the study was conducted and which restrict the generality of its findings. Katz and Lazarsfeld's particular approach to empirical research, namely strict quantification and coding, short-term effects, a marketing orientation, a claim to scientific objectivity and political neutrality, itself derived from their grounding in functionalist sociology.

Merton's (1955) description of the emerging field of the sociology of knowledge, when applied to media research, captures the 'Columbia School' framework within which Katz has worked:

'searching out such variations in effective audiences, exploring their distinctive criteria of

significant and valid knowledge, relating these to their position within the society and examining the socio-psychological processes through which these operate to constrain certain modes of thought constitutes a procedure which promises to take research in the sociology of knowledge from the plane of general imputation to testable empirical inquiry' (p.510).

Katz defines this functionalist approach as one which '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' (Katz, 1973, p.164-5). As a model for processes of diffusion of innovation and of audience activity, this approach lays out a clear research programme, although the stress on 'testable empirical inquiry' is a double-edged tool. It poses a challenge to those who develop theory without testing it against real-world processes, and yet it imposes limitations on the scope of theoretical inquiry as certain questions are more 'testable' than others.

This functionalist perspective supports the democratic or pluralist political agenda which for Peters (1989) underpins *Personal Influence*. Peters suggests that 'much of the history of American mass communication theory and research is an attempt to carry out a political project without being articulate about that project' (p.199), and that discussion of media effects is really a discussion of 'the perils and possibilities of democracy' (p.200), of 'how to conceive of the public sphere in an age of mass media' (p.212). The underlying debate, therefore, concerns mass society, a debate 'which turns on the question of the viability of democracy in an age of media and bureaucracy' (p.216). Mendelsohn (1989) concurs: 'this limited effects paradigm is deeply embedded in the theory of action that was first promulgated as a rationale for basing new 18th- and 19th-century democratic governance on public opinion and popular will' (p.819). Katz's work typifies this broadly normative tradition, examining issues of media effects, bureaucracy, voters, public opinion, and so forth, in order to emphasise (and protect) the self-determining potential of the individual against the power of the mass media and to promote a professional-client model of producer-audience relations (e.g. Katz, 1978a, 1992a & b). Yet Katz rarely presents an explicitly political agenda beyond expressing his broad interest in the relation between media, public opinion, citizenship and conversation.

Peters argues that 'the genius of *Personal Influence* was to rescue the public sphere from the media' (1989, p.215) and thereby to resolve the crisis of participatory democracy in a media age. Yet he, like others, is sceptical of the argument that the mass media, far from being usurpers of public space are, instead, supporters of it through the medium of active debate within primary groups. Just as Schiller (1989), commenting on *The Export of Meaning*, questions whether divergent and resistant interpretations among audiences have any actual effect on established power structures, Peters asks whether the interpersonal step of the two-step flow has any identifiable effect in shaping collective understandings or ordering social worlds. Maybe these questions remain for future research: the significance of Katz's work lies partly in keeping open the possibility of an empowered audience and a more participatory democracy. And while his optimism may prove unfounded, it provides a counterposition to the prevailing pessimism, thereby keeping the debate alive.

Audiences, effects and the politics of media research

Personal Influence was highly significant in the early history of media research as the originator of the theoretical shift from direct effects to indirect effects which depend on the mediating role of interpersonal relations. The theory of opinion leadership and the two-step flow

of communications has been developed in numerous studies of consumer research (Feick & Higie, 1986), public opinion (Black, 1982), survey methodology (Weimann, 1991) and mass communications (Rogers & Shoemaker, 1971). However, like his uses and gratifications research (see below), it is often cited by his critics for representing, as it was intended to, the way forward for administrative research. By endorsing the problematic (though still commonplace) transmission model of the media (Carey, 1975) and by emphasising the value of empirical social scientific methods over high theory, it took mass communication research firmly in an 'administrative' direction, divorcing it from the emerging school of critical mass communications. For Sproule (1989), Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) played a key role in (re)writing research history to create 'the magic bullet myth' of direct media effects in order to demonstrate the success of the Columbia approach in putting media research on a scientific footing.

Consequently, the main criticisms of *Personal Influence* addressed the metatheoretical rather than the substantive agenda, arguing against the received version of *Personal Influence* as a standard work which established a way forward for administrative research, rather than against a research monograph intended as one contribution among many to a diverse and continuing programme of media research. Gitlin claims that '*Personal Influence* can be read as the founding document of an entire field of inquiry' (1978, p.208) and criticises it as an approach which itself criticises the analyses of power, influence and ideology advocated by critical mass communications. From a different theoretical position, but also concerned about the reading of *Personal Influence* which lets the media off the hook, Lang and Lang (1983) attack administrative research for its 'downgrading of the mass media vis-a-vis personal influence' (p.134). Like Gitlin, they too see the minimal effects paradigm, significantly established by *Personal Influence*, to be a consequence of the methodological approach taken to empirical research by the Columbia researchers.

There is a certain irony in the criticisms of the politics of administrative researchers, for example, for developing psychological propaganda and persuasion research as, supposedly, a means of helping governments to manipulate the people. Originally, Lazarsfeld and others were originally motivated to conduct propaganda research because, as members of the Socialist Student Movement, they were concerned that their propaganda was unsuccessful in the face of that of the growing nationalist movement of Vienna in the 1920s. Indeed, when discussing the earlier Marienthal study in Vienna, which linked social stratification and social psychology, Lazarsfeld (1969) claims that his work 'had a visible Marxist tinge' (p.278), and he recalls the almost accidental way in which he happened upon market research methods (and funding) when empirical research techniques were otherwise lacking to pursue these ends. Subsequently, much administrative research has been conducted with a liberal rather than manipulative intent, whatever the purposes to which it is subsequently put (Rossi, 1980, comments on the pitfalls of applied research). In his defense, Katz points out the contradiction in attacking 'the "administrative" orientation for providing powerful tools of persuasion to the marketers, politicians, etc. while arguing that the effects of such persuasive attempts are invisible in the short run' (1987, p.S30). Lang and Lang (1983) concur, arguing that administrative research contains 'much that is critical of existing institutional arrangements and practices' (p.131-2) and that 'empirical research can be used by any group, including crusaders against the status quo' (p.132).

Katz (1978b) notes further that contemporary critical media studies also 'betrays an interest in affecting policy' (p.135): indeed, present political and economic conditions increasingly mean that policy-relevant research findings, which Katz has always aimed to provide, are demanded of us all. It seems to me that the possibility of research being 'co-opted' is making present critical researchers cautious about making claims beyond those of complexity and context-dependency. Katz would be impatient with this and expect media research to offer clear answers to the why/why and how questions which in any case implicitly underpin research.

The uses and abuses of Uses and Gratifications theory: a social psychological approach to the active audience

In the 1940s and 50s, mass communications research was closely entwined with social psychology and sociology. In *Personal Influence* (1955), the social psychology of the group is used to account for the diffusion of media effects, and links between interpersonal and mass communications, often neglected in subsequent research, were central. Although since then, mass communications has become a more-or-less distinct discipline, Katz has always drawn upon these other disciplines to develop a more complex approach to mass communication processes. Over this same period, sociology and sociological forms of social psychology became increasingly separate from psychology and psychological forms of social psychology. Katz drew more upon the former and yet valued the psychological for emphasising the autonomy of the individual and as a corrective against sociological reductionism. Consequently, his is a more social constructionist account of the active audience compared, say, to the experimental approach of the Yale school (Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953), for Katz consistently locates cognitive and motivational accounts of audience activity in the context of the primary group and social networks.

The roots of the disputes in media theory about the contribution of social psychology can be traced back to the 1920s and 30s. Adorno's (1969) understanding of social psychology drew more on psychoanalysis, influenced by Fromm's work at the (Frankfurt) Institute of Social Research, than on the embryonic tradition of positivist social psychology. For researchers at the Institute before the Second World War, it was their explicit aim to develop a critical social psychology (Bronner & Kellner, 1989) 'to explain the *processes* through which individual consciousness was adjusted to the functional requirements of the system, in which a monopolistic economy and an authoritarian state had coalesced' (Habermas, 1989, p.293). This approach contrasts with the largely individualistic social psychology which developed in America. Smith (1983) misidentifies Katz as part of this latter tradition, failing to see the significance of a more sociologically grounded mass communications for social psychology. While Adorno's *The Authoritarian Personality* was seen to offer 'a potential model for large-scale, theoretically guided programmatic research using sophisticated empirical methods and bearing on an important social problem seen in its historical social context' (Smith, 1983, p.173), the unresolved problems with this project contributed to the individualising of the social in social psychology (Farr, 1991), resulting in an 'experimental social psychology [with] its ahistorical, narrowly natural-science-oriented ways' (Smith, 1983, p.173). Consequently, Katz's and others' (Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976) advocacy of the potential contribution of (sociological) social psychology for mass communications is insufficiently recognised.

It is typical of Katz that he advanced his argument for drawing on social psychology in media research through innovative empirical work. Katz and Foulkes (1962) argued that, given the demise of the early effects or campaign approach to the mass media ('what do the media do to the people'), there were two routes open for continued work on the mass media -- studying the diffusion of new ideas and its relation to social and technical change, and studying media uses and gratifications ('what do people do with the media?'). For Katz, the two key mediating variables derive from the Columbia Bureau of Applied Social Research's persuasion model during the 1940s and 50s, namely interpersonal relations -- leading to diffusion of innovation, and selectivity -- leading to uses and gratifications. Of these two routes, Katz and his colleagues investigated first the former (Coleman, Katz and Menzel, 1966; Crain, Katz and Rosenthal, 1969; Katz et al., 1963), and then the latter (Blumler and Katz, 1974; Blumler et al., 1985; Katz et al., 1973). As work on the two-step flow and on diffusion of innovation (Rogers, 1983) has shown, interpersonal relations provide networks of communication (channels of information for the diffusion of innovation), pressure to conform (group dynamics and social normativity) and sources

of social support (and social identity), each of which affects the individual decision-making upon which diffusion depends. Selectivity, the belief 'that individuals seek information that will support their beliefs and practices and avoid information that challenges them' (Katz, 1968, p.795), is understood both as a cognitive defense against media power and positively as the interests of the active viewer which 'impress the media into the service of individual needs and values' (Katz, 1979a, p.75). Contemporary extensions of this research draw on theories of social cognition to elaborate how and why viewers selectively and constructively make sense of television (Hawkins, et al., 1988; Livingstone, 1990).

The sociological diffusion research (Katz et al, 1966) can be contrasted with the more psychological uses and gratifications approach (see Blumler and Katz, 1974), in terms of their starting point (text/message versus audience need), context (social structure and culture versus individual habits), and effect (acceptance of intended message versus need gratifications). However, in both these approaches the mass media are seen as plural (different channels, different genres), as are the audience (diverse individuals, groups, etc.), and the sociocognitive processes of media influence are foregrounded (acceptance, expectations). Thus throughout his work, Katz has argued against a view of mass society comprised of monolithic and homogeneous media and a mass audience of defenceless viewers.

Critics note that Katz's concept of selectivity focuses more on motivation than meaning, and so tends to view the text as an inkblot of which viewers can make any use they wish. Symptomatic of contemporary uses and gratifications, the typology of the active viewer proposed by Levy and Windahl (1985) misunderstands the hermeneutic nature of meaning creation, seeing it rather as gaining 'a more or less clear understanding of the structure of the message' (p.115), and Rubin (1985) and Palmgreen et al (1985) assume the text to be a source of given and obvious messages. Yet for Katz 'activity inheres in the creative translation of media messages by individuals in the process of perceiving and attributing meanings' (Katz, 1979a, p.75). Blumler, Katz and Gurevitch (1985) see this creative process of meaning negotiation as a route 'to build the bridge we have been hoping might arise between gratifications studies and cultural studies' (Katz, 1979a, p.75). In studying audience reception of *Dallas* (Liebes and Katz, 1990), Katz took uses and gratifications in this new direction, but has been less successful in taking uses and gratifications theory with him.

Ironically, just as uses and gratifications theory is criticised for regarding the text as open to any readings or uses which viewers find gratifying, these same critics tend to use uses and gratifications theory for everything and anything, routinely citing its limitations in order to critique (a stereotype of) the social psychological tradition, and hence to demarcate critical mass media research. Thus, in criticising uses and gratifications theory for being mentalistic and individualistic, Elliot (1974) neglects the discussion in the introduction to *The Uses of Mass Communications* (see also Katz, et al., 1973; Katz and Adoni, 1973) of the ways in which needs are seen as having socio-structural rather than individual psychological origins and as being subject to social, cultural and historical influences. This discussion was far from incidental, having developed from Katz's interest in social groups (c.f. *Personal Influence*), although admittedly this aspect of the theory has been insufficiently developed (Wright, 1974).

Notwithstanding such criticisms, vigorous and interesting empirical research has followed in the footsteps of Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch as part of the active audience tradition. Swanson (1992) suggests that the main discoveries are 'that gratification-seeking mediates between content and effect and may result in consequences not obvious from manifest content' (p.309), and 'that the seeking of gratifications is one of the influences that shape people's exposure to mass media' (p.311). Hence uses and gratifications theory undermines extrapolations about use from content and represents a new, contextualized way of approaching media effects. Since its initial exposition in *The Uses of Mass Communications*, the theory has developed fruitful integration with other theories of use, reception and effect (Rosengren, Wenner, & Palmgreen, 1985). In its emphasis on active audiences, the social contexts of use and different motivations

for using different media or different contents, recent work on audience ethnography (Bausinger, 1984; Seiter, et al., 1989; Silverstone & Hirsch, 1992) echoes uses and gratifications research, particularly the work of Katz et al. (1973).

Audience reception: towards an integrated conception of the audience across social science and the humanities

Katz and Foulkes (1962) suggest that:

'the uses and gratifications approach represents a bridge to the theorists of popular culture -- the group of humanists, psychoanalysts, reformers, etc., who have been speculatively analyzing the mass media and mass society. Until very recently, they have been paid no heed by the empirically oriented mass media researcher and have returned the compliment' (p.379; see also Katz, 1959).

However, the basis on which such bridge building is to occur remains unelaborated, although from a brief comment in Katz and Foulkes (1962), it seems that common ground is to be found in the fact that while popular culture theorists are, ultimately, concerned with questions of effect, they, like uses and gratificationists, approach the issue the other way around, asking what people do with the media -- focusing on escapism and fantasy -- rather than vice versa.

The Export of Meaning, an empirical study of the cross-cultural reception of *Dallas*, integrates Katz's work on uses and gratifications with that on diffusion and social networks, resulting in the emphasis on subcultural and family decodings. The study offers a reading of the primordial themes of the prime-time American soap opera and relates these themes to the diverse processes of audience reception in different cultures. The book thus furthers the debate over cultural imperialism by revealing the resistance of local cultures to an American product, not through rejection or avoidance (except in the case of Japan) but through (sub)cultural renegotiations of the programme. In addition to this substantive value, this book is at least as significant for illustrating the viability of a convergent approach to audience research. *The Export of Meaning* integrates different disciplines (literary theory, linguistics, sociology, mass communications), approaches (administrative, critical), communication foci (audience, text, context), and methods (qualitative and quantitative audience research, textual analysis), resulting in a productive conceptualisation of the active viewer. While these convergences have been most successful in relation to the soap opera (Livingstone, 1990), the insights thereby derived are currently being extended to other television genres.

Katz sees these convergences regarding audience reception research as stemming directly from uses and gratifications research, claiming that 'gratifications research begat audience decoding' (Katz, 1987, p.S37). This is contentious, for uses and gratifications is not known as an innovative research domain. The most cited work on audience decoding, Morley's *The Nationwide audience*, opens with an attack on uses and gratifications as the tradition against which this work is to be understood. Instead, critical researchers see audience reception research as motivated primarily by political arguments about the heterogeneity of the audience (or the problems of assuming homogeneity among audiences and a privileged status for the textual analyst). They have been concerned to 'focus almost exclusively on disempowered groups within the mass audience and endeavour to gauge how, through acts of interpretation, members of such groups resist dominance' (Swanson, 1992, p.322). Reception research is also rooted in epistemological arguments about polysemy and the context-dependency of meaning. Finally, through the ethnographic turn, audience reception research represents an attempt to rescue empirical research for the critical tradition (Seiter, et al., 1989). Katz's appropriation of reception research to the administrative tradition is too imperialistic a move. However, the coincidence of

developments in administrative and critical schools which led both to acknowledge the limitations of textual interpretation, of inferring effect from content, and of failing to place viewers in a sociocultural context, was clearly responsible for the enthusiastic support for reception research during the 1980s and 90s.

But a moment of coincidence may not herald a future of convergence. What is more likely to undermine old oppositions (Livingstone, 1993) is the broader crisis in the social sciences of established disciplinary boundaries, of methodological certainty and of political commitment. For Ang (1994) and some others, any convergence between social science and humanities approaches to audience response is more apparent than real. Particularly, Ang challenges the frequent, often implicit, assumption that diversity of interpretation -- as demonstrated, for example, in *The Export of Meaning* -- is evidence of audience autonomy or freedom from media power. She argues that such an assumption only makes sense in relation to the closed-circuit, transmission model of communication advocated by liberal-pluralist researchers which assumes that there is a trade-off between locating power in the sender or the receiver of a message.

From a rather different position, in *Media Events* Katz and Dayan also challenge the opposition of broadcasters/text and audiences which has tried to apportion more or less power to each side. They undermine any simple opposition of media and audience, not by advocating the interpretive relation between text and reader (as in *The Export of Meaning*), although this idea is central to *Media Events*, but by focusing on the institutional arrangements and social interconnections which link media and audience. *Media Events* shows the complex interplay among diverse participants involved in the new genre of 'media events': the broadcasters, marketers, diplomats, journalists, public relations experts, viewers, fans, contestants, experts, technicians, managers, and so forth. In this way, Dayan and Katz take further earlier work on diffusion of innovation, showing the constructive role of media and audiences in an ever more complex set of relations between public opinion, everyday conversation and media representation and participation. These complexities are such that, it is suggested, the rhetorical, symbolic, narrative, and ritual structures of this new genre take over the construction and outcome of cultural and political events, transforming them first and foremost into media events.

Media events represent both the opportunities and dangers of a media-dominated democracy. Television enfranchises: media events create a national or even international sense of occasion -- liminal moments for society which reflect, idealise, and at the same time, authenticate a vision of society for the public. Yet if these liminal moments substitute for political participation and political change, then their reactionary, manipulative or narcotizing effects should be at the forefront of our concern. Certainly, Dayan and Katz claim a wide range of effects for media events -- on participants and on institutions, at the time of the event and subsequently, including the ways in which live broadcasting confers legitimacy and charisma on the 'celebrities' involved, the interruption of everyday routines which casts viewers into roles proposed by the script of the ceremony, effects on the climate of opinion by encouraging or inhibiting the expression of certain beliefs, changes to the organization of politics and political campaigning, and instances of direct political or social change resulting from a media event. While the link between the theory and data is weakest in relation to these claims of effects, it is likely that Katz's theoretical direction (and, indeed, the complexity of the actual cultural/political links between media and everyday life) has taken him beyond the possibility of ready 'testable empirical inquiry'.

On the continuing question of media effects

A central focus of Katz's work has been on the effects of the mass media. In his description of the history of mass communications as an oscillation between conceptions of active and passive viewers -- and hence between minimal effects and powerful media (e.g. Katz, 1980b, 1987), Katz offers his vision of the field, classifying media research by research tradition, by

research centre, by decade. Although this classification is inevitably oversimplified, Katz's aim is the vital one of recontextualizing our notion of effects. Nearly twenty years ago, Katz welcomed the early signs of this: 'the study of mass media "effects", with its primarily psychological bias, is now broadening to take account of the *social* processes involved in the spread of influence and innovation' (Katz, et al., 1966, p.154). Looking back some years later, Katz welcomes as fruitful rather than regrets as unfocused the diverse conceptions of media effects which resulted from this broadening of approach: 'shifting from one to another definition of effect has released the field from the morass of persuasive effects. Shifting from individual to societal effects has released the field from psychologism and refocused it on *sociology* and politics' (1981, p.267).

His work over the past 40 years has played a substantial role in effecting this shift in the field. From the addition of interpersonal communication to the influence of the media in the 1950s to the selective and motivated viewer of *The Uses of Mass Communications* (1974) in the 1970s and the interpretive, culturally grounded viewer of the late 1980s and early 1990s, he has consistently argued for a socio-psychological, selective viewer, although--interestingly--conceived in different ways as media theory has developed. Thus for Katz, 'the effects of the media are mitigated by the processes of selectivity in attention, perception, and recall, and ... these, in turn, are a function of predispositional and situational variables such as age, family history, political affiliation, and so on' (Katz, 1987, p.S26), and research must map these processes of selectivity and their dependence on social context. Here is the context for his view that '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"' (Katz, et al., 1973, p.164). By *The Export of Meaning* (1990), he and Tamar Liebes saw the process of cross-cultural reception as being so complex that 'effects', the classic social psychological question, have become almost too difficult to address. Yet *Media Events* with Daniel Dayan (1992) attempts directly to rethink effects by taking a more complex social semiotic, anthropological, critical approach. The media are, in this book, connected with broader public debates about changing relations between society, technology, citizenship, identity and democracy.

Yet Katz's writings on effects have sometimes been misunderstood, particularly the common identification of *Personal Influence* with the claim of minimal effects. Certainly, because straightforward evidence for powerful media has not been forthcoming, Katz has always argued against those who, from whatever perspective, *claim* powerful media effects (e.g. Hall, Gitlin, Noelle-Neumann and Gerbner). And equally certain, *Personal Influence* argued against strong effects, although not for null effects. The point was that Katz and Lazarsfeld felt themselves led by the *data* to emphasise the mediating, but not wholly undermining, role of the social and communicative context in processes of effect. In terms of research strategy, Katz argues against the kind of broad theorising which results in what he sees as the untestable or at least typically untested theories of hegemony and ideology (Fejes, 1984). Boudon (1991) discusses Katz and Lazarsfeld's two-step flow theory as an example of Merton's middle-range theory, where middle-range theories attempt to integrate relevant hypotheses and empirical regularities but assume that 'it is hopeless and quixotic to try to determine the overarching independent variable that would operate in all social processes' (p.519).

The two-step flow of media influence, the uses and gratifications tradition, the concern with cultural imperialism in the reception of *Dallas* and with media events, have all been taken as different kinds of arguments against effects or for 'audience autonomy'. Yet for Katz, these represent instead different and creative attempts to rethink the central problem of effects by both avoiding advocacy of a major ideological position and by moving beyond the impasse of methodological difficulties towards exploring the social and contextual factors which circumscribe, mediate or facilitate media effects. Katz's interest in people's everyday lives, their motivations and understandings, and their location in local networks, suggests that he would never have expected to find clear evidence for a single process whereby the media affects a vulnerable

audience. His continuing focus on the influence of the media has required him to seek an alternative and more complicated route to tracing its diverse and indirect processes. Yet, a careful meta-analysis which seeks patterns among studies of these multiple and context-dependent processes remains to be conducted: only then can we assess whether Katz's recontextualizing approach is more successful than those of others who seek a grand, unifying theory (Livingstone, in press).

In *Media Events*, Katz tries to show what a more contextualized notion of effects would look like, for a major claim of the book is that the whole question of effects, whether conceived in terms of political effects on public opinion or ideological effects in maintaining the status quo, should be rethought using an anthropological perspective on the media which emphasises ceremony, symbolic community, ritual and liminality. Katz and Dayan use the phenomenon of media events to demonstrate the inextricable interconnections between everyday conversations, media processes and public opinion, arguing that these diverse, particular and located processes provide the context for understanding media effects. *Media Events* also pushes forward Katz's metatheoretical agenda of convergence among disciplines by studying active viewers in global/local and community/domestic contexts as a way of gaining a broader conception of media effects. Now that the primary group is increasingly an imagined rather than an actual community, and that the media are inextricably integrated into everyday life, this kind of multifaceted analysis of a genre may be a more sophisticated way, if not the only way, of addressing the question of effects.

On the level of middle-range theory, Katz appears to have shifted his position. Yet, a continuity is apparent in the claim that 'the entire genre of media events deals with the relationships among elites, broadcasters, and audience' (Dayan and Katz, 1992, p.225), for this is also true of his earlier work on the relations between bureaucracies and clients, or the study of journalist ethics, public opinion and election campaigns, public service broadcasting and the research agenda, or the two-step flow of media influence. In each case, including that of the academic's own relation to funders, Katz hopes to work out how these relations can be framed by a public service rather than a market model. It is partly for this reason that social science method becomes central, as an important means of providing accountability, within a framework in which research is motivated less by the specifics of developing theoretical axioms than by the broad democratic aim of improving the quality of administrative decision making and, as a consequence, enhancing the public good.

Conclusions

In a moment of disillusion, Katz concludes that 'we teeter back and forth between paradigms, without getting very far. We need to perform some crucial experiments and to agree on appropriate research methods rather than just storing a treasury of contradictory bibliographical references in our memory banks' (Katz, 1992b, p.85). Such a conclusion depends on Katz's characterization of media research history in terms of an oscillation between powerful media and powerful audiences (Katz, 1980b, see also Mendelsohn, 1989). Yet this oscillation can itself be seen as stemming from the contradictions within the liberal-pluralist approach to media research, an approach which sees the audience both as public and as mass (Livingstone & Lunt, 1994), although often at different times. Yet, as the debate itself becomes a self-conscious one, I would suggest that we cannot return to the days when one side was advanced over the other. Media researchers are now irrevocably aware of the debates which structure their field, together with the epistemological and political origins which motivate them, and so must surely progress beyond the oscillation which has structured the field hitherto. Katz played a key role in keeping the active viewer side of the debate alive; now we must move beyond the active versus passive conception of the viewer altogether (Livingstone, 1993).

I suggest that, when we look back over the last half century of media research, Katz should precisely not be criticised for that for which he has sometimes been criticised, namely the methodological, political and epistemological arguments about the conduct and purpose of media research. In this respect, Katz's contribution has been vital -- keeping alive a series of debates in which, especially among many British researchers, the odds have been against him. For these debates have been highly productive for the field, as I have tried to show in this chapter, although ironically, we are now more than ever in need of the synthetic skills of researchers like Katz in defining the future of the field. Despite, or even in his case because of his positive response to, the inevitable critical commentary surrounding new developments in a field, Katz's contributions have stood the test of time: the work on personal influence and diffusion established the mediating role of social groups in processes of media effects; no new genre or form of media can be studied without asking what uses and gratifications it provides for its audience; the work on *Dallas* is still one of a few studies linking audience reception to cultural context and processes of media imperialism; and so forth.

However, having been original in so many areas, Katz's work is vulnerable to the charge that he opens up new areas for research but offers little development of them, maybe because his valuing of collaboration takes him in ever-new directions while others are inspired to undertake this development of his key ideas. Yet perhaps in consequence, much of Katz's underlying, integrative, conceptual agenda remains implicit. Interestingly, while this agenda has remained remarkably constant over forty years, the different ways in which Katz has pursued it are testimony to the different assumptions and priorities of different decades of media research. Yet to elaborate this, either as an account of a constant theoretical framework or as a narrative of research development, would require an engagement with the intellectual currents of social theory on which Katz perceptively draws but to which his work does not contribute substantially. Perhaps his recent advocacy of Tarde as the integrating theorist for media research reflects his awareness of this lack. Of course, such a criticism could be made of most other media researchers, and in this respect, media research is still a domain, a set of problematics, rather than a discipline. To the extent that media researchers believe that the media are central to social, cultural and political developments, the case still needs to be made convincingly to those outside, with empirical demonstrations and middle range theories providing the (vital and necessary) starting point for such a case. It remains a challenge for media research to transcend its tendency to regard intellectual engagement with high theory as a complication rather than an enhancement of the quality and direction of useful research.

For the present, it would be fair to conclude that media research has successfully established Schramm's (1961) claim that the media affect some of the people some of the time (Livingstone, in press). The question for the future concerns the meaning and consequences of this statement -- the kinds of effects, the diverse kinds of power relations between media and audiences, the contexts within which the media is influential, and the relation between effects, however reconceived, and pleasure, identity, everyday practices, citizenship. Katz has long argued for exactly this contextualizing of media effects, and his work encompasses a broad range of stimulating and productive approaches whose implications merit further exploration. He has given us many characters and plots to play with in the never-ending soap opera of media research; promoting a continuing debate between social science and humanities, establishing new models for media effects research, generating a diversified and theoretically challenging agenda for audience research, recognising as vital the link between research and policy, and insisting on conceptualising key constructs in terms of the complexities and particularities of their real-world context.

Annotated Bibliography

I. Books by Elihu Katz (complete list):

Katz, E., and Lazarsfeld, P. F. (1955). *Personal influence: The part played by people in the flow of mass communication*. Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press of Glencoe. Translations into Japanese (1960), German (1962); Italian (1968).

Presents the 'Two-step flow' theory of mass communication influence, in which opinion leaders seek out mass media messages relevant to their expertise and disseminate these through vertical or horizontal flows in their local community, especially during periods of uncertainty, resulting in a selective transmission process (which resists or facilitates social change) mediated by interpersonal relations in primary groups. The book develops the idea of the opinion leader (from Lazarsfeld's *The People's Choice*), describes the 'Decatur' study which traced actual channels of communication (for opinions on shopping, fashion, films and politics) in an 'average' American city, and discusses the role of the small group, with its norms and networks, in analyzing the interpersonal mediation of mass communication processes.

Coleman, J. S., Katz, E., and Menzel, H. (1966). *Medical Innovation: A Diffusion Study*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1966.

An analysis of the social psychological factors -- individual, interpersonal and institutional -- affecting decision making in the medical profession. The case study explores the role of innovation in social change by examining the diffusion and adoption of a new drug in four communities. The medical decisions of individual doctors are shown to depend on the social and professional networks of relationships -- local patterns of communication and influence -- among doctors.

See also Katz, E. (1961). The social itinerary of technical change: Two studies on the diffusion of innovation. *Human Organization*, 20(2), 70-81.

Crain, R. L., Katz, E., and Rosenthal, D. (1969). *The Politics of Community Conflict: The Fluoridation Decision*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill.

Applies theories of diffusion of innovations, community conflict and alienation to the problem of resistance to fluoridation. From their study of the process of decision making in several hundred communities, the authors conclude that none of these theories are appropriate as the decision is primarily political and its outcome is largely, and in a counter-intuitive manner, determined by the differing democratic structures (elite or participatory) of local governments.

Katz, E., and Danet, B. (1973) (Eds). *Bureaucracy and the Public: A Reader in Official-Client Relations*. New York: Basic Books.

An edited volume addressing bureaucracy as a problem for sociology and society, focusing on the interaction between clients and officials in formal organizations, and including articles on culture and community aspects of bureaucracy, the influence of organizational structure, situational influences and strategies for innovation and change. The volume combines critical and social scientific approaches to bureaucracy, and raises issues of the

individual in society (or group), agency and structure, meaning and function, stability and change. Katz's articles in the volume examine the response of Israeli organizations to new immigrants and the rhetoric of clients' persuasive appeals to officials.

See also Katz, E., and Danet, B. (1966). Petitions and persuasive appeals: A study of official-client relations. American Sociological Review, 31(6), 811-822. Katz, E., Gurevitch, M., Danet, B., and Peled, T. (1969). Petitions and prayers: A method for the content analysis of persuasive appeals. Social Forces, 47(4), 447-463

Blumler, J. G., and Katz, E. (1974) (Eds). *The Uses of Mass Communications: Current Perspectives on Gratification Research*. Beverly Hills, Cal.: Sage.

An edited volume which includes the theory and evidence for the 'uses and gratifications' paradigm together with its major criticisms. It is generally taken as the definitive statement of this approach. In the first chapter, which summarises the past, present and potential of uses and gratifications, Katz et al. define the approach as the study of '(1) the social and psychological origins of (2) needs, which generate (3) expectations of (4) the mass media or other sources, which lead to (5) differential patterns of media exposure (or engagement in other activities), resulting in (6) need gratifications and (7) other consequences, perhaps mostly unintended ones' (p.20).

Katz, E., and Gurevitch, M. (1976). *The Secularization of Leisure: Culture and Communication in Israel*. London: Faber and Faber, and Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Also in Hebrew, *Tarbut Hapnai Be Hisrael* (The Uses of Leisure in Israel). Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1974.

Presents an empirical audit of the uses of leisure, culture and communication in Israel following the introduction of television in 1970. It adopts a broadly social psychological perspective, charting the changing consumption patterns of the public in public and private forms of elite and popular cultural activities, as related to national and subcultural contexts. It broadens the functionalist perspective of the uses and gratifications approach to include all forms of leisure, and adds a policy orientation.

See also Katz, E., and Adoni, H. (1973). Functions of the book for society and self. Diogenes, 81, p.106-121.

Katz, E., and Wedell, E. G. (1977). *Broadcasting in the Third World: Promise and Performance*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, and London: MacMillan.

Analyses the ways in which broadcasting institutions have been introduced into developing countries, showing the social, political and cultural conditions and constraints which resulted in a significant discrepancy between the promise of modernization -- of transferring technology, knowledge and investment from the West to the Third World -- and the actual performance (and unintended side effects) of broadcasting in developing countries. The book draws on original research in eleven countries to emphasise the complex processes of institutional and cultural change across diverse national contexts.

See also Katz, E. (1979b). With what effect? The lessons from international communications research. In J. S. Coleman, R. Merton and Rossi (Eds.), Qualitative and quantitative social research. New York: Free Press.

Katz, E. (1977). *Social research on broadcasting: Proposals for further development. A report to the British Broadcasting Corporation*. London: British Broadcasting Corporation.

Katz's response to the BBC's invitation to prepare 'an agenda for new projects of social research in the field of broadcasting', based on extensive interviews with broadcasters and researchers. The report discusses three kinds of research, evaluative (effects and functions), critical (organisations and output) and diagnostic (policy-related), and considers what broadcasters want to know about audiences, what social research can and cannot do, the often problematic broadcaster-researcher relationship, and outlines a wide-ranging research agenda.

See also Katz, E. (1978a). Looking for trouble. *Journal of Communication*, 28(2), 90-95.

Roeh, I., Katz, E., Cohen, A., and Zelizer, B. (1980). *Almost Midnight: Reforming the Late Night News*. Beverly Hills, Cal.: Sage.

An account which integrates the broadcaster's and academic's, or insider's and outsider's, perspective on the shaping of a new nightly news show which set out to rethink the standard news format by inviting an informal, intimate relationship between viewers and presenter. The book details a model for innovation within a broadcasting bureaucracy, through a (sometimes problematic) collaboration between researchers and broadcasters, with the joint ideal of improving the news and gratifying unmet audience needs.

Katz, E., and Szecsko, T. (1981) (Eds). *Mass Media and Social Change*. London: Sage.

An edited volume containing the diverse but individually significant papers presented to the symposium on Mass Communication and Social Change at the 9th World Congress of Sociology. The papers discuss the central issue of whether the mass media should be conceptualized as agents of social change or reinforcers of the status quo, generally disagreeing with the view of the media as disembodied agents of persuasion, instead locating the media firmly within a context of social, cultural and political institutions.

Liebes, T., and Katz, E. (1990). *The Export of Meaning: Cross-Cultural Readings of DALLAS*. New York: Oxford University Press. Reprinted by Polity Press, Cambridge (1994).

A study of the active reception of television by audiences to examine notions of cultural imperialism and the global village. The social-semiotic meanings of the highly successful American soap opera, *Dallas* are analyzed using themes of primordality and seriality, and related to the ways that specific subcultures accept, resist or renegotiate the ideological messages of the text. Israel is used as a microcosm of global cultural and ethnic differences in order to compare reception processes among Moroccan settlers, Israeli Arabs, newly arrived Russian Jews and kibbutz members in Israel, and American and Japanese viewers in their own countries. Focus group discussions show viewers, through the group's negotiation of meaning, using diverse cultural resources to interpret the drama according to different frameworks, and making referential readings (interpreting the drama as a window on the world) or critical readings (critiquing the drama as a cultural and technical product) of the text.

See also Katz, E., and Liebes, T. (1986). Mutual aid in the decoding of *Dallas*: Preliminary notes from a cross-cultural study. In P. Drummond and R. Paterson (Eds.), Television in transition. London: British Film Institute. Liebes, T., and Katz, E. (1986). Patterns of

involvement in television fiction: A comparative analysis. European Journal of Communication, 1(2), 151-172. Liebes, T., and Katz, E. (1988). *Dallas and Genesis: Primordality and seriality in popular culture*. In J. W. Carey (Ed.), Media, myths, and narratives: Television and the press. Newbury Park, Cal.: Sage. Liebes, T., and Katz, E. (1989). On the critical abilities of television viewers. In Seiter, E., et al. (Eds.), Remote control: Television, audience, and cultural power. London: Routledge.

Dayan, D., and Katz, E. (1992). *Media Events: The Live Broadcasting of History*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Reprinted by Harvard University Press (1994). Translated into Italian and French (forthcoming).

Applies an anthropological framework to understanding the meaning of the new phenomenon of 'media events' -- the live broadcasting of 'historic' events around the world (e.g. the Olympic Games, Kennedy's funeral, the British royal wedding). The celebration of media events in the living room, the experience of 'not being there', is analyzed as a new and potentially transformative ritual whose form and significance must be negotiated among organizers, broadcasters and audiences. The events themselves can be seen as scripted -- as Contest (e.g. the Olympic Games, the Senate Watergate hearings), Conquest (e.g. Sadat's visit to Jerusalem, the Pope's visit to Poland) or Coronation (e.g. the Royal Wedding, the mourning following Kennedy's assassination) -- and the aesthetics, functions and effects of this genre are traced.

See also Katz, E. (1980a). Media events: The sense of occasion. Studies in Visual Anthropology, 6, 84-89. Katz, E., Dayan, D., and Moyal, P. (1981). Communications in the 21st century: In defense of media events. Organizational Dynamics, 10, 68-80. Katz, E., and Dayan, D. (1985). Media Events: on the experience of not being there. Religion, 305-314. Katz, E., and Dayan, D. (1986). Contests, conquests, coronations: On media events and their heroes. In C. F. Graumann and S. Moscovici (Eds.), Changing conceptions of leadership. New York: Springer. Dayan, D., and Katz, E. (1987). Performing media events. In J. Curran, Smith and Wingate (Eds.), Impacts and influences. London: Methuen.

II. Selected key articles by Elihu Katz:

Katz, E. (1957). The two-step flow of communication: An up-to-date report on an hypothesis. Public Opinion Quarterly, 21, 61-78. -- reviews solutions 'to the problem of how to take account of interpersonal relations in the traditional design of survey research' (p.61), and locates the Decatur study (Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1955) and the drug diffusion study (Coleman, Katz and Menzel, 1966) in the context of related research, reflecting on the conceptual and methodological issues which arise.

Katz, E. (1959). Mass communications research and the study of popular culture: An editorial note on a possible future for this journal. Studies in Public Communication, 2, 1-6. -- agrees that while the study of short-term media effects is 'dead', research should now address not what the media do to people but what people do with the media (i.e. uses and gratifications) and thereby aim for a more complex link to effects and also build a bridge to the humanist tradition of studying popular culture.

Katz, E. (1960). Communication research and the image of society: Convergence of two traditions. American Journal of Sociology, 65(5), 435-440. -- argues for a convergence

between the persuasion model of (urban) mass communications with studies of community, diffusion and interpersonal relations in rural sociology.

- Katz, E., and Foulkes, D. (1962). On the use of the mass media as 'escape': Clarification of a concept. Public Opinion Quarterly, 26(3), 377-388. -- a discussion of the commonly used but little analyzed concept of escapism, showing how uses and gratifications provides a useful framework to separate the alienated desire for escape (use) from escapist media content (gratification), and offering an analysis of the social context, psychological process and consequences of media exposure.
- Katz, E., Hamilton, H., and Levin, M. L. (1963). Traditions of research on the diffusion of innovation. American Sociological Review, 28, 237-252. Reprinted in C. W. Backman and P. F. Secord (Eds.) (1966), Problems in social psychology: Selected readings. New York: McGraw-Hill. -- multidisciplinary research on the process of diffusion of innovation is reviewed as it relates to the following aspects of diffusion: 'the (1) acceptance, (2) over time, (3) of some specific item -- an idea or practice, (4) by individuals, groups or other adopting units, linked (5) to specific channels of communication, (6) to a social structure, and (7) to a given system of values, or culture (1966, p.156).
- Katz, E. (1968). On reopening the question of selectivity in exposure to mass communications. In R. P. Abelson, et al. (Eds.), Theories of cognitive consistency: A sourcebook. Chicago: Rand McNally and Co. -- argues for the notion of selectivity as central in explaining the power of the audience to minimize media effects. Examines whether selectivity can be shown to involve motivated choice associated with the quest for reinforcement, and thus distinguished from the mere expression of interest or utility or from de facto selectivity whereby social circumstances expose people to congenial communications.
- Katz, E. (1971a). Television comes to the people of the book. In I. L. Horowitz (Ed.), The use and abuse of social science. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Books. -- an autobiographical and sociological account of the founding of Israel Television by its Director, 1967-9.
- Katz, E. (1973). Television as a horseless carriage. In G. Gerbner, et al. (Eds.), Communications technology and social policy. New York: Wiley. -- draws on an analysis of the television's introduction in developing countries to argue for the runaway character of the medium, against those who consider it controlled by national and international interests.
- Katz, E., Gurevitch, M., and Hass, H. (1973). On the use of the mass media for important things. American Sociological Review, 38(2), 164-181. -- an empirical study of the different uses and gratifications which audiences derive from books, television, radio, newspapers, cinema and interpersonal communication.
- Katz, E. (1978b). Of mutual interest. Journal of Communication, 28(2), 133-141. -- Katz responds to critics of *Social Research on Broadcasting* that he colludes with broadcasters, is atheoretical, identifies professionalism with public service and is selective.
- Katz, E. (1979a). The uses of Becker, Blumler and Swanson. Communication Research, 6(1), 74-83. -- a defense against critics of uses and gratifications theory in which Katz uses the criticisms to aid theory development.

- Katz, E. (1980b). On conceptualising media effects. Studies in Communication, 1, 119-141. -- argues that 'the history of empirical work on the effects of mass communications can be written in terms of two concepts: selectivity and interpersonal relations' (p.119), so that 'the "power" of the media rises and falls, conceptually, as a function of the importance attributed to the intervening processes of selectivity and interpersonal relations' (p.120), an importance which he shows oscillates over the past six decades of research. See also Katz, E. (1988b). On conceptualizing media effects: Another look. In S. Oskamp, (Ed.), Television as a social issue. Newbury Park, Cal.: Sage.
- Katz, E. (1981). Publicity and pluralistic ignorance: Notes on 'The Spiral of Silence'. In Baier, Kepplinger and Reumann (Eds.), Public opinion and social change. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag. -- motivated by his concern over the (problematically absent) relation between theory and research on public opinion and on mass communication, Katz critiques Noelle-Neumann's theory of the spiral of silence and locates it in the context of other theories of powerful effects.
- Katz, E. (1983). The return of the humanities and sociology. Journal of Communication, 33, 51-52. -- attributes the ferment in the field to the reunion of the social sciences with the humanities, an interdisciplinarity which is resulting in a productive broadening of research questions away from short-term effects to include media history, genre and more long-term, subtle effects.
- Blumler, J. G., Gurevitch, M., and Katz, E. (1985). REACHING OUT: A future for gratifications research. In K. E. Rosengren, L. A. Wenner, and P. Palmgreen (Eds.), Media gratifications research: Current perspectives. Beverly Hills, Cal.: Sage. -- reflects on the last ten years of uses and gratifications research, acknowledging the limitations of 'vulgar gratificationism' with its 'audience imperialism' and 'disappearing message', supporting audience reception research, and advocating cross-cultural comparisons and improved links between micro and macro-level analyses.
- Katz, E. (1987). Communications research since Lazarsfeld. Public Opinion Quarterly, 51, S25-S45. -- argues that the minimal effects paradigm of Lazarsfeld's Bureau of Applied Social Research can deal with subsequent criticisms from the institutional, critical and technological paradigms of media research.
- Katz, E. (1988a). Disintermediation: Cutting out the middle man. Inter Media, 16(2), 30-31. -- diverse bodies use the mass media to communicate directly to the public, cutting out traditional intermediary institutions, and thereby introducing technological and institutional determination.
- Katz, E. (1990). Viewers' work: The Wilbur Schramm Memorial Lecture. Presented to the University of Illinois, Urbana, 6 September. -- reconsiders Schramm's distinction between reality and fantasy television (and active and passive viewers) in relation to current audience research, and argues that different approaches could be reconciled, given agreed rules of evidence and good research, so as to understand better the nature of the work viewers do when watching television.
- Katz, E. (1992b). On parenting a paradigm: Gabriel Tarde's agenda for opinion and communication research. International Journal of Public Opinion Research, 4(1), 80-86. -- traces Lazarsfeld's approach to the relation between conversation, public opinion and

media influence back to Tarde, and asks how much of Tarde's agenda has been accomplished 100 years later.

Katz, E., and Haas, H. (1994). Twenty years of television in Israel: Are there long-run effects on values and cultural practices? Manuscript. -- replicates the leisure survey of Katz and Gurevitch (1974) and charts the changes. While acknowledging the problems of causal inference, Katz suggests some effects of both medium and message which, while sometimes contradictory, have generally slowed, but may facilitate, the change from collective to individualistic values.

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..As the present chapter concerns Katz's work rather than offering an account of his career, I here summarize the latter: PhD (1956) in sociology at Columbia University; Research Associate at the Bureau of Applied Social Research, Columbia University; Lecturer at Columbia, then Chicago and Jerusalem; founding Director, Israel Television (1967-9); presently Emeritus Professor of Sociology and Communications at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Trustee Professor at the Annenberg School for Communications, University of Pennsylvania, and Scientific Director of the Israel Institute of Applied Social Research, Jerusalem; has held various additional professional affiliations and offices, and received a number of prestigious awards and honours.

..Katz's commitment to interdisciplinarity has led him to draw in his research on linguistics, anthropology, semiotics, political science and literary theory, as well as social psychology and sociology.

..For example, see the special issues, 'Ferment in the Field', 1983, and 'Future of the Field', 1993, of the *Journal of Communication*.

..This book contributes rather less to the conceptual agenda as it does not address conversation and social interaction.

..This concern with convergence might be traced back to Lazarsfeld's time at the Vienna Psychological Institute in the 1920s, when the director, Karl Buhler, 'attacked all narrowly based

"schools" of psychology...and tried to develop a point of view that could unite them' (Ash, 1989, p.148), taking an interdisciplinary approach theoretically and integrating qualitative and quantitative methods (Jahoda, 1983).

..When at Columbia University Bureau of Applied Social Research, Katz wrote his master's thesis (1950), supervised by Leo Lowenthal, on radio fanmail on the subject of 'happiness'.

..The aim of the Bureau of Applied Social Research was to use empirical methods to combine social psychology and sociology in order to understand what broadcasting means in the lives of its listeners and viewers.

..Katz (personal communication) suggests that for Lazarsfeld administrative research takes the client's problem as given while critical research asks whether the client may be part of the problem. The distinction does not map in any simple way onto others such as theoretical/empirical or quantitative/qualitative.

..See discussions in Livingstone (1990), Lindlof (1991), Seiter et al. (1989), Morley (1992), Silverstone (1994).

..This is less true of his later works, especially *Media Events*.

..The notion that social psychological questions -- concerning social identity, communication and meaning, influence, interpersonal and intergroup relations etc -- are especially amenable to empirical test is contestable (Harre & Secord, 1972); the epistemological problems of effects and reception research might suggest the opposite.

..In fact, Lazarsfeld was relatively uninterested in mass communications, simply using media research to develop new social science methodologies (Morrison, 1978); yet the approach he developed had long-term effects on mass communications research.

..In an article on political communication, Katz (1971b, p.304) argues that 'election campaigns, for all their faults, may be the major learning experience of democratic polities. They deserve, therefore, to be better designed'.

..Empirical research conducted in the tradition of Social Representations Theory (Farr and Moscovici, 1984) would support Katz here, for this too regards spontaneous conversations in primary groups as the locus for generating considered public opinion which influences decision-makers and which diffuses throughout, or marks differences among, the general public.

..Similarly, while political and epistemological debates dominated critical social science through the 1970s and 80s, they tend not to form part of Katz's retelling of media research history (e.g. the conclusion of Katz, 1987).

..Katz notes in his review of *Inside Prime Time* (1985) that Gitlin does not always meet these critical standards in his own work.

..A similar justification might be offered for the contemporary use of focus groups in audience research (Lunt & Livingstone, 1995).

..At a time when the interpenetration of the mass media into everyday life was less marked than today, theorizing the relations between mass and interpersonal communication was challenging (Berger & Chaffee, 1988; Cathcart & Gumpert, 1983; Hawkins, Wiemann, & Pingree, 1988; Rubin & Rubin, 1985).

..See Farr (1991) on the historical separation of psychological from sociological forms of social psychology.

..It is typical of (psychological) social psychology that The Yale Program of Hovland et al (1953) is seen as studies in persuasive rather than mass communication.

..Recently, a more critical social psychology has developed (Billig, 1991; Farr & Moscovici, 1984; Gergen, 1982; Himmelweit & Gaskell, 1990; Shotter, 1993).

..Katz is unusual when he suggests that 'some of us are still trying' (1987, p.S30) to build bridges between approaches, for 'there is no history of a systematic acknowledgement of Marxist scholarship by traditional communications research in the United States' (Hardt, 1992, p.236).

..See for example, Morley's introduction to *The Nationwide Audience* (1980), work which, ironically, Katz and Liebes develop in *The Export of Meaning*. Although social psychology might seem an appropriate field with which to theorize the active viewer, critical audience research has tended to mark its distance from social psychology, and the term is often used pejoratively to signify administrative, reductionist or positivist research (Livingstone, 1990).

..Silverstone (1994) defends Katz and Lazarsfeld, noting the primacy of the concept of sociability their work. Rubin and Windahl (1986) and Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur (1976) have responded to the individualistic criticism of uses and gratifications by considering the sociostructural conditions of media dependency. However, such criticisms of uses and gratifications theory hinge on whether the theory is taken to draw on and refer to a more sociological or psychological form of social psychology; Katz would locate his work within the former tradition, although some other uses and gratificationists are better located within the latter.

..Katz and his colleagues also address the theme of cultural imperialism in *Broadcasting in the Third World and Media Events*.

..Schiller (1989) criticizes *The Export of Meaning* for creating the straw person -- the passive, tabula rasa of mass audiences -- against which the active viewer concept is seen as progress: who, he asks, as does Morley (1991), would have expected audiences around the world to simply absorb American cultural imperialism? Katz might answer that in fact many have feared just this.

..Swanson (1992) also sees audience reception research as the way in which uses and gratifications has attempted to answer its critics regarding the problem of interpretation and the role of the text. Katz claims 'audience "decoding" as steps towards a better understanding of uses and effects...decoding is now conceptualized as a social psychological process via which viewers enter into "negotiation" with a text' (Katz, 1987, p.S38).

..Curran (1990) criticises the supposed innovativeness of critical audience studies, describing the recent turn to audience reception as 'the new revisionism', and noting that the now-derided effects tradition first documented 'the multiple meanings generated by texts, the active and creative role of audiences and the ways in which different social and discourse positions encourage different readings' (p.149-159). Maybe one could read *Personal Influence*, albeit against the grain, as a contribution to cultural studies, for it shows how interpretative communities, according to their own subcultural characteristics, resist or conform to the ideological meanings of the media.

..Research on audience resistance offers 'recovery from the excesses of manipulation models of Frankfurt inspiration' (Gitlin, 1990, p.191) as well as from the supposed hypodermic model of effects (Katz, 1980b). However, Schiller points out that 'where this resistance and subversion of the audience lead and what effects they have on the existing structure of power remain a mystery' (1989, p.149). Morgenstern (1992) notes that audiences are considered duped by the media when they express opinions in favour of the status quo and resistant to the media when they express contrary opinions: the empirical test is not whether they are affected by the media, but whether they endorse an implicit theory of the Left!

..Ang (1994) argues that 'critical theory has changed because the structure of the global capitalist order has changed' (p.202). Consequently, convergence among critical and positivist researchers is also a matter of contention for the Frankfurt School. Lowenthal still insists on the continued, even increasing, necessity for ideology critique (Jay, 1987, p.239) while Habermas argues for the 'ambivalent potential of mass communications' (Habermas, 1989, p.302). Given 'the steady advance of pluralist themes within the radical tradition' (Curran, 1990, p.157), Habermas cites Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) among other works when arguing that empirical media research reveals how popular culture may contain critical messages, how 'ideological messages miss their audience because the intended meaning is turned into its opposite under conditions of being

received against a certain subcultural background' (Habermas, 1989, p.304) and how 'the inner logic of everyday communicative practice sets up defenses against the direct manipulative intervention of the mass media' (p.304).

..Hardt (1992) suggests that the recent administrative versus critical debate (as in the *Journal of Communication*, 1993) represents 'Goffmanesque example[s] of impression management rather than a substantive debate among several different theoretical positions. In fact, notions of compromise or friendly accommodation in the spirit of common interests clouded the potential for the emergence of real differences and radical changes on this occasion' (p.21).

..Ang (1994) suggests starting from the assumption that: 'the potential infinitude of semiosis [is] corroborated by the principle of indeterminacy of meaning ... [so that] any containment of variation and difference within a limited universe of diversity is always-already the product of a determinate ordering by a structuring, hegemonizing power, not, as the functionalist discourse of liberal pluralism would have it, evidence of a lack of order, absence of power' (p.204).

..Schiller notes a contradiction between the increasing global penetration of mass media into politics, culture and daily life, and the revival of the limited effects paradigm in the active audience literature.

..For example, see Katz (1971b, 1977).

..Unfortunately, there can be no definitive experiment or agreed methodology which resolves all debate, for on the contrary, the more crucial the experiment the more heated the debate it generates (consider the famous case of Milgram's experiments on obedience to authority).

..Katz (*personal communication*) notes that he was recruited by Lazarsfeld to 'save' the study that became *Personal Influence*.

..Elihu Katz is author of well over 100 articles. For reasons of space, I have selected those of particular theoretical significance to the development of media theory, with a focus on the audience. I have also omitted those articles whose content overlaps with Katz's books, and those which address issues outside the scope of this paper (e.g. problems in journalism, elections studies, public opinion, religious behaviour, and the reporting of the Arab-Israeli conflict and peace process; see, for example, Katz and Feldman, 1962, Katz et al., 1969, Katz and Parness, 1977, Katz, 1989, Katz & Levinsohn, 1989, Katz, 1992a).