Socio-Economic and Communication Determinants of Poverty Alleviation among the Urban Poor

Charles Owino

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Declaration

This dissertation is my own original work and has not been presented for the award of a degree in any other University.

..... 7.11.2005

Charles Owino *Date*

Approval

This dissertation has been submitted for examination with my knowledge as supervisor

..... 29/11/05.....

Dr. Joseph Mbindyo ***Date***

Dedication

To my mother, the late Dom Awuor, for her love, great sense of responsibility and endless support.

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Abstract

While many government programmes have been designed to alleviate poverty among the urban poor, scores of people have continued to languish in wretched poverty. This study sought to determine the impact of communication strategies in enhancing the livelihood of the urban poor in the Eastlands area of Nairobi. The study investigated the key socio-economic and communication determinants of awareness of poverty eradication policies, and assessed the effectiveness of government communication strategies in regard to programmes that target them. Both primary and secondary data were used to quantify the economic contribution of communication to the overall improvement in the standards of the living of the urban poor. The primary data were collected from the field through household surveys.

The findings and conclusions of this study indicated that the deficiency of communication strategies in government programmes has complicated their implementation. The end result is that the urban poor have remained deprived even though there could be good intentions by the government to alleviate poverty among them. The recommendation is that in developing poverty alleviation programmes, policy makers should single out urban households as a key target group deserving intensified attention and communicate with them right from design through to the implementation of poverty programmes. It concludes that to be relevant for policy making, the concept of communication strategy should be embraced in government programmes for meaningful economic support and poverty alleviation, as well as for the attainment of the first of the eight Millennium Development Goals – that of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger.

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Chapter One

Introduction

This section presents the background of the problem area, followed by a brief history of the programmes that the government has designed to reduce poverty among the urban poor, with rather depressing impacts.

Background

Although the African continent is gifted with enormous natural and human resources, as well as great cultural, ecological and economic diversity, it remains underdeveloped. Too many African nations suffer from dictatorships of many shades, corruption, civil unrest and war, underdevelopment, and deep poverty. The majority of the countries classified by the United Nations as least developed are in Africa and numerous development strategies have failed to yield the expected results. While some believe that the continent is doomed to perpetual poverty and economic slavery, Africa has immense potential.

With all these attendant challenges, few African countries are likely to meet all eight of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on time, although the setting of targets has accelerated development in many areas and some countries are on course towards some goals. Mozambique, for example, has succeeded in curbing child mortality (Goal 4) and Tanzania is on track to provide safe water for all (Target 10, Goal 7). Uganda and Kenya have made gains in reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS, as called for by Goal 6 (UNFPA, 2005; 2003 Kenya Demographic and Health Survey [CBS, 2003]), but the pandemic remains arguably the single greatest threat to health and development on the continent, closely followed by malaria (also a target of Goal 6). Of the roughly 2 million people who die of malaria each year, 90% are African children under the age of five. Each year, this disease costs the continent an estimated US$12 billion in gross domestic product and increases poverty by reducing productivity and social stability. Thanks to international efforts, the incidence of malaria has decreased in recent years, but further progress requires continuous and substantial funding.

Poor countries bear the prime responsibility for achieving most MDGs, but they cannot make it if rich states fail to join them in meeting Goal 8 – developing a global partnership for development. This will involve more and better aid, debt relief and fair trade terms. Increasing international aid to a level that would really help eradicate poverty in Africa would not cost the rich world much. Even better, refusing to hide corruption money in Western banks, eliminating costly and trade-distorting agricultural subsidies, and enforcing transparency in extractive industries that enable official corruption in poor countries would cost nothing. The only obstacles to action are entrenched lobbies that give political leaders campaign contributions to keep the unfair structures in place. Many governments in sub-Saharan Africa have adopted stabilization and adjustment programmes to improve the living conditions of the urban working poor. Thus, poverty issues have taken a centre stage in all development agendas in sub-Saharan Africa (Sevageldin, 1989).

In the case of Kenya, poverty eradication has been the main objective of the country's development policy since independence in 1963 (Republic of Kenya, 1997). For example, the very first *National Development Plan* highlighted the rise in ignorance, diseases and poverty and called for their eradication (ROK, 1966). Kenya has been implementing a Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF) since 1973. Despite the rhetoric, however, poverty is still widespread and severe (Mwabu and Mullei, 2000), and if Kenya is to meet the MDGs it must achieve an economic growth rate of 7% plus for the remaining period to 2015.

The depth and pervasiveness of poverty make it a national problem of formidable dimensions, calling for urgent action. More than half of Kenya's rural population (over 9 million people) lives below the poverty line.[1] In urban areas, and particularly in Nairobi more than one and a quarter million persons, or over 30% of the population live below the poverty line. Overall, more than 60% of Kenyans live in poverty while the 10% top richest people take home 40% of all income generated (ROK, 2001 – the poverty reduction strategy paper). Among the 210 political constituencies in Kenya, the incidence of poverty as measured by the head-count index ranges from a low of about 16% Kabete constituency in Central

[1] To determine how many people are poor, normally a monetary poverty line is derived which represents the cost of a basket of goods. This poverty line is determined and based on the expenditure required to purchase a food basket that allows a minimum nutritional requirements to be met set at 2,250 calories per adult equivalent per day in addition to the cost of meeting basic non-food needs (ROK, 2000). In Kenya, this poverty line was estimated to be about Ksh2,648 for urban households.

Province to a high of about 84% in Ganze constituency in Kilifi District, Coast Province – the poorest in Kenya (ROK, 2005 – The Poverty Report).

What became of the much-touted Poverty Eradication Commission of 1999 headed Dr. Gilbert Oluoch? A report by the United Nations in June 2004 (UNDP, 2004) ranked Kenya among the 30 poorest countries – number 148 out of 177 countries in the UN Development Index that measures achievement in life expectancy, education and income. The 2005 Millennium Development Goals report on Kenya's status prepared by the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development says the number of Kenyans currently living below the poverty line rose from 44.7% in 1992 to 60% in 2003.

In the early 1980s, Kenya's social indicators were distinctly more favourable than those of most countries in the region, but many indicators stagnated in the early 1990s. There are also persistent differences between rural and urban areas and between the poor and the non-poor. These are the findings of the *Kenya Poverty Assessment* (World Bank, 1995), which is one of the few studies in the region to document and measure changes in poverty indicators over a decade. Using data from a number of sources, it shows that while Kenya achieved some improvement in its social indicators, the lack of sustained per capita income growth resulted in continued poverty for an increasing number of people, and that the benefits of good health and education did not accrue to all.

The challenge facing Kenya today is to reduce poverty and achieve sustained economic growth for healthy national development (ROK, 2001). As much as the government is committed to address this challenge in consultation with key stakeholders in the economy, especially the private sector, civil society organizations and other development partners, not much has been achieved. The strategy to achieve this entails the participation and inclusion of all Kenyans, particularly the poor, in the programmes aimed at tackling the challenges of poverty. This is in recognition of the fact that it is the poor who understand at first hand the causes, nature and extent of poverty.

The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) 2001–2004 outlines the principles and measures necessary for poverty reduction and economic growth in consultations with stakeholders, in particular the poor at all levels. The PRSP builds on past efforts aimed at poverty alleviation and in particular the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (IPRSP)

July, 2000, which identified interim measures and strategies necessary for facilitating sustainable and rapid economic growth, improving governance, raising income opportunities for the poor, improving the quality of life, and improving equity and participation. These principles remained valid and relevant and form the basis of the PRSP, whose basic objective was economic growth and poverty reduction.

Among other things, the absence of sustained per capita income growth because of low investment and an inefficient parastatal sector is considered to be the primary cause of continued income poverty in Kenya. Despite a dramatic decline in fertility in the 1980s (which unfortunately is slowing inching upwards again, according to the 2003 Kenya Demographic and Health Survey), population momentum pushed growth in the labour force by 4% per annum. The slow increase of employment opportunities resulted in a fall in real wages in most sectors of the economy. In urban areas, unemployment increased from 11% in 1977 to 16% in 1986 to 22% in 1992, and the trend is the same to date (Demographic and Health Survey 2003).

Table 1: Kenya poverty and social indicators

Kenya Poverty and Social Indicators (in percent)

	Early 1980s	Early 1990s
Percentage of Population Below Poverty Line	48	46
*Primary Enrollment Rate (gross)**	109	105
Male	114	106
Female	101	104
Primary Enrollment Rate (Net)		73
Bottom decile		63
Top decile		78
Infant Mortality Rate	77	67
Rural		65
Urban		46
Mothers with secondary education		35
Mothers with no education		66
Child Stunting Rate (under 5 years of age)	36	34
Rural		34
Urban		22
Mothers with secondary education		21
Mothers with no education		37

Note: A percentage over 100 indicates that there are overaged children in primary school.
***Source:* *Kenya Poverty Assessment.* March 1995. Washington D.C.: World Bank.**

The average holding size in the smallholder sector has continued to decline and the proportion of households without land continues to increase. The poor have thus, turned increasingly to wage-employment and self-employment, but falling real wages, a history of restrictions on private trade and processing, and poor maintenance of infrastructure continue

to constrain the growth of urban incomes (Nafukho, 2000). Mwabu and Mullei (2000) and UNDP (1999) show that poverty and low levels of human development are closely associated. Indeed, poverty is multi-dimensional, and includes inadequacy of income and deprivation of basic needs and rights, as well as, lack of access to productive assets, social infrastructure and markets and lack of participation in decision making processes. The only way to address poverty would be to focus on investment in intellectual capital (Nafukho, 2000). In urban areas, job expansions are mainly in the informal sector popularly referred to as the *Jua Kali* or informal sector. If we have to go by the definition of a "good job" (living wage, safe environment, humane benefits, reasonable job security), then the majority of the jobs created in the urban setting are poor jobs. These will hardly reduce poverty among the urban working poor, since the poor already work in "poor jobs".

With the collapse of the textile industries in Eldoret, Kisumu and Nakuru, many workers in these urban areas are in and out of "poor jobs" with great frequency. They encounter layoffs, dismissals or unemployment. A number of urban workers are reported to have committed suicide because of dismissal, poor working conditions or forced transfers. There is also increased crime especially in Nairobi and more particularly in the densely populated areas habited by the poor. The rise in crime rate can be attributed to high unemployment rates among urban dwellers, which have confined the majority of urban workers to compulsory poverty (Mwabu. et. al. 1999).

Alleviating poverty raises some serious allocation problems with respect to the scare resources available. It is therefore important for policy makers and planners to have access to the most accurate and up to date information about the poor and also to communicate to them what the government is doing or intends to do to help them. The policy makers and planners first need to know who the poor are, where they are located geographically, which groups in society are most in need, what their main problems are, and how their level and nature of poverty have been influenced by government programmes.

Urban poverty

Many people living in urban areas of Kenya today live in abject poverty, a majority literally below this much talked about poverty line, which according to the Bretton Woods Institutions

(World Bank and International Monetary Fund), is living on less than one US dollar a day. The majority of Kenya's urban poor live in peri-urban slum settlements characterized by unhygienic living conditions and inadequate or low quality basic services like schools and health care. The urban poor do not have regular income and that leads to their inability to afford decent and adequate housing. It also leads to poor health, poor education and poor nutrition, which make them more susceptible to poverty conditions. Lack of access to credit for business or housing coupled with tenure insecurity, evictions, and inappropriate policy and regulatory frameworks also contribute to the vulnerability of the urban poor. Among the Nairobi Province constituencies, the poverty incidence ranges from 31% in Westlands to 59% in Makadara, meaning that the poorest constituency (Makadara) has about twice the number of people in poverty compared with the least poor constituency (Westlands). The eight political constituencies in Nairobi contribute 6% to total national policy (ROK Poverty Report, 2005).

Statement of the problem

This study sought to determine the role of communications in enhancing the livelihoods of the urban poor. Many times strategies devised to address the plight of the urban poor lack the critical aspect of communication and yet these programmes are by nature meant to reach and benefit the people. The absence of a communication element in these programmes has contributed to their poor outcomes, thus further exacerbating the scope of poverty.

To date the government has not been keen to critically examine its poverty programme with an eye towards incorporating a communications aspect to ease implementation of its programmes. If the element of communication were squarely in place in all government programmes, how much ground would the government and its agents cover in accomplishing objectives, thus perking up the standards of living among its urban poor? Maybe a lot, in fact. Involving poor people in the implementation of various policies would make work easier as they would understand what is expected of them and play their respective roles accordingly.

This study tried to identify the key socio-economic and communication determinants of awareness of poverty alleviation policies, evaluate the awareness of government communication strategies in promoting poverty alleviation policies and gauge the

effectiveness of government communication strategies with regard to programmes that target the urban poor. On the basis of its findings, the study intended to make appropriate suggestions for enhancing the role of communication in government's urban poverty alleviation programmes.

Purpose of the study

Many well-meaning government programmes aimed to positively affect the urban poor by raising their standards of living have not had much impact, in part because they lack a communication component. This then calls for the government to look critically at its programmes and devise better means and ways of reaching the people the programmes are intended for. Efforts to teaching these people can be significantly improved by incorporating good communication strategies into the programmes to meet the particular needs of the urban poor.

Rationale for the study

Economic growth and poverty reduction are likely to occur where there is an effective two-way flow of communication. Such communication would influence project selection, innovation and entrepreneurship among the targeted group. The urban poor must therefore be fully involved in such projects, and the best way to do this is by ensuring their participation in the development of relevant communication strategies and suitable dissemination packages for them. In order to achieve substantial and sustained economic growth among the urban poor, there is a need to as much as possible involve the potential beneficiaries in the design of these programmes at all levels.

The motivation of this study is that if the much-needed rise in the standards of living among the urban poor is to be achieved, then communication should form a very important component in government poverty reduction programmes.

The study focused on how communication strategies can positively affect poverty alleviation and ensure economic growth. For people living in poor settings in urban areas, lack of information is piled on top of other poverty indicators – they are information disadvantaged and therefore do not receive adequate, relevant and well packaged information in a refined

manner that is required for them to participate in programmes. The quality and the quantity of information about government programmes that reaches the poor determines the outcome of the programmes. The more they receive the information, understand, adapt and practice it, the more government policies or programmes are likely to succeed.

Objectives

The broad objective of this research was to determine the impact of communication in enhancing the livelihoods of the urban poor.

Specific objectives of the study

The study was guided by four specific objectives:

1. To identify the key socio-economic and communication determinants of awareness of poverty alleviation policies.
2. To evaluate the awareness of government communication strategies in promoting poverty alleviation policies.
3. To assess the effectiveness of government communication strategies with regard to programmes that target the urban poor.
4. On the basis of findings thereof, to make appropriate suggestions to enhance the role of communication in government poverty alleviation programmes among the urban poor.

Research questions

The following questions challenged the study:

1. What are some of the key socio-economic determinants of the urban poor?
2. What is the awareness level about governments' poverty alleviation policies among the urban poor?
3. How does the government communicate with the poor during the process of implementing its programmes, and how effective are these communication strategies?

Hypothesis

This study tested the hypothesis that the deficiency of communication strategies in polices aimed at alleviating poverty among the urban poor significantly affects the results of government programmes.

Scope of the study

Although there are many interventions targeting the poor with the express objective of alleviating poverty, this study focused precisely on the programme presented in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). Owing to limitations of time and financial resources, the study covered Nairobi's Eastlands area. The duration of the study was three months (July, August and September, 2005) and the findings of were used as a representation of the overall state of poverty in urban areas. These results would help improve the social lives and general welfare not only of the urban poor residents of Nairobi's Eastlands area, but also all urban poor residents of other major towns in Kenya and the rest of the world. Data recorded in this study would also be a reserve for future research in a related area.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

The issue of poverty has been the subject of extensive discourse for many years. This chapter deals with various definitions of poverty and what other scholars have said about the subject.

Definition of poverty

In quantitative terms, the poor are those who cannot afford basic food and non-food items. In a qualitative approach, participatory poverty assessments (PPAs) show that people define, view and experience poverty in different ways. In the 2001 PPA report, poverty is generally defined as the inability to meet basic needs. Poverty was associated with features such as lack of land, unemployment, and inability to feed one self and family, lack of proper housing, poor health and inability to educate children and pay medical bills. While different people and communities define poverty differently, poverty is associated with the inability to meet or afford certain basic needs, as well as lack of voice or power to participate in decision making.

In Nairobi poverty is defined as to live contrary to the ways you would like to, for example lacking decent shelter, education and development. Among the manifestations of poverty are lack of access to proper medical services, child labour, inadequate nutrition, begging, prostitution, theft or robbery, vagrancy/street families, ill health and lack of access to proper education. The contributors to poverty include HIV/AIDS, unemployment, corruption, laziness, low income, lack of knowledge or skills, landlessness, disability, tribalism, discrimination, insecurity, high cost of education, poor physical infrastructure, poor service delivery in power and telecommunication sector, and lack of credit facilities.

Human poverty or poverty of lives and opportunities is multidimensional in character, and diverse, rather than uniform, in content. Over the years, the concept of poverty has been defined in different ways. Poverty in the human development approach draws on each of these perspectives, but particularly on the capability perspective. In the capability concept, the poverty of a life not only lies in the impoverished state in which the person actually lives, but also in the lack of real opportunity – due to social constraints as well as social circumstances – to lead valuable and valued lives. Human poverty has traditionally been

measured in Kenya in terms of inadequate consumption or income.

Income perspective

People are considered poor if their income level is below a defined poverty line. Many countries, including Kenya, have adopted income poverty lines to monitor progress in reducing poverty incidence. Often the cut-off poverty line is defined in terms of having enough income for a specified amount of food.

Basic needs perspective

Poverty also implies deprivation of material requirements for a minimally acceptable fulfilment of human needs, including food. This concept of deprivation goes well beyond lack of private income: it includes the need for basic health, education and essential services that have to be provided by the community to prevent people from falling into the poverty trap. It also recognizes the need for employment and participation.

Capability perspective

The absence of some basic capability to function is another aspect of poverty. The functions relevant to this analysis can vary from physical ones such as being well nourished, adequately clothed and sheltered, and able to avoid preventable morbidity, to complex social achievements such as partaking in the life of the community. The capability approach reconciles the notions of absolute and relative poverty, since the relative deprivation in incomes and commodities can lead to an absolute deprivation in minimum capabilities.

Measurement of poverty

Poverty assessments are typically clouded in conceptual and methodological uncertainties. How living standards should be assessed, whether or not household surveys are necessary, and if such surveys provide a reliable guide. Also to ask is where the poverty line should be drawn and if the choice matters. Other important questions are if the poverty measure should be used in aggregating data on individual living standards and if that choice matters. Various applications in poverty assessment and policy evaluation for developing countries are used to show how these methods can be put into practice (Ravallion, 1992).

In measuring poverty it is critical to define the minimum standards of living required to keep people from being considered "poor" and to make comparisons among these minimum levels, for families of different size and/or composition in different locations and time. Economists have emphasized the second role, while generally ignoring the first. Experience suggests that the poverty measures obtained, and the inference for policy derived, are affected by the choice made in setting poverty lines. The two methods within objective poverty lines are the food-energy intake approach and the cost of basic needs approach. Subjective poverty lines are discussed in the context of minimum income question, used in many developed countries, even through it has its pitfalls in the context of developing countries (Ravallion, 1987).

Another crucial concept is that of the *working* head of the household, as it helps investigators identify more clearly women supporting households in extreme circumstances than does the idea of the *reported* head. This is so because it draws attention to the overall disadvantage of female heads: the lower return on their market hours of work and the overall work burden they carry to attain a given level of consumption for their household (Rosenhouse, 1989). According to Glewwe (1988), the different definitions of poverty will often lead to different policy recommendations. Poverty reducing policies should thus be carefully designed, with emphasis on the use of household survey data to formulate and evaluate specific policies.

T. Ho (1982) discussed the role of health status indicators in the measurement of living standards and recommended the inclusion of the following morbidity indicators in the Living Standards Measurement Survey (LSMS): the incidence of long-term disability, the incidence and duration of illness in the two weeks before the survey, and the extent of functional disability resulting from the illness. He described the data needs for a health module that includes information on mortality, morbidity and nutritional status and the various health inputs that affect health status. Nanak Kakwani (1990) says several poverty indexes have been suggested to measure the intensity of poverty suffered by those below the poverty line, but because the studies are estimated on the basis of sample observations, whether the observed differences in their values are statistically significant needs to be tested.

Debatably, the fight against poverty is a matter that has had a long but not so distinguished track record in the African continent. Among researchers, policy makers, politicians and activists, it is a preoccupation that dates back to the very beginning of international multilateral engagements with Africa, including most notably the World Bank. Within

African countries and in the councils of various bilateral and multilateral development agencies, a considerable amount of resources has been devoted to the task of tackling poverty – but the results obtained have also been very limited and by all accounts, the problem of poverty is worsening. Initially, the preoccupation of policy – and of its organic intellectuals – was to develop and implement measures designed to reduce poverty. Targets were set to this end – and invariably were not met (UNDP Poverty Report, 2000). Subsequently, in the face of sustained criticisms of the limits of conventional approaches and the repeated failure to met set targets, attention was directed to the possibilities of eradicating poverty.

The goal of eradication was considered feasible considering the significant increases in human productive capacity registered in the post Second World War period. However, access to the resources required for eradicating poverty was itself conditioned by a series of overlapping relations of power – between nations, within nations, amongst classes, between men and women, among the young and the old, among ethnic groups – that proved far more intractable, and in some cases outrightly forbidding to tackle (UNDP Poverty Report, 2000). Dominant discourses, therefore, reverted back to strategies for mitigating poverty in the development process, including a variety of schemes that included micro-credit projects, social funds, safety nets and others. At the same time, target setting was resumed, initially with the year 2000 in mind and as that magical date approached without significant progress being recorded, new global and local millennium targets were set with realization dates for between 2015 and 2020.

The obvious frustration at the failure of dominant approaches to make a decisive difference has spurred popular initiatives such as the "Make Poverty History" campaign of the NGOs, the Live-Aid and Live-8 music festivals underwritten by musicians, and campaigns like Jubilee 2000 for the cancellation of the debts of the poorest countries. Such popular initiatives have an important role in communicating the breadth and depth of the problem, but they cannot be expected to go far without an appropriate conceptual and policy framework for tackling the structural and non-structural roots of poverty. A new global strategy against poverty needs to be mounted – with more resources, a sharper focus and a stronger commitment. Based on commitments made at the 1995 World Summit for Social Development, and again in the Millennium Summit, developing countries are being encouraged to launch full-scale campaigns against poverty. Yet despite having set ambitious

global targets for poverty reduction, donor countries are cutting back on aid and failing to focus what remains on poverty.

Effective governance is often hyped as the "missing link" between national anti-poverty efforts and poverty reduction. For many countries it is in improving governance that external assistance is needed – but not with a new set of poverty-related conditionalities imposed on top of the existing economic conditionalities. Based on their commitments at the Social Summit, countries establish their own estimates of poverty, set their own targets and elaborate their own plans. The role of external assistance is to help them build the capacity to follow through on their decisions and resolutions. More than three-quarters of countries have poverty estimates, and more than two-thirds have plans for reducing poverty. But less than a third have set targets for eradicating extreme poverty or substantially reducing overall poverty – the Social Summit commitments. This is a serious shortcoming (UNDP Poverty Report, 2000). Moreover, the poverty targets set at the Social Summit are based on monetary measures, while most development practitioners now agree that poverty is not about income alone, but is multidimensional. Thus, countries should begin incorporating explicit human poverty targets—such as reducing malnutrition, expanding literacy and increasing life expectancy—into poverty programmes.

Another shortcoming: many anti-poverty plans are no more than vaguely formulated expressions of intent. Only a few countries have genuine action plans—with explicit targets, adequate budgets and effective organizations. Many countries do not have explicit poverty plans, but incorporate poverty into national planning. And many of these then appear to forget the topic. Much remains to be learned about how to make anti-poverty plans effective. *Overcoming Human Poverty, UNDP Poverty Report 2000* focused on this issue – to contribute to the United Nations General Assembly's five-year review of progress since the Social Summit and to help accelerate the collective campaign against poverty.

Developing anti-poverty plans

Anti-poverty plans help focus and coordinate national activities and build support. But to be effective, they must be comprehensive – much more than a few projects "targeted" at the poor. And they need adequate funding and effective coordination by a government department or committee with wide-ranging influence. Most critical, they should be

nationally owned and determined, not donor driven. These are some of the conclusions from UNDP-sponsored assessments of the poverty reduction activities of 23 of its programme countries (UNDP Poverty Report 2000). While some of the countries most successful in reducing poverty have lacked plans, they have been exceptions. A plan is evidence of a national commitment and of an explicit allocation of resources to the task. It is also a means to build a constituency for change. Without such organized public action, market-driven economies rarely promote social justice.

Attempting to make macroeconomic and national governance policies more pro-poor should be a major part of any anti-poverty plan. One reason that many poverty programmes become disjointed is that external donors provide much of the funding for individual projects, and the funds are not allocated through regular government channels. National control and coordination get elbowed aside. And the need to build government's long-term capacity to administer poverty programmes is neglected.

Many national programmes lack a good management structure, located within the government rather than outside it. As a multi-dimensional problem, poverty should be addressed by a multi-sector approach – cutting across government ministries and departments. But most programmes hand the responsibility for poverty reduction over to a ministry of social affairs, which generally lacks authority over other ministries. Where a central coordinating committee is set up to overcome this problem, it rarely has enough power to get the job done.

Most governments have difficulty in reporting how much funding goes to poverty reduction because they are unable to distinguish between activities that are related to poverty and those that are not. They often confuse social spending with poverty-related spending. But much government spending could be considered pro-poor if it disproportionately benefits the poor. Under these conditions it is probably best to set up a special poverty reduction fund to give a better financial accounting and to allow government departments and ministries to apply to the fund for financing for their poverty-focused programmes.

A review of national anti-poverty plans underscores the importance of developing a new generation of programmes that focus on making growth more pro-poor, target inequality and emphasize empowering the poor. The old-school prescriptions of supplementing rapid growth

with social spending and safety nets have proved inadequate. In countries with widespread poverty like Kenya, too many programmes still rely – mistakenly – on targeted interventions. It is better to concentrate on building national capacity for pro-poor policy making and institutional reform, the areas where external assistance should also concentrate its resources. This focus will also help provide greater coherence to national programmes overcoming the tendency to rely on a disjointed set of small-scale projects.

Standing in the way of integrated poverty programmes, however, is the common "two-track" approach to poverty reduction: growth on one track and human development on the other (UNDP Poverty Report, 2000). The two tracks rarely intersect: economic policies are not made pro-poor, while social services are assigned the burden of directly addressing poverty. This is one legacy of old-style structural adjustment programmes, which took up poverty after the fact or as a residual social issue (often even exacerbated by the SAPs themselves). The current consensus on the importance of pro-poor growth is still hobbled by an inability to recommend practical policies and concrete reforms to structural adjustment programmes. Part of the problem is confusion about what constitutes pro-poor growth and how to gauge it. Another part stems from failure to squarely address the sources of inequality – such as unequal distribution of land, the most important asset of the rural poor in many low-income developing countries.

It is clear from the history of the career of the theme of poverty in Africa that a deep-seated poverty of imagination has afflicted the research and policy communities, yielding endless cycles of approaches and strategies that lead nowhere. This poverty of imagination also speaks to the unhelpful nature of the approaches and tools that have been dominant in the quest for overcoming poverty on the continent. Furthermore, the slide into Western cultural interpretations of wealth and poverty, which began as a gradual process in the 1950s and 1960s and became full-blown during the McNamara years at the World Bank, did not help matters (UNDP Poverty Report, 2000). Indeed, the introduction of standard international measures that purport to be universally valid and applicable seem to have carried this process of Westernization to its logical conclusion, resulting in the generation of sweeping claims about poverty that were inscribed with cultural parochialism, and the decline of painstaking sociological work to understand the sources, dimensions and trends of the dialectic of individual, family, household and community wealth and poverty.

Range of poverty plans

As suggested above, many people tend to regard poverty programmes as a set of targeted interventions, a conception that is too narrow. Macroeconomic and national governance policies have as much impact on poverty as targeted interventions – if not more. The narrow conception has to do with how poverty programmes have emerged. Many have arisen from some breakdown – a financial crisis, a prolonged recession, a wrenching adjustment to external shocks – and continue to bear the birthmarks of that origin. Many have emerged in the wake of structural adjustment programmes, set up as "social safety nets" to cushion the fall in employment and incomes. Those in the Dominican Republic, Ghana, Mozambique and Zimbabwe are examples.

Often poverty programmes are implemented for compelling political reasons: mass unrest threatens stability. Many of those hurt by economic reforms are newly poor – from the middle strata – and are more vocal and organized than the chronically poor. With recovery, a major reason for a poverty programme might fade, along with the popular coalition supporting it. Broader support would come from involving all sectors of society in formulating a national poverty programme. Zambia used a participatory approach in devising its poverty action plan. Zambia's Ministry of Community Development and Social Services involved a wide, representative spectrum of participants in drafting the national plan as well as provincial and district plans. But such efforts are just the start. Some governments have included civil society organizations in formulating a plan, but then failed to incorporate them in its implementation; others have failed to integrate the all important communication components in their programmes.

Strengthening coalitions for poverty reduction can be particularly important, perhaps ironically, when people's incomes are rising. With healthy economic growth, many people believe (mistakenly) that poverty programmes need be only isolated safety nets for the needy. But such misconceptions merely reinforce the case for a new generation of poverty programmes, more explicitly concerned with pro-poor growth and with overcoming inequality as a source of impoverishment. In many developing countries – as in industrial ones – there are deep-seated structural reasons for the persistence of poverty. Uganda is a good example of a country trying to shift from stringing together social safety nets to attacking the fundamental causes of poverty.

In some countries poverty alleviation funds are established outside the structure of line ministries to administer a set of donor-financed projects. In such arrangements the activities of the funds overlap with those of line ministries, which then have less motivation to become involved in poverty reduction activities. The donor-sponsored projects financed by these semiautonomous funds nevertheless do have some advantages over government-run projects, particularly in institutional aspects. In some cases the funds have been more successful in decentralizing decision making and resources and in fostering community participation. They also tend to be more immune to political influence and corruption. Transparency and accountability in resource allocation are more likely.

Governments have great difficulty in reporting how much funding goes to poverty reduction. For most of the assessments of national poverty programmes, no reliable statistics can be provided for such funding (UNDP Poverty Report, 2000). One reason is that poverty is by its nature cross-sectoral. Where does one draw the line between activities that are relevant to poverty and those that are not? In place of estimates of funds directed to poverty reduction, some governments point to information on expenditures allocated to such sectoral interventions as basic social services. These types of interventions might benefit the poor, but they benefit almost everyone else as well. By this standard, investments in agriculture or in rural roads could be counted too.

Some anti-poverty plans continue to treat poverty as though it were a sectoral issue that can be addressed by a set of targeted interventions, such as providing micro credit or basic social services. Such narrowly based plans rarely give economic policies and general budget allocations a more pro-poor slant. While taking note of economic policies, many still advocate measures that stimulate growth as the single best antidote to poverty. More recent plans have taken on the need to advocate pro-poor growth – but still reflect little concrete idea of what this means. Beyond economic policies, many people are beginning to regard governance, in the sense of institution building, as a vital link between growth and poverty reduction.

In some countries where poverty persists despite growth, a governance system that discriminates against the poor might be the explanation. Inequality in the distribution of income probably reflects the underlying inequality in the distribution of political power.

One defining characteristic of the poor, after all, is lack of power and influence. In most African countries there is little leeway in structural adjustment programmes to "adjust" economic measures to benefit the poor. The Enhanced Framework for Poverty Reduction (EPRSP) and its Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) – which were jointly endorsed by the government, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank – were meant to help change this situation. But still at issue was ensuring that the government would be in the driver's seat.

With renewed emphasis on inequality as an impediment to reducing poverty, growth is no longer considered the single driving force for poverty reduction. In many countries inequality – between rich and poor, men and women, rural and urban – is a roadblock to rapid and sustained growth. Moreover, a country with high inequality requires much higher growth to achieve significant progress against poverty. Many poverty programmes do not adequately address inequality. Implicitly, they assume that rapid growth will take care of poverty if accompanied by "human development" through investments in social services such as education, health care, water and sanitation. Inequality has to be brought to the fore in the discussion on how to reduce poverty.

The other missing link between anti-poverty efforts and poverty reduction is governance. Even when a country tries to implement economic policies to foster pro-poor growth and mount targeted poverty programmes, inept or unresponsive governance institutions can nullify the impact. When governments are unaccountable or corrupt, poverty reduction programmes have little success in targeting benefits. The poor cannot gain a hearing for their views from undemocratic and authoritarian political regimes. They cannot gain access to public services from an unresponsive central bureaucracy – or know that the services exist if they lack information. Even when services are decentralized, the poor might not benefit if the local elite diverts the resources for their own interests.

In such an environment reforms of governance institutions should be moved front and centre, to provide the minimum conditions for getting poverty reduction programmes and any other people-centred programmes off the ground. Holding governments accountable to people is a bottom-line requirement. Having regular elections – free and fair – can bolster accountability. But if people want government to represent their interests, they also have to hold officials to account between elections. And for this, they need to be organized. So there are several links

in the chain stretching from decentralizing central governmental authority to directly improving the lives of the poor.

Targeting poor households

If one believes that targeting is tied to empowerment of the poor, targeting by government should probably stop at the community level, using some method of ranking communities by the extent of poverty. Ignoring this need to rank, some countries use their autonomous neighbourhood groups to identify families that need social assistance (UNDP Poverty Report, 2000). The effectiveness of this community-based selection depends on the poor being actively involved in community affairs. Otherwise, social assistance might not go to those most in need. To minimize arbitrary decisions, the government requires these groups to base their decisions on fixed rules as well as on the groups' discretion. But the government does not use poverty indicators to distinguish communities, so those with many households needing social assistance are likely to get no more funds than those with few such households.

A human poverty approach to targeting poor households is more appropriate – although more complex – than an income-based method. Household members can be deprived in some human capabilities but not in others. So it is unlikely that one identifiable group of households is "poor" while another is "non-poor". The human poverty approach shifts the emphasis from the household to the individual – to identify deprivation among, say, women and children as well as among men. It also shifts the emphasis to specific interventions to address specific deprivations – such as improving primary education to reduce illiteracy or boosting access to health services to lengthen life expectancy. The application of such policies is best left to communities, which have better access to information on the characteristics of households.

Geographical targeting, even at the community level, might not reach disadvantaged social groups. Women, ethnic minorities, low-status castes, refugees and indigenous peoples are likely to need special interventions. Take women, who might benefit disproportionately from some programmes, such as food distribution systems, but be excluded from others, such as public works schemes. Differences in the way projects affect men and women should be taken into account in designing project components.

Types of intervention

Poverty programmes have put a great deal of emphasis on small-scale interventions, such as providing schools, clinics or microfinance. Sometimes they focus predominantly on such interventions, overlooking such national issues as economic policy making or building governance institutions. And these interventions are not always successful in reaching the poor. While focusing resources on the poor can take several forms concentrating on sectors, geographical units or social groups, another form of targeting is by type of intervention, such as allocating resources to basic social services, microfinance or physical infrastructure. The aim is usually not to reach particular poor groups, households or individuals with these services but to achieve universal coverage in a certain area or community. Restructuring government expenditures might make such services more available to the poor, but there is no guarantee that the poor will make use of them.

In addition to stimulating rapid economic growth, traditional anti-poverty strategies emphasize channelling resources to human resource development. This "second prong" usually advocates investing in basic social services – basic education and health care, nutrition, water and sanitation, and reproductive health. After these two prongs do their work, according to this view, the poor who remain should be a small minority requiring mostly social assistance, for which targeting benefits becomes important.

Most poverty programmes now stress reallocating social expenditures to basic social services, and some seem to rely on providing basic social services as the main way to combat poverty. In many instances UNDP's support to national programmes also puts special emphasis on basic social services – or the larger issues of social protection (UNDP Poverty Report, 2000). But supplying more basic services does not necessarily go hand in hand with more poor people using them. In addition to reallocating expenditures, efforts should concentrate on ensuring that the poor make use of the services made available to them.

Access to infrastructure

Providing infrastructure has many potential benefits for the poor. Roads can increase access to social services, making it easier for students to travel to schools or for the ill to reach a health clinic. Infrastructure can also stimulate greater private investment, by businesses and

households. And the construction can supply many temporary jobs, particularly for the unskilled. Much of the success of infrastructure projects depends on whether communities are involved in selecting them. If they are, a project is more likely to meet their needs and more likely to be maintained by the community long after the construction is over.

Countries need comprehensive, but workable poverty monitoring systems to gauge their progress towards the targets for eradicating extreme income poverty and reducing overall income poverty. The monitoring system should also track progress in the fight against human poverty. The main weaknesses of traditional surveys: they do not illuminate the causes of poverty or generate policy-relevant information. To say that the poor need more income and therefore the economy should grow more does not take us very far anymore. Large income and expenditure surveys will have to share the bill with rapid monitoring surveys focused on human poverty and with participatory assessments.

There is growing consensus that poverty monitoring should be linked more tightly to anti-poverty policy making. But the most troublesome is determining whether, and to what extent policies are having an impact on poverty. This is a matter of evaluation, not just monitoring. The existing systems of monitoring and evaluation are not up to this task. Most surveys have been used to target resources geographically. Morocco is a good example of a country that has used a sophisticated system of indicators to determine first the poorest provinces and then the most deprived communities within those provinces. This task can be done with a set of surveys at one point in time. To monitor poverty over time requires a series of surveys producing comparable results. Only a few countries have such surveys. (Kenya has just recently released its own review of poverty in the country – *Geographic Dimensions of Well-Being in Kenya: Who and Where Are the Poor?* [ROK, 2005].) Fewer still have fielded a system to both monitor and evaluate the impacts of their poverty programmes. So there is little systematic verification of what policies work – and what policies do not – to help countries move closer to their poverty eradication targets.

According to UNDP Poverty Report (2000), the poor are often excluded from poverty assessments – as they are from poverty programmes. Whether expensive or cheap, rapid or slow, surveys that fail to incorporate the views of the poor are likely to miss the essence of the problem. After all, they are the people most directly affected—keenly aware of the problems they face and probably the most knowledgeable about solutions.

Poverty eradication plans

The Kenya National Poverty Eradication Plan was launched in March 1999. This new plan is a 15-year programme modelled on the commitments of the World Summit for Social Development. It recognizes that previous poverty reduction efforts have failed to reach the poor, largely because of implementation problems and weak governance structures. The government established the Poverty Eradication Commission, comprising a cross-section of interest groups, as an independent body to monitor implementation of the poverty plan. A notable aspect of the plan is its Charter for Social Integration, which states that citizens have the right to make decisions about matters that vitally affect their material and social wellbeing. The plan also identifies basic needs with individual rights. Health, literacy, food security, clean water and freedom from injustice and physical harm are among the rights it underscores. The project's rapid participatory research encourages beneficiaries to take part in assessing their needs and designing interventions. The rationale is that if the poor lack organization and power, the benefits of poverty programmes are unlikely to reach them.

Much of the success of national poverty programmes rides on "targeting" benefits to the poor. But most programmes still assume that external agents deliver the benefits and that the poor are passive beneficiaries—the traditional safety net or social welfare model. Little wonder that the poor often complain that they never see the benefits—while delivery agents complain that poverty persists despite their good intentions and scientific methods. At the root of this predicament is a governance problem, a misconception of how poor people and poverty-reducing benefits come together. If the poor lack power, the benefits of poverty programmes are unlikely to reach them – or, if they do, to make a lasting difference. Effective targeting follows from empowerment, not the other way around. The very term "targeting" probably clouds the issue: better to talk more generally about focusing poverty reduction resources.

The poor have to be organized to advance their interests—to stand a chance of being heard and taken seriously. Once organized, the poor will find that politicians are more interested in their fate and governments more responsive to their demands. Other popular forces will show increased interest in joining them in alliances for change. And more anti-poverty resources will be directed their way. Generally it is safe to assume that resources will not flow to the powerless, despite the many rhetorical flourishes to the contrary.

Delivering cash or in-kind benefits to the poor should play second or third fiddle to broader methods of channelling resources to those in need. If an economy is growing and its growth is pro-poor, resources will flow towards the more deprived segments of the population. If the government budget also favours the poor, poverty will not persist. Often, however, macroeconomic policy making and budgeting are not pro-poor. And poverty programmes have generally failed because national policies do not take poverty into account. Beyond adjusting macroeconomic policies, governments can also direct resources to sectors where the poor are employed—agriculture, rural off-farm enterprises, small urban businesses. But as many of the assessments of national poverty programmes show, the first response of governments called on to reduce poverty is to channel resources exclusively to the social sectors, under the assumption that this is the way to address poverty.

One way of focusing resources is to allocate them to geographical units, such as provinces or communities. Rather than direct resources to particular sectors, a government allocates them to poor areas. The administrative costs of doing so are usually low. Many national poverty programmes use geographical targeting as their main method of intervention. The first step in this approach is to identify the poorer regions. A household survey representative at the provincial or state level can usually supply enough data. The issue is what indicators to use. To target poverty, indicators of human poverty, such as those in the human poverty index, would be more useful than income or the human development index. Average levels of human development, for example, do not always correspond to the incidence of human deprivation.

Tackling poverty

Kenya's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) and even the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) do not pay sufficient attention to employment as a key path to poverty reduction. Nevertheless, it is necessary to construct strategies that can make industry fully supportive of human development by improving the welfare of employees. The main discouragement would be to the kind of industries that, in the past, have earned good profits at the expense of the majority of the population, the loss of which can only benefit Kenya.

Although their numbers are growing slowly, few industrial firms, most particularly those in the informal sector, pay attention to their corporate social responsibilities, thus creating a

need for incentives for industries to develop long-term relationships with their workers. In this regard, attention should be paid to investment incentives to encourage long-term employment contracts with the associated benefits for human development: better terms of service, improvements in the work environment, reductions in unemployment uncertainties and occupational hazards, and improvements in employee-employer relationships.

Positive human development can be promoted by improving security conditions in Kenya, thereby encouraging investment in processing activities and complementary services. This will open up many parts of the country to industry, with attendant welfare benefits. Reduction of uncertainty will also pave the way for long-term investment, including implementation of industrial projects with long payback, but strong upstream and downstream linkages, that are crucial for general improvement in human welfare.

There is also impressive scope for expanding opportunities for entrepreneurship and the quality of employment in small-scale industries. The major constraints are the present restrictions on small industries, on the one hand, and the inadequacy of public services on the other. Most local authorities lack the basic infrastructure for industry and do not have suitable zones to serve as incubators for small industries and enterprises. Thus, small industries lack visibility and cannot foster a sustainable linkage with medium and large-scale industries. The existing industrial development strategy tends to over-emphasize export sectors, while at the same time ignoring the development of a local industrial base to serve the needs of the local population.

A revolution in corporate attitude and culture that would allow Kenyan industry to work using an environmentally friendly philosophy is needed. Indeed, the limiting factor in most pollution prevention efforts to date, and the key constraint in accomplishing the transition to sustainable practices, is management practices. The enforcement of environmental standards in Kenya is still piecemeal, focusing on individual industries that act in isolation, and thus may not achieve sustainability owing to a failure to exploit synergies (*Human Development Report,* UNDP, 2005).

Without education and human capability, Kenya cannot establish a competitive niche in even low technology activities, but will remain at the bottom of the technology ladder. The interacting triad of incentives, factors and institutions makes up the system within which

industrial firms learn and create technology. Creating an environment that encourages innovation requires political and macroeconomic stability, which Kenya has been fortunate to have in the past. Telecommunications competitiveness is also vital for better access to information and communications technology. To change Kenya's present status among the lowest ranked countries, a new approach to poverty reduction is needed.

Chapter Three

Theoretical Framework

The previous chapter made it clear that if poverty reduction programmes are to work effectively, poor people must be involved in their planning and implementation. The big question is, how to accomplish this. Communications techniques, technologies and approaches may be part of the answer. This chapter deals with the diverse communication theories relevant to this study and what other scholars have said about the subject matter.

Media invention and evolution

There is currently no theoretical perspective within which the full range of interpersonal and mass media can be systematically compared. Patterns observed in studies of emerging new media suggest the possibility of such a perspective in a theory of media invention and evolution. These perspectives are presented as five spheres of invention (mediators, characteristics, uses, effects, practices) that interact in two evolutionary cycles – of genre and media.

A human communication medium can be defined as a system that enables the creation and consumption (sending and receiving) of messages. While it is common to apply the term medium only to systems that enable mass communication, studies that attempt to compare media across contexts (interpersonal, group, organizational, mass) frequently use the term medium to describe a broad array of communication systems. Over 100 different media are identified in the media taxonomies of Bretz (1971), Ciampa (1989), Foulger (1992), and Hoffman and Novak (1996). A wide range of distinct media is always evident.

Table 2: Human communication media (systems that enable human communication)

Propinquitous interactive media	Intimacy, face-to-face interaction, social dancing, small group interaction, brainstorming, family interaction, participatory games and sports, classroom discussion
Live presentational media	Speeches, lectures, town meetings, judicial proceedings, ritual ceremonies, legislative assemblies, mobs, theatrical performance, bonfires, political rallies, live musical performance, sporting events, puppet shows
Static art media	Cave paintings, bas relief, oil paintings, quilts, pottery, sculpture, architecture, animations, photographs, filmstrips, holographic recordings, signs
Correspondence media	Letters, notes, memos, business correspondence, tele-writing, telegrams, telex, facsimile, tape letters, personal video, recorded tele-writing, electronic mail
Publishing media	Books, daily/weekly newspapers, magazines, video recordings (videotapes, DVD video, etc.), journals, recordings (records, CD's, cassettes), newsletters, merchandise packaging, online information, online databases, online services, electronic publications, multimedia documents (video text), billboards, direct mail advertising, microforms
Telephonic media	Telephone, teleconferencing, intercom, family radio, videophone, video conferencing, internet telephone (CU See Me), instant Messenger, text messages
Dynamic art media	Silent film, motion pictures, film with subtitles, talking animatons, lightboards
Broadcast media	Broadcast television, cable television, satellite TV, digital TV, radio, talk radio
Interactive mass media	Hypermedia, video hypermedia, computer conferencing (newsgroups, ListServes), cooperative composition, voice mail, electronic bulletin boards, streaming audio and video, voice-into-text concurrent interaction, virtual reality, interactive television

Source: These media are organized into nine general categories that are suggested by the typologies of Bretz (1971), Ciampa (1989), Foulger (1992), and Hoffman and Novak (1996).

The breadth of possibilities presented in the table goes beyond the ways we typically think about media. Indeed, studies of mass media and other communication systems tend to treat the system itself as a backdrop. The medium exists, is used, and has best practices, audiences and effects. The processes of mass media (for example, decision making, social relationships, message production, influence, control and power, as noted by Cappella, 1991) tend to be interesting only as an art and body of practice that can be taught to aspiring journalists and broadcasters.

Mass media theory generally focuses on effects (Littlejohn, 2002). Whether the focus is on the relationship of orality and writing to society (Innis, 1950; McLuhan, 1964), two-step

flows (Lazarfeld, Berelson and Gaudet, 1948; Katz, 1957), the diffusion of innovations (Rogers, 1995), audience cultiviation (Gerbner, 1986), agenda-setting (McCombs and Bell, 1996), uses and gratifications (Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch, 1974), dependency theory (Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur, 1976), or a critical theory (Littlejohn, 2002), the issue is the effects of media rather than the media themselves.

The question of how media came to be has not been entirely ignored. Histories of media development, including those of Marvin (1990), Douglas (1997), Fischer (1994), Raymond (1996), Winston (1998), Fang (1997), and Standage (1999), provide important insights, but report after the fact for well established media, generally using secondary sources. Theories of the evolution of media can be built based on these sources, and at least one (Winston, 1998) does so. The real process of invention in media will not, however, be found in such secondary sources as memoirs, patents, published controversies, legislative enactments, judicial proceedings, archival statistical data and other after the fact records. To find the real process of invention, one must appeal to the actual conversations that occur when people are actually building, operating and using a medium for the first time.

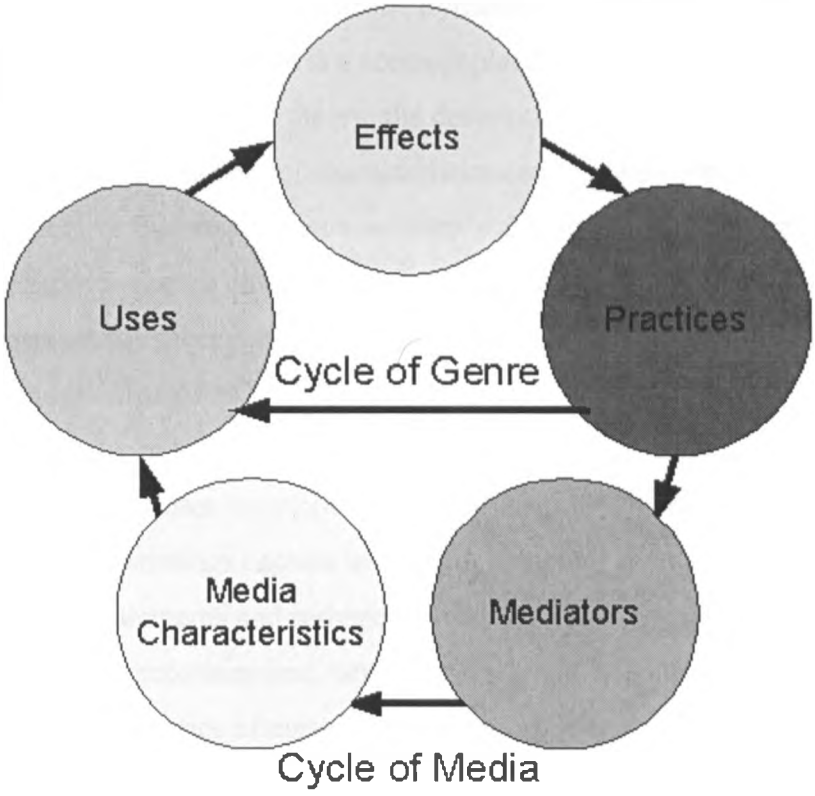
This suggests a need for participant-observation studies of new media as they are created. Such studies are not unheard of. Kidder (1981) documents, as an observer, the creation of a new computer system from concept to delivery. Foulger (1990) observes the creation and evolution of an instance of a new medium, computer conferencing; over a period of nine years as it passed through all of the stages of the diffusion of innovation curve. Rogers (1995) documents continuing patterns of evolution and change in several distinct, but interrelated spheres.

Spheres of invention

Media are invented and subsequently evolve in the intersection of five spheres of invention: mediators, characteristics, uses, effects, and practice. Each sphere is a distinct locus of invention, with changes in any sphere often initiating a need for invention in other spheres. The primary relationships between these spheres of invention form two cycles of change. The larger cycle of media is a primary engine of change during the early stages of media invention. The smaller cycle of genre, which focuses on optimizing the uses of the medium to user needs, becomes the primary engine of change during the subsequent evolution of the

medium. If we think of the spheres of invention as a system, the cycles summarize the primary feed forward and feedback relationships between the spheres, as depicted by the arrows in Figure 1.

Figure 1: A model of the spheres of invention



A model of the spheres of invention in which media are evolved and their primary interrelationships. Note that there are two cycles embedded in this model. The first, labelled here as the cycle of media, documents the interrelationships of these spheres of invention for the overall medium. The second, labelled here as the cycle of genre, documents the interrelationships of the spheres as the medium is optimized for specific uses.

Source: Littlejohn (2002).

The sphere of mediators encompasses the components from which media are built and the ways in which those components are organized. All media entail a system of mediators. Even face-to-face communication entails modalities (sight, sound and perhaps others) and carriers (light and air). Other media may also entail some combination of routers, memory, interfaces, filters, envelopes and amplifiers. For example, computer-based media generally entail all of these mediator types. The sphere of mediators can be treated as a system theory (Littlejohn, 2002) in which a selection of mediators is organized, often using cybernetic and information theory constructs, in such a way that they enable communication.

The sphere of characteristics encompasses the essential qualities of a communications medium. A wide range of characteristics, including multiple measures of modality, message, production, performance, participant and mediators, can be unambiguously described for any medium. They often vary together so as to reduce to a much smaller number of meaningful dimensions, including bandwidth, dynamism and interactiveness (Foulger, 1992; Hoffman and Novak, 1996). There is a commonplace notion of media characteristics associated with medium theory, system theory, the description of new media and the generation of media typologies. The sphere of characteristics converts this commonplace notion to a theoretical perspective that asserts that a medium's characteristics enable a set of possible uses, that media with similar characteristics will compete for those uses, and that a new medium's prospects for success depend, to a large extent, on its differentiation from existing entrenched media (Foulger, 1992).

The sphere of uses encompasses the purposes to which a medium is actually applied. Two examples: paintings capture images for posterity, recreate feelings in the viewer, make political statements and reshape the way we view the world. Broadcast television includes advertising, entertainment, news dispersal, and education. The uses of media are a frequent element of theories of mass communication, starting with Lasswell's (1948) functions of communication, but most obvious in the uses-and-gratifications approach (Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch, 1974). They are also fundamental to at least some theories of message production (Littlejohn, 2002), message reception and processing, and our use of the interpersonal context for relationship formation and maintenance, the management of face and boundaries, and conflict management.

The sphere of uses is consistent with this range of interpersonal and mass media approaches to media use, but makes a somewhat broader set of claims starting with the claim that characteristics enable uses. Second, all of the stakeholders associated with a medium (not just the audience) potentially make use of media to meet varying goals, with a medium's success imbedded in the intersection of those uses. Most important is the anchor that the sphere of uses provides for the cycle of genre. A medium's success and long-term survival depend on the number of uses it can attract, with each distinct use having a unique relationship to the medium and a potentially distinctive set of effects on both media participants and the world at large.

The sphere of effects encompasses the actual impacts the use of a medium has on those who are directly and indirectly associated with it. The orientation of this sphere towards a medium's stakeholders makes it potentially inclusive not only of existing audience, cultural and individual effects theories in mass communication (Littlejohn, 2002), but of attribution and attitude theories and critical theories. This integration of very different kinds of communication theory follows from the assumption that media effects are invented.

Media and attitude theories represent, respectively, functional and intentional views of those effects. Attribution theories present the mechanisms by which responsibility for effects is assessed. Critical theories contribute to the invention of effects. There are two principal variants of effect. "Application effects" follow from the successful, and generally intentional, use of a medium to achieve a particular goal, and are generally considered as desirable. "Outcome effects", whether intended or not, are those judged undesirable by users of the medium. One stakeholder's application effect may very well be another's outcome effect. An effect that is hardly considered at one point in time may be extremely important at another. Advertisers might consider the ability of a medium to sell products (cigarettes, for example) to large audiences a good thing. Critics of those products might consider such mass marketing capabilities a problem. This difference in the valuation of effect doesn't matter to the sphere of effects. What matters is that the effects are recognized and evaluated by stakeholders in a way that propels them to press for change in the sphere of practice.

The sphere of practice encompass the patterns of behaviour that participants within a medium adhere to when using the medium. A commonplace notion of practice, much of it tied to specific media (i.e., newspapers, television, radio, film, public speaking, face-to-face interaction, etc.), guides instruction across the communication curriculum, which is also influenced by theories of message production practice (Littlejohn, 2002), social and cultural practice, and interpretive practice. Among these theories only the ethnography of communication, with its focus on norms, forms and codes, comes close to capturing the idea of the sphere of practice. There are two major variations associated with the sphere of practice:

- One variation, which might be referred to as generic practice, encompasses the "forms" that people use to optimize specific uses of the medium to maximize desired effects. Generic practices originate in application effects and encompass patterns that differ

across the varied uses of the medium. They can include message components, message structure, message characteristics, the relationship of messages to one another, and prototypes of ideal performance or "best practice". Consistent with its naming, generic practice most often evolves entirely within the cycle of genre, with successful practice expanding the popularity of the associated use and encouraging imitation. The study of these kinds of generic practices has traditionally been most closely associated with genre theory (in literature, rhetoric, art, music, ethnography and other disciplines), but is also an essential element of conversation analysis and other theoretical traditions. Indeed, almost any perspective that is concerned with the effects of messages within specific media or contexts has an associated concern with best message practices.

- A second variation, which might be referred to as constraining, regulatory or outcome-driven practices, comprise the "norms" that participants and other stakeholders in the medium enact to minimize undesirable effects. Regulatory practices originate in outcome effects and encompass the rights, responsibilities, ethics, norms, policies, rules, roles, laws, agreements (informal and otherwise), and enforcement practices by which the medium is governed. They most often arise through a process of problem recognition, negotiation, compromise and agreement, and stabilize through a combination of enforcement and socialization. While regulatory practices can be enacted entirely within the sphere of genre, it is not unusual for them to be converted into, or to be enforced by, new mediators that ensure that certain kinds of behaviour don't occur, thus closing the cycle of media. A number of communication theories, including ethnography of communication (norms) and the coordinated management of meaning (regulative rules), usefully inform the nature of regulatory practice (Littlejohn, 2002).

Practices are the message of the medium that McLuhan (1964) referred to when he declared that "The Medium is the Message". All practices are, through their effects, relationship messages. They are the message structure that encapsulates message content, the relationships that tie messages together in particular ways and the constraints on participant behaviour that express the relationship of the medium to its stakeholders. While practices may be the visible message of the medium, they do not act in isolation. In media, there are no practices without effects, effects without uses, uses without characteristics, or characteristics without mediators. Practices close the loops that allow media to evolve continuously as a function of use, and genre to continue to evolve within established media. It is the

intersection of these very different spheres of invention that make media possible and that allow us to transmit messages through a human communication system.

Considering the normal operation and interaction of these spheres of invention it is easy to imagine a simple, but practical medium built around hammers, which really are used as mediators in at least some media, most notably instrumental music systems involving pianos and/or percussion. These can be seen operating in the sphere of:

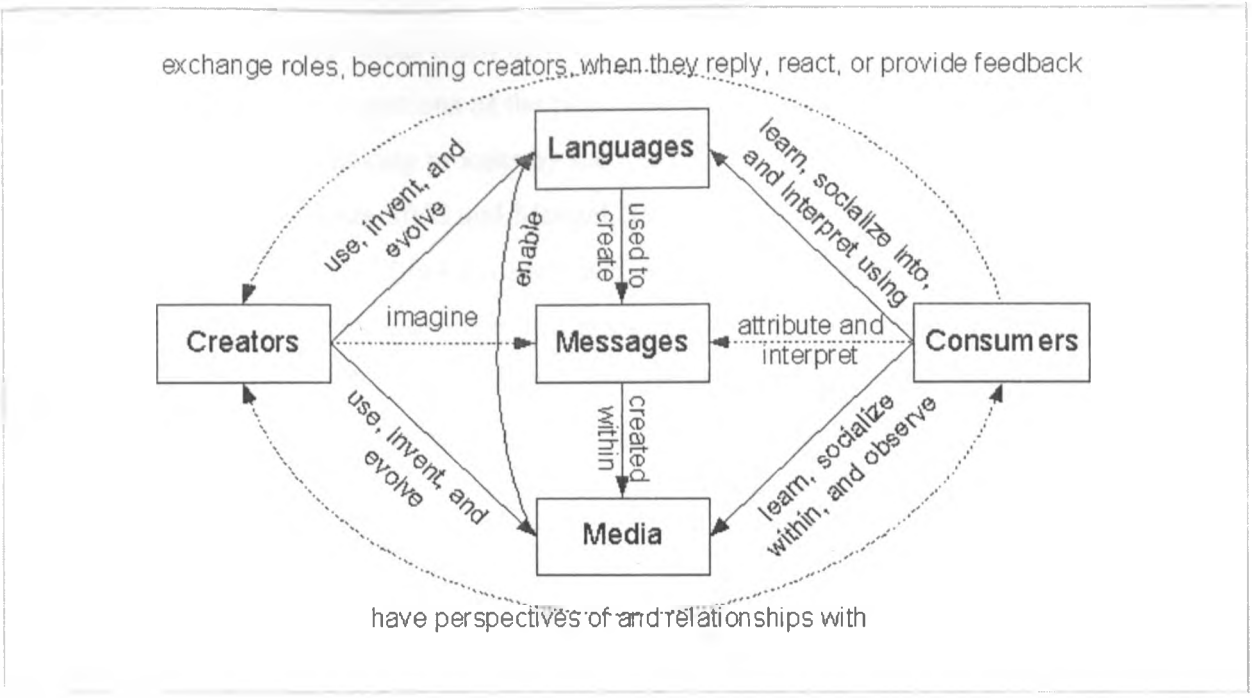
- Mediators: We know that hammers can be used to hit things. When they do, they form signals that can carry information/reference meaning, including sounds. The human interface to the hammer is simply "hold, aim, and swing until it hits something". To generate sound with a hammer, it must have something to hit. This requires the addition of a second mediator (e.g., a log). If we assume the presence of air so that sound will carry, we now have a proto-medium (a system that enables communication).
- Characteristics: We have a system with which a person can create loud hammering sounds. Comparing it to a near competitor, yelling, one notes that the range of signals that can be created by a hammer and log are limited when compared to human language, but that the signals carry a far greater distance than yelled human language does. It is unlikely, given this comparison, that hammering will ever be a substitute for human language for shorter distance communication, but that it might have value as a means of longer distance communication.
- Uses: We decide that there would be value in using hammering as a means of providing warning of danger to the community.
- Effects: We find that the system is effective in warning the community of impending danger, but that false warnings are a problem.
- Practices: The effectiveness of the medium is such that senders of messages attempt to improve it by experimenting with different hammering techniques (different ways of swinging the hammer, different points of contact with the log, etc.). Some of these techniques succeed, making the medium even more useful for its intended purpose. Inevitably, others imitate these techniques, thus creating a set of generic practices. The false warnings, however, create a debate in the community that results in the establishment of punishable rules against such false warnings.
- Effects through the use of these techniques: These actions should make the medium more effective for its intended uses while reducing the incidents of false warnings.

- Uses: This success encourages application of the medium to an additional use, calling the community together for meetings and celebrations.
- Effects: This additional use creates confusion, as it is difficult to tell whether one should break out weapons or walk to the community commons.
- Practices: The confusion causes users to agree on a hammer language that distinguishes warnings, meetings, celebrations and other meanings.
- Effects through the use of this language: The problem is reduced.
- Practices: It is found that hollow logs make sounds that carry further.
- Mediators: We improve our medium by requiring the use of hollow logs
- characteristics, our medium is useful at even longer distances (to surrounding communities).
- Uses: We start using our medium to send messages to those surrounding communities (Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch, 1974).

These processes of media invention and evolution form a theory of theories that integrate a variety of theoretical approaches into a unified whole. Each sphere of invention, intersection of spheres and cycle of innovation represents a very different theoretical space in which different kinds of theory and communication research methods apply. As a field, communication encompasses a wide range of very different and largely unintegrated theories and methods. Context-based gaps in the field like the one between mass media and interpersonal communication have been equated to those of "two sovereign nations," with "different purposes, different boundaries", "different methods" and "different theoretical orientations" (Berger and Sheven, 1988), causing at least some to doubt that the field can ever be united by a common theory of communication (Craig, 1999).

The theory of media invention and evolution presented here by no means unites communication theory into a single common framework. It does, however, provide something more than the kind of meta-model that Craig (1999) calls for. The spheres of invention and the larger cycles of media evolution through which they interact provide a substrate that may satisfy Cappella's (1991) suggestion and the field can be "remade by altering the organizational format", replacing contexts with processes that operate within the scope of media.

Figure 2: A metamodel of the communication process



Source: Foulger (1992).

Two-step flow theory of communication

The two-step flow of communication hypothesis was first introduced by Paul Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson and Hazel Gaudet in *The People's Choice,* a 1944 study focused on the process of decision-making during a presidential election campaign in the United States. These researchers expected to find empirical support for the direct influence of media messages on voting intentions. They were surprised to discover, however, that informal, personal contacts were mentioned far more frequently than exposure to radio or newspaper as sources of influence on voting behaviour. Armed with these data, Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) developed the two-step flow theory of mass communication.

It was not until the *People's Choice* was published that society really began to understand the dynamics of the media-audience relationship. The study suggested that communication from the mass media first reaches "opinion leaders", who filter the information they gather to their associates, with whom they are influential. Previous theories assumed that media directly reached the target of the information. For the theorists, the opinion leader theory proved an interesting discovery, considering the relationship between media and its target was not the focus of the research, but instead a small aspect of the study.

Lazarsfeld et al. suggested "ideas often flow from radio and print to the opinion leaders and from them to the less active sections of the population." People tend to be much more affected in their decision making process by face-to-face encounters with influential peers than by the mass media (Lazarsfeld and Menzel, 1963). As Weiss described in his 1969 chapter on functional theory, "Media content can be a determining influence.... What is rejected is any conception that construes media experiences as alone sufficient for a wide variety of effects." The other piece in the communication process is the opinion leader with which the media information is discussed. The studies by Lazarsfeld and his associates sparked interest in the exact qualities and characteristics that define the opinion leader. Is an opinion leader influential in all cases, on all topics? Or is the influence of an opinion leader constrained to certain topics? How does an opinion leader come to be influential?

A study by Robert Merton (1949) revealed that opinion leadership is not a general characteristic of a person, but rather limited to specific issues. He found that individuals who act as opinion leaders on one issue, may not be considered influential in regard to other issues. A later study directed by Lazarsfeld and Katz further investigated the characteristics of opinion leaders. This study confirmed the earlier assertions that personal influence seems more important in decision making than media. Again, influential individuals seem constrained in their opinion leading to particular topics, non-overlapping among the individuals. The opinion leaders seem evenly distributed among the social, economic, and educational levels within their community, but very similar in these areas to those with whom they had influence.

Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) did not identify any particular traits amongst opinion leaders that stand out. The traits that characterize each of the opinion leaders in their niche did have things in common, though. For one thing, the opinion leaders were identified as having the strongest interest in their particular niche. They hold positions within their community affording them special competence in their particular niches and they are generally friendly, companionable individuals. Finally, they have contact with relevant information supplied from outside their immediate circle. Interestingly enough, Katz and Lazarsfeld observed that the opinion leaders receive a disproportionate amount of their external information from media appropriate to their niche.

Studies by Glock and Nicosia (1966) determined that opinion leaders act "as a source of social pressure toward a particular choice and as a source of social support to reinforce that choice once it has been made." Charles Glock (1952) explained that opinion leaders often develop leadership positions in their social circles. They achieve these positions based on their knowledge of situations outside their circles. This theory asserts that information from the media moves in two distinct stages. First, individuals (opinion leaders) who pay close attention to the mass media and its messages receive the information. Opinion leaders then pass on their own interpretations in addition to the actual media content. The term "personal influence" was coined to refer to the process intervening between the media's direct message and the audience's ultimate reaction to that message. Opinion leaders are quite influential in getting people to change their attitudes and behaviours and are quite similar to those they influence.

The two-step flow theory has improved our understanding of how the mass media influence decision making. The theory refined the ability to predict the influence of media messages on audience behaviour, and it helped explain why certain media campaigns may have failed to alter audience attitudes and behaviour. The two-step flow theory gave way to the multi-step flow theory of mass communication or diffusion of innovation theory.

Although the theory of indirect flow of information from media to the target was quickly adopted, the original study performed by Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet (1948) was not. It had a few faults. The panel method by which they attempted to better understand the influences reaching a voter was unfaulted. It very effectively allowed the researchers to notice changes in a voter's feelings almost immediately. The resulting unit of change was an objective measurement that could easily be recorded and compared. The faults lie in the manner with which the researchers addressed the flow of influences.

Since the research was not designed to specifically test the flow of influence, the experiment was decidedly lacking in explanations. The first problem concerning the findings of the study were that the data had to be collected in a random sample, but subjects in a random sample can only speak for themselves. For these reasons, each person could only say whether or not they considered themselves advice givers. Lazarsfeld and his associates in the 1940 election study were unable to determine the specific flow of influence. They determined there were a

number of opinion leaders spread throughout the socio-economic groups; however, these leaders were not directly linked to particular groups within the socio-economic levels.

Even within studies specifically designed to determine who opinion leaders are and how they are different from the average populace, there have been problems born from experimental design. "The criticism of the concept of opinion leaders has focused mainly on its methodological deficiencies" (Weimann, 1991). As Weimann suggested in his 1989 study of previous research, much of the design problem involved determining the opinion leaders while studying the flow of information. There seemed to be too many factors to control. Despite the difficulties in qualifying the influentials, the theory of a group of individuals that filter the flow of media information has lived on.

Although the empirical methods behind the two-step flow of communication were not perfect, the theory did provide a very believable explanation for information flow. The opinion leaders do not replace media, but rather guide discussions of media. Brosius and Weimann (1996) explain the benefits of the opinion leader theory well in their 1996 study of agenda setting, "The opinion leaders should not be regarded as replacing the role of interpersonal networks but, in fact, as reemphasizing the role of the group and interpersonal contacts".

Lazarsfeld and his associates detailed five characteristics of personal contact that give their theory more validity:

- ***Non-purposiveness/casualness:*** One must have a reason for tuning into a political speech on television, but political conversations can just "pop-up". In this situation, the people involved are less likely to have their defences up in preparation, and thus are more likely open to the conversation.
- ***Flexibility to counter resistance:*** In a conversation, there is always opportunity to counter any resistance. This is not so in media, a one-sided form of communication.
- ***Trust:*** Personal contact carries more trust than media. As people interact, they are better able through observation of body language and vocal cues to judge the honesty of the person in the discussion. Newspaper and radio do not offer these cues.
- ***Persuasion without conviction:*** The formal media are forced to persuade or change opinions. In personal communication, sometimes friendly insistence can cause action without affecting any comprehension of the issues.

Menzel (1966) introduced another strong point in favour of the two-step flow of information theory. First, there is an abundance of information channels "choked" with all types of journals, conferences, and commercial messages. These are distracting and confusing to their target. With the barrage of information humans are flooded with daily, it is not hard to understand why someone might turn to a peer for help with evaluating all of it.

The true test of a theory lies in its timelessness – its ability to spark interest and provoke thought years after its introduction. The two-step flow of communication theory has been able to remain relevant throughout the years. Several recent studies have addressed issues arising from Lazarsfeld's, Katz's and Merton's studies from the 1940s. In two such studies Weimann (1994) and Brosius and Weimann (1996) addressed the setting of agendas as a two-step flow of communication. Weimann (1991) looks at the re-emergence of the opinion leader theory in the modern day, addressing several problems that have been overcome and sparking the new interest in the old theory.

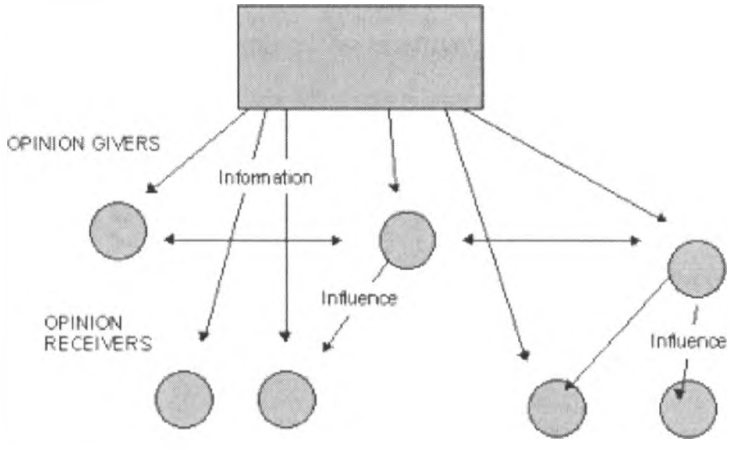
The two-step flow of communication theory is difficult to witness in the field. Many researchers have attempted to design credible models for testing the theory, but with only minor success (Weimann, 1991). Brosius and Weimann (1996) set out to explain agenda setting using the basis of the two-step flow of communication theory determined by Lazarsfeld, Katz, and the many other researchers. To avoid the difficulties in studying the actual flow of communication, Brosius and Weimann separated the opinion leaders from their two-step flow of communication theory. Participants were studied against a scale to determine the "strength of personality".

The Brosius–Weimann study attempts to describe the individuals whose personal communication has impact on agenda setting. These individuals are the typical opinion leaders, who still control the flow of information. Brosius and Weimann (1996) define agenda setting as a two-step flow, wherein certain individuals (influentials) "collect, diffuse, filter, and promote the flow of information" from media to the community. The difference between these influentials and the opinion leaders, as Weimann (1991) stresses, is that these influentials are usually elitists, not spread throughout the community as the old theory suggested. Are these influentials a new breed? Or is there really a difference between influentials and opinion leaders? This has not been addressed as yet. The two authors do suggest that the influentials are a subsection of the opinion leaders.

For fifty years, the research organization Roper has considered the group of "influentials" important enough to track. Regularly, reports and studies are performed in an attempt to unlock the secret to reaching these influentials. Who are they? What has the term "influential" come to describe? According to Diane Crispell, these people are the "thought leaders" and "pioneer consumers". "Influentials are better educated and more affluent than the average person, but it is their interest in the world around them and their belief that they can make a difference that makes them influential" (Crispell, 1989).

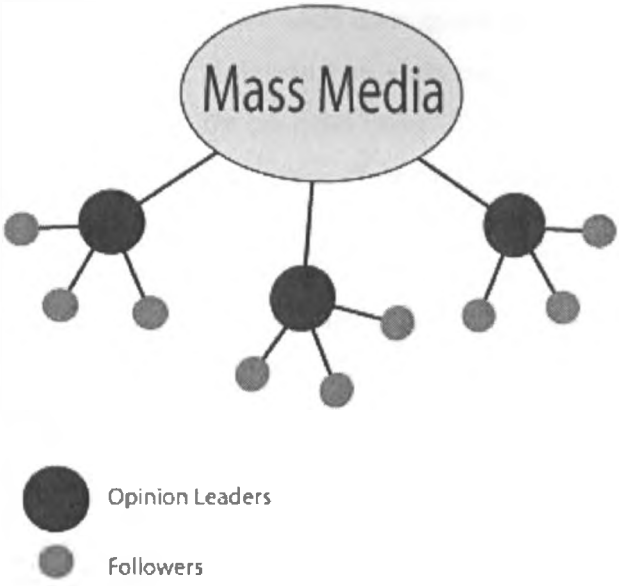
The influentials today seem to be isolated in the upper class. They are the trend-setters. It is this group that is first to adopt new technology and that remains on the leading edge of trends (Poltrack, 1985). This is the group that advertising attempts to reach. Daily articles are published on maximizing the market by reaching these influentials. The idea remains that the most efficient media is word-of-mouth, and it is by reaching the influentials with other forms of media that this word-of-mouth is generated. It seems the opinion leaders of yesterday have been overlooked for the smaller subset of influentials.

Figure 3: Two-step model



Source: Bowes (1997).

Figure 4 Opinion leaders



Source: Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955).

Diffusion of innovation

What do corn and communication have in common? Together, they helped piece together one of the most popular general systems theories in the field of communication, namely the *Diffusion of Innovation*. Back in 1943, Bruce Ryan and Neal Gross studied the diffusion of hybrid seed corn innovation amongst farmers in Iowa (DeFleur and Lowery, 1995). Their investigation included four main elements of diffusion, including:

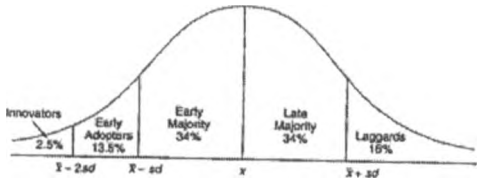
- A specific innovation.
- Processes of interpersonal and mass communication that created awareness of the item.
- A specific kind of social system.
- Different individual types that make decisions at various stages of diffusion.

Their findings suggested the important role of interpersonal networks in the diffusion process as a system. Within the farming community, they found that the exchange of farmers' personal experiences with hybrid seed was at the heart of diffusion. This was illustrated by observing that when enough farmers adopted hybrid seed corn, the rate of adoption took off.

In 1963, Everett Rogers built on their findings by studying this diffusion phenomenon across disciplines and producing the five stages of the adoption process: awareness, interest, evaluation, trial and, finally, adoption. Rogers also refined the distinctions between early

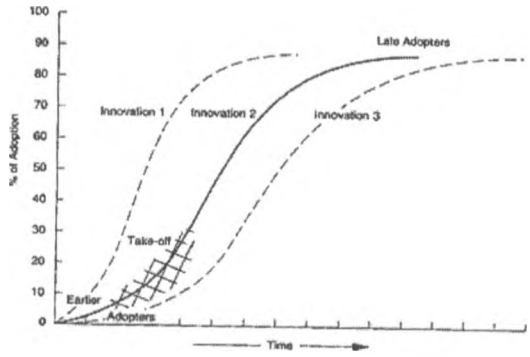
accepters, early adopters, the majority and later accepters in the popular *Diffusion of Innovation Curve* and a corresponding defined set of individual adopter types, including innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority and laggards, each with its own location on the adoption curve. This is also how poverty alleviation programmes are supposed to filter through communities if they have good communications strategies integrated in them.

Figure 5: Relationship between types of adopters classified by innovativeness and their location on the adoption curve



Source: Rogers (1963).

Figure 6: Shapes of curves of diffusion for innovation that spread over various periods of time



Source: Rogers (1963).

Everett Rogers explained *Diffusion of Innovations* as a theory that analyses, as well as helps explain, the adaptation of a new innovation. It helps to explain the process of social change. An innovation is an idea, practice or object that is perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption. The perceived newness of the idea for the individual determines the reaction to it (Rogers, 1995). As a result, diffusion is the process by which an innovation is

communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system. Thus, the four main elements of the theory are the innovation, communication channels, time and the social system.

The realization of the Diffusion of Innovations theory might seem simple at first, but various other earlier works were critical in helping communication researchers arrive at it. Then the two-step flow theory of communication was a hypothesis that was under considerable examination here again. Elihu Katz (1957) hypothesized that ideas flow from radio and print to opinion leaders and from these to the less active sections of the population. Through a series of studies, which were increasingly more refined over time, researchers found that the two-step flow model only accounted for one aspect of interpersonal relations as a channel of communication.

Interpersonal relations influences decision making in more ways including as channels of information (the two-step flow emphasized only this aspect), as sources of social pressure, as well as sources of social support. The two-step flow theory of communication was an early hypothesis (similar to the magic/silver bullet theory of communication), which is now dated, but served as a stepping-stone in developing the more refined diffusion of innovation theory.

Magic bullet theory

The magic bullet (hypodermic needle) theory was one of the earliest concepts of media theories that credited immense power to mass communication to influence its audiences. Early thought about the mass media surrounded the thinking that when media audience members were isolated from one another, they were vulnerable targets, easily influenced by mass media messages. The magic bullet theory, which originated in the 1920s and 1930s, proposed that as an audience, we were all passive and equally susceptible to media messages (Lowery and DeFleur 1983).

The media were thought to have the ability to shape public opinion and persuade the masses toward nearly any point of view desired by the author of that particular text. Early thinking was that messages were like magic bullets; they struck all members of the audience equally and created uniform effects among them in a very different way. This theory has also been known as the "hypodermic needle theory", using the metaphor as a reference to how the

media are assumed to be injecting all audience members with the same message, causing a uniform thinking among them that the author of the media text intended.

Hypodermic syringe

This the earliest passive audience model of media effects. It has two main features: The effect is fairly immediate and it is a simple stimulus-response model of human behaviour. According to the theory the media are like a syringe that injects ideas, attitudes and beliefs into the audience, which as a powerless mass has little choice but to be influenced. Consequently, it is a transmission model of communication and the message encoded by the sender is the message received by the audience, unless there are obstacles that corrupt the message. There seem to be two areas of concern here, though: violence and political attitudes (Lowrey and DeFleur, 1983).

Audiences – Active and passive

It would be unusual for any of us living in a contemporary society to go throughout a day without encountering some form of mass media. This is not surprising: the media are directed at us, we are the audience. Since most of us cannot avoid the mass media, it is clearly of interest to consider what, if anything, the media do to us and what our responses to media messages are. There seem to be three important questions:

- Do the media affect our behaviour or beliefs?
- If they do produce an effect, how can this be explained and measured?
- To what extent do we ignore or subvert media messages?

In general there seem to be two main approaches to the study of audiences. One approach views the audience as very much the passive recipient of media messages – the media produce effects in an audience. The second approach considers the audience as much more actively involved in media interpretation – the reception analysis model.

Or more simply:

- What does the media do to us? (The passive audience)
- What do we do with the media? (The active audience)

This division reflects the more general argument within social sciences as to the extent to which our behaviours are determined by the wider society, or the result of freely exercised choice. The question that has dominated the study of mass communications since the early 1960s has been: "What do mass communications do to audiences?" It was only in the late 1960s that people began, timidly, to ask: "What do audiences do to mass communications?"

Active audience models are based on a simple idea – that no text has but one single meaning. The meaning has to be extracted (decoded) by the receiver. In other words the transmission model of communication is rejected and is replaced with the idea that reality is socially constructed. As receivers we are constantly trying to make sense of information we receive – the media message does not have a monopoly on meaning. Texts are viewed as polysemic (having multiple meanings). A text may have a preferred reading – the meaning intended by the person producing it – but that meaning can be undermined when decoded by the audience. The earliest attempt to try to account for an active audience was the uses and gratifications theory (Lowrey and DeFleur, 1983).

Reception analysis

Moving beyond the idea that audiences use the media in different ways, reception analysis takes a closer look at what is actually going on. Reception analysis concentrates on the audience itself and how it comes to a particular understanding of a text. To some extent it is obvious that each of us will decode texts in ways that reflect our personal biographies – our own histories. So gender, class, occupation and personal circumstance may all be important in determining how we decode a text.

Owing to the interest that the theories of Katz and Lazarsfeld caused, many methods were developed in the 1960s and 1970s to identify opinion leaders, their characteristics, and how their influence is related to mass media and the society in general. Weimann (1994) found four important methods of identification during the "golden age of opinion leaders" (1960s and 1970s):

- Sociometric method
- Informants' ratings method
- Self-designation method
- Observation method

These can be elaborated as follows:

- ***Sociometric method***: This method, based in the works of Moreno (1960), uses simple and direct questions to members of a given group in order to know their affiliations and social networks. The sociometric method is very reliable, since it seeks the point of view of the followers and therefore it is possible to trace more easily the social connections and the role and status of the members of a given group. Weimann (1994) suggests that the weakness of this method is that although it is possible to follow in a progressive way the strong ties in a given group, it is almost impossible to identify the weak ties, the connection between unrelated segments of the group.

- ***Informants' rating method***: Instead of using a random sample from the universe of the group as in the sociometric method, this system uses key members of the group previously identified in order to have their point of view about who in the community is more influential in terms of opinion leadership. Even though this method is highly accurate and economical, it has the inconvenience that it is necessary to design a previous database in order to choose the "key informants". Therefore, it is only suitable for relatively small groups.

- ***Self-designating method***: This kind of study is based on the original dichotomy-style method used by Lazarsfeld et al. (1948) in which respondent have to classify themselves as opinion leaders or followers. The two questions used by Lazarsfeld in his study where: have you recently tried to convince anyone of your political ideas, and has anyone recently asked you for your advice on a political question? This set of questions had the problem of having a systematic error since opinion leaders almost always ranks higher than followers (Weimann, 1994)

- ***Observation method:*** This method emphasizes the observation of a group to determine its inner interactions and identify the position of key members in the flow of information. Although this method has the advantage of a high score in validity, it has the problem that it could be intrusive, especially in small groups.

Chapter Four

Methodology

Primary and secondary data were used to quantify the economic contribution if any of communication to the overall improvement in the standards of the living of the urban poor. The methodology involved identification of the research site and target populations, purposive sampling of respondents, testing and administration of a study-specific questionnaire, and analysis of both primary and secondary data. The study took place during July, August and September 2005.

Research site

Over 50% of Nairobi's population is estimated to be living in slums euphemistically referred to as informal settlements. They subsist in abject poverty, just managing to keep their heads above water. The Eastlands area of Nairobi was selected for two reasons: One, many poor people reside in estates around this area and two, the geographical setting is representative of Kenya's ethnic communities. Eastlands was also a physical focus because it is an area where the highest concentration of poor people live in generally small households.

Research design

The data collection process required a preliminary survey in order to construct the sampling frame and draw a sample. A pilot survey was conducted in the area for this purpose and a population of households was identified. Collection of primary data entailed conducting interviews using self-administered questionnaires on sample respondents. Secondary data was also used to provide the body of literature and theoretical traditions and ideologies. The study made use of both quantitative and qualitative data. While quantitative data focused on numbers, averages, groups (numerically) and fractions, the qualitative data focused on attitude, opinion, criticism and choice.

Respondents were selected at random from various locations of the Eastlands area. Trained enumerators (all university college graduates) were used to administer the questionnaire. Five enumerators were recruited and trained on poverty issues and knowledge of the areas they

were going to visit. The training also covered the objectives of the study, the survey instruments and interviewing techniques, as well as on how to address and approach subjects in a culturally acceptable manner.

Pre-testing of the questionnaire was done in 20 households and data analysed before the real data collection was done. Minor changes on the structure of the questionnaire were made where necessary, but the questionnaires that were used in the pilot study were not included in the final analysis. The pre-testing was also taken as an opportunity to retrain the field assistants. The procedure used to ensure the quality of the data collected included a careful training of the enumerators, close supervision during the actual survey, and daily checks to ensure consistency, completeness and clarity of the completed questionnaires.

Description of the population

The study targeted households in a more or less organized setting. Only adults were considered; this was vital as the study attempted to look at the relationship between poverty among urban poor and the communication component in government programmes. The study also identified and examined the communication component in government programmes that target the urban poor, and assessed the effectiveness of government communication channels in regard to programmes that target the urban poor. Given that not every household in Nairobi's Eastlands could be interviewed, a random sample of the population of 300 households was selected and a total of 250 respondents were reached (male and female). The research was able to get respondents from all key categories based on gender, level of education, income levels, age and type of shelter.

Sampling method

Both probability and non-probability sampling techniques were used. All respondents were purposively sampled from Eastands area of Nairobi owing to the strategic justification outlined above. The respondents were derived from several estates in the Eastlands area, including Mathari North (areas I, II, III and IV also Mathari valley), Kariobangi North (Korogocho, Baba Dogo, Light Industries, Kasabuni, Lakisama and Kariadudu), Huruma, Dandora (phases I, II and III), Makadara, Majengo, Umoja and Kayole. Cluster sampling was used to classify these estate into areas from which households were randomly selected.

Purposive techniques were used to ensure that key respondents were representative of every estate and the Ministry of Planning and National Development.

Data Sources

The primary data were generated from the household surveys. This report has, however, utilized data from sources of different quality. It is thus important to explain how the information was collected, its quality and the underlying concepts used in collecting the data. Some of this information was in published form while most was unpublished. While the published information was largely in its finalized form, but of the unpublished data were raw, in the sense that they were undergoing further analysis in preparation for publication. Such raw data as those found in the working paper series are likely to change, albeit slightly, after further validation, and are therefore provisional. The administrative records mainly generated poverty data from the Ministry of Planning and National Development. Use was also made of published data contained in the two annual publications, *Statistical Abstract* and *Economic Survey*. The figures are reliable but limited to national aggregates. The other caution is that the current year figures are always provisional and hence subject to change in subsequent editions.

Data processing and analysis

The Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) was used for data analysis. Graphs were plotted using SPSS programme and Microsoft Excel.

Chapter Five

Analysis and Presentation of Empirical Results

This chapter discusses respondents' households and their environment, access to the media, and personal characteristics. A copy of the questionnaire used to gather the primary data is included in Appendix A. Charts illustrating the study results are contained in Appendix B and Annex C has the map of Nairobi that was used as a guide in selecting the estates in the study area.

Some of the major problems faced by interviewers include the following

- Subjective responses or blatant lies from some respondents.
- Hostility from certain people within the neighbourhood.
- Insecurity as these areas are prone to numerous crimes during the day.
- Difficulty moving around, as the areas have exposed sewage, refuse, human waste, trenches, rubbish heaps, etc.
- Financial constraints hindered the smooth collection of data and some respondents demanded money before they would participate.
- Interview fatigue.

Households and their environment

Household in this case is defined to a component that includes all persons who occupy a housing unit. The occupants could be a single family, one person living alone, two or more families living together, or any other group of related or unrelated persons who share living arrangements. As seen in Table 2, in the population studied, 46% were household heads, 41% were spouses and 98% were children (son/daughter) of the household, while 20% were either a sister or a brother of the household head. The brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law were 4% and 6%, respectively, with nieces and nephews being 9% and 4% in that order. Cousins were 14% and others 8%.

Table 2: Household members

Number	Item	Frequency	Percentage
1	Household head	46	18.4
2	Spouse	41	16.4
3	Son/Daughter	98	39.2
4	Brother/Sister	20	8.0
5	Brother-in-law	4	1.6
6	Sister-in-lLaw	6	2.4
7	Parents	NIL	0.0
8	Nieces	9	3.6
9	Nephews	4	8.0
10	Cousins	14	5.6
11	Other (Specify)	8	3.2

Source: Computed from survey data by author.

Table 3 shows that of the 250 people studied, 69.6% were male and 30.4% were female. Men therefore dominate as urban household heads in the area studied. Most of the female household heads were single mothers, while a majority of the households headed by males were a complete family. Households headed by females are sometimes the result of divorce, separation or widowhood.

Table 3: Gender

Number	Item	Frequency	Percentage
1	Female	76	30.4
2	Male	174	69.6

Source: Computed from survey data by author.

As for facilities available in the households, as can be seen in Table 4 radios are the most common electronic gadgets available, owned by 31.6% of the respondents. These are simple radios meant for catching up with the latest news and other programmes of interest They operate on dry cells, as only 18.8% of the households have electricity supply. Apparently 16.4% posses televisions, mainly small black and white 14-inch sets that use car batteries to power them. The 1.6% with refrigerators have small second-hand units used mainly to store business products like meat and other perishables. A bicycle is handy here, and 14% of the households have one; they are used as a means of transport for going to work. Cell phones are owned by 17.2% of households, most of them without credit to communicate, so they are

basically for receiving phone calls. In the entire population studied only one person (0.4%) owned a vehicle (an old pick up), which was used for transporting business items.

Table 4: Facilities available in households

Number	Items	Frequency	Percentage
1	Electricity	47	18.8
2	Radio	79	31.6
3	Television	41	16.4
4	Refrigerator	4	1.6
5	Bicycle	35	14.0
6	Cell phone/Mobile	43	17.2
7	Car	1	0.4

Source: Computed from survey data by author.

Most of the respondents (58.4%) obtain their water from water vendors, while 37.6% use piped water, but this source is unreliable due either to disconnections or to illegal water connections that draw off more than the supply can support. A few households use bore holes; this is represented by 4% of the total respondents. See Table 5 for the details.

Table 5: Water source

Number	Item	Frequency	Percentage
1	Piped water	94	37.6
2	Water vendors	146	58.4
3	Bore holes	10	4.0
4	Well	-	NIL
5	Bottled water	-	NIL
6	Others (Specify)	-	NIL

Source: Computed from survey data by author.

As far as toilet facilities is concerned, ventilated pit latrines are commonly used by the respondents (33.2%), the other common type of toilets are traditional pit latrines (28%). Flush toilets are there (24.4%), but most are not used because of the apparent lack of piped water in most areas. Other places are even worse off without any form of toilet facilities (see Table 6).

Table 6: Toilet facilities

Number	Item	Frequency	Percentage
1	Flush toilet	61	24.4
2	Traditional/Pit Latrines	70	28.0
3	Ventilated/Improved pit latrines	83	33.2
4	No facility/bush/fields	36	14.4
5	Other(specify)	NIL	

Source: Computed from survey data by author.

A majority of the respondents live in very poor structures, with 41.6% living in small blocks of about 10 feet by 10 feet or smaller, and 38.8% living in houses made of mud or clay. Others live in iron sheet (12%) and wooden (5.2%) structures. Houses of the rest are very poorly constructed of paper, tin or an assortment of materials (see Table 7).

Table 7: Housing structures

Number	Item	Frequency	Percentage
1	Block/Brick/Cement	104	41.6
2	Clay/Mud	97	38.8
3	Iron sheet	30	12.0
4	Wood	13	5.2
5	Other (Specify)	6	2.4

Source: Computed from survey data by author.

As shown in Table 8, the source of income for most respondents (32.8%) is small-scale informal businesses in the sector commonly referred to as *Jua Kali*. A good number are also self-employed (27.2%) in the private sector, while others are casual workers who do odd jobs like washing clothes or cars for others in the neighbourhood. A few of the respondents are employed in the civil service (0.8%) and some rely on their pension money (1.6%).

Table 8: Income source

Number	Item	Frequency	Percentage
1	Employment in civil service	2	0.8
2	Employment in private sector	54	21.6
3	Business/Self-employment	68	27.2
4	Jua Kali/Informal sector	82	32.8
5	Casual work	40	16.0
6	Pension	4	1.6
7	Other(Specify)	NIL	

Source: Computed from survey data by author

In terms of medical services, the majority of the respondents just buy medicine across the counters in local shops without prescription (31.2%). Some visit local council dispensaries and health centres (26.4%), while others (18.4%) visit local low cost private clinics (which more often than not have unqualified staff). Some also visit herbalists (12.4%) and a very small percentage 2% visit consultants in private clinics mostly away from their estates or located in the central business district. Apparently even members of those passionate Christian sects that encourage their congregation to seek divine intervention do not do so when they are ailing (see Table 9).

Table 9: Medical services

Number	Item	Frequency	Percentage
1	Visit a consultant in a private clinic	5	2.0
2	Visit local private clinic	46	18.4
3	Local Council dispensaries/Health centres	66	26.4
4	Kenyatta National Hospital	24	9.6
5	Major private hospitals	NIL	
6	Buy medicine in local shops	78	31.2
7	Visit herbalist	31	12.4
8	Seek divine intervention	NIL	
9	Other (Specify)	NIL	

Source: Computed from survey data by author.

Most roads in the data collection areas are mere paths (29.6%) that cannot allow vehicles through even in times of emergency. Some are just dry weather roads (28.4%) and murram roads (26%). Tarmac roads are few and those that are there are in bad shape, with pot holes all over and very poor drainage (see Table 10).

Table 10: Roads in the areas

Number	Item	Frequency	Percentage
1	Tarmac roads	40	16
2	Murram roads	65	26
3	Dry weather roads	71	28.4
4	Paths	74	29.6
5	Other	NIL	

Source: Computed from survey data by author.

The main mode of transportation is the *matatus,* on which 40.8% respondents depend for transport. A good number also use public bus transport by a company called Bus Track,

which operates mainly within the city of Nairobi; the respondents who use this mode of transport comprise 26%. A lot of walking is also done by many respondents (24.4%) around this area, others (7.2%) depend on bicycles as a means of transport (see Table 10).

Table 11: Transport system often used

Number	Item	Frequency	Percentage
1	Private car	NIL	
2	Taxi	NIL	
3	*Matatus*	102	40.8
4	Bus Track	65	26.0
5	*Tuk Tuk*	4	1.6
6	*Boda boda* taxi	NIL	
7	Private bicycle	18	7.2
8	Walk	61	24.4
9	Other (Specify)	NIL	

Source: Computed from survey data by author.

As can be seen in Table 12, the majority of children from the interviewed households go to government City Council schools (37.2%); and other 23.6% go to private low cost schools and 22.8% attend church sponsored schools in the area. Others go to NGO sponsored schools and makeshift public schools around the area; these last categories are represented by 9.2% and 7.2%, respectively.

Table 12: Schools in the areas

Number	Items	Frequency	Percentage
1	Private high cost	NIL	
2	Private low cost	59	23.6
3	Government City Council	93	37.2
4	Church sponsored	57	22.8
5	NGO sponsored	23	9.2
6	Makeshift public schools	18	7.2
7	Other (Specify)	NIL	

Source: Computed from survey data by author.

Most the tertiary institutions in the areas where the data were collected are makeshift public college (36%) and private low cost institutes (32%) run in the traditional way with very limited facilities. There are also some church sponsored colleges (14.4%) and private high cost colleges (6.8%). The latter are doing very poorly because of the considered enormous

amount of fee they charge. In some areas, there are also NGO sponsored colleges (4%). (See Table 13.)

Table 13: Tertiary institutions available

Number	Item	Frequency	Percentage
1	Private high cost colleges	17	6.8
2	Private low cost colleges	80	32.0
3	Government collages	17	6.8
4	Church sponsored	36	14.4
5	NGO sponsored	10	4.0
6	Makeshift public colleges	90	36.0
7	Other (Specify)	NIL	

Source: Computed from survey data by author.

Access to the media

Many respondents do not have access to newspapers, with 34.8% saying they do not read the leading local daily newspapers at all. Another 34.8% read newspapers at least once a week. Those who read daily (22.4%) do not often buy, but would normally read if they borrow from their friends and also from vendors at a small fee on the newspaper stands, this is then returned later. Another 7.2% read newspapers less than once a week, mainly those that are used to wrap items they buy from shops in the estates. (See Table 14.)

Table 14: Newspaper access

Number	Items	Frequency	Percentage
1	Every day	56	22.4
2	At least once a week	87	34.8
3	Less than once a week	18	7.2
4	Not at all	87	34.8
5	Other (Specify)	NIL	

Source: Computed from survey data by author.

Table 4 above showed that 31.6% of surveyed households have a small radio. A large number of the respondents (61.6%) do listen to the radio every day largely because it is cheap to buy and maintain. Some who are very poor either get to listen with their neighbours at least once a week, particularly when there is a major news (29%), or less than once a week (28%) if there is no major breaking news. Some do not listen to the radio at all because they cannot

afford one and those staying in the neighbourhood are also too poor to own one (15.6%). See Table 15 for the details.

Table 15: Radio listening

Number	Item	Frequency	Percentage
1	Every day	154	61.6
2	At least once a week	29	11.6
3	Less than once a week	28	11.2
4	Not at all	39	15.6

Source: Computed from survey data by author.

Half of the respondents (50%) do not watch television at all because they do not have access to a set. Those who watch every day (34.4%) either own a set or visit their neighbours who own one. The others who watch at least once a week (11.2%) also do so because they have visited a friend or a neighbour, while 4.4% of the respondents watch television less than once a week. (See Table 16.)

Table 16: Television watching

Number	Item	Frequency	Percentage
1	Every day	86	34.4
2	At least once a week	28	11.2
3	Less than once a week	11	4.4
4	Not at all	125	50.0

Source: Computed from survey data by author.

The main item that many respondents with access to the media said was common was politics (37.6%) and that is what attracts them most, particularly the males. Females mainly go for entertainment and 36.4% respondents who were interviewed found entertainment to be common in most media items. Development matters, they said, only take 11.6% of the media items featured, while educative features are only apportioned 8.8% of the space and airtime. For health matters only 5.6% said it was common.

Table 17: Items considered common in the media

Number	Item	Frequency	Percentage
1	Entertainment	91	36.4
2	Politics	94	37.6
3	Educative features	22	8.8
4	Health matters	14	5.6
5	Development matters	29	11.6
6	Other (Specify)	NIL	

Source: Computed from survey data by author.

From one source or another, 52.8% have heard about some form of a government national development plan, while 47.2% have no idea (Table 18a). This is not very heartening given that these development plans are geared towards alleviating poverty among them. The awareness level should be at more than 90% if implementation and participation in these projects is to reduce poverty effectively.

Table 18a: Knowledge about national development plans

Number	Item	Frequency	Percentage
1	Yes	132	52.8
2	No	118	47.2

Source: Computed from survey data by author.

The main sources of information for those who know about the government's national development plans are both the radio and the newspapers, with each having 30% of the respondents saying that is where they got information (Table 18b). The respondents who got this information from the television number 22%, while others got it from posters (6.8%) as well as billboards and opinion leaders with (1.6%) each. Another 8% said they have some knowledge but could not pin down the actual source. This gives a clue to the effectiveness of government representatives.

Table 18b: The medium that is the source of information

Number	Item	Frequency	Percentage
1	Newspaper	75	30.0
2	Radio	75	30.0
3	TV	55	22.0
4	Billboard	4	1.6
5	Poster	17	6.8
6	Sticker	NIL	
7	Opinion leaders	4	1.6
8	Government agent	NIL	
9	Other (Specify)	20	8.0

Source: Computed from survey data by author.

As far as knowledge of poverty reduction programmes is concerned, the majority of the respondents (69%) did not know such a government programme exists, while only 31% had an idea of what it is. They are not very clear what this programme is about, however, but only know that it is meant to reduce poverty levels, particularly in urban areas where hard core poverty is the order of the day (see Table 19).

Table 19: Knowledge of poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP)

Number	Item	Frequency	Percentage
1	Yes	78	31.0
2	No	172	69.0

Source: Computed from survey data by author.

Only 24.8% of the respondents reported understanding what the MDGs are. Since most government programmes are hinged on the MDGs, it is very unfortunate that 75.2% of those interviewed do not understand what they are, whom they are meant for as well as when and how they should be achieved. (See Table 20.)

Table 20: Understanding of Millennium Development Goal (MDGs)

Number	Item	Frequency	Percentage
1	Yes	62	24.8
2	No	188	75.2

Source: Computed from survey data by author.

As shown in Table 21a, the majority (67%) of the respondents do not share information on PRSPs because they do not fully comprehend what they are. A third (33%) did share information, but only the basic smidgens they understood about the programmes.

Table 21a: Sharing of information about PRSPs

Number	Item	Frequency	Percentage
1	Yes	82	33
2	No	168	67

Source: Computed from survey data by author.

That government needs to do more for the poor was what 55.5% of the respondents could say (Table 21b). They say it should use the mainly Provincial Administration to disseminate pertinent information that the poor need to know, including District Commissioners, District Officers, and area Chiefs and their assistants. The government should also organize campaigns and crusades on the development plans it has for awareness purposes as well as use the media as much as possible, particularly radio, since 38.4% would like to hear more about such programmes. Some (2%) who are a bit pessimistic because they have heard about the programmes before and their lives have not changed say they do not want to hear more, while 4.4% think that these programmes are irrelevant to their lives. Apparently these programmes are not totally unknown, since in one way or another the respondents are aware of them even if in the most rudimentary manner. This therefore means that the government should do more particularly in designing these programmes to have a good communication campaign element.

Table 21b: Reactions when information about PRSPs is shared

Number	Item	Frequency	Percentage
1	Would like to hear more	96	38.4
2	Have heard enough about them	5	2.0
3	Are irrelevant to their life (of the poor)	11	4.4
4	Government needs to do more to reach the poor	138	55.5
5	PRSP is a very strange animal	NIL	
6	Other (Specify)	NIL	

Source: Computed from survey data by author.

Personal details

Very many of the respondents are poor, basically living below the poverty line, with up to 58% surviving on less than Ksh3,000 per month (Table 22). This translates to less than Ksh100 per day. Those who earn between Ksh3,001 and Ksh5,000 per month constitute 22.8%, while those who get between Ksh5,001 and Ksh10,000 are 12%. Only 7.2% of those interviewed earn over Ksh10,000.

Table 22: Income of households

Number	Item	Frequency	Percentage
1	<3,000	145	58.0
2	3,001—5,000	57	22.8
3	5,001—10,000	30	12.0
4	>10,001	18	7.2

Source: Computed from survey data by author.

From Table 23, it is evident that most of the respondents have only primary level education (42%). Those with secondary level education are 33.3%, while those with some tertiary level education are 19.2%. The others (5.2%) are mainly those who do not have any form of formal education. The results further indicate that households headed by individuals with educational attainment at the secondary level or above are better off than those whose heads have primary level education or no formal education. Thus households headed by individuals with no education at all depict the highest level of poverty.

Table 23: Level of education of household heads

Number	Item	Frequency	Percentage
1	Primary	105	42.0
2	Secondary	84	33.3
3	Tertiary	48	19.2
4	Other (Specify)	13	5.2

Source: Computed from survey data by author.

Many of the respondents live as a family (66%). There is a significant number of single people (29.2%) mostly with their spouses elsewhere particularly in the rural areas. There are also those who have been widowed or are widowers (4.8%). There were no reported cases of divorce, possibly because most of these marriages are traditional and may not require a long

court process to dissolve or the parties cannot afford the cost of pursuing divorce cases even if they were willing to engage in one. (See Table 24.)

Table 24: Marital status

Number	Item	Frequency	Percentage
1	Married	165	66.0
2	Divorced	NIL	
3	Widow/Widowed	12	4.8
4	Single	73	29.2

Source: Computed from survey data by author.

More than two-thirds of the respondents are Christians (68%), some are Muslims (22%) and a few are non believers (7.2%). The others believe in or relate to a religion that is not one of the world's main religions, or are followers of an ancient polytheistic or pantheistic religion. (See Table 25.)

Table 25: Religion

Number	Item	Frequency	Percentage
1	Christian	170	68.0
2	Muslim	55	22.0
3	Non-believer	18	7.2
4	Other (Specify)	7	2.8

Source: Computed from survey data by author.

The mother tongue is the dominant language for most of the household heads interviewed, with 41.6% able to understand and speak their language fluently. Many are also good in Kiswahili (36%) and a good number know English (20%) and are able to understand the basics and speak as well. Some of the respondents (2.4%) also understand other foreign languages. (See Table 26.)

Table 26: Language

Number	Item	Frequency	Percentage
1	English	50	20.0
2	Kiswahili	90	36.0
3	Mother tongue	104	41.6
4	Other (Specify)	6	2.4

Source: Computed from survey data by author.

Chapter Six

Concluding Remarks and Policy Recommendations

The study had the objective of identifying the key socio-economic and communication determinants of awareness of poverty alleviation policies. A field survey was conducted in which primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire. Adults in a total of 250 households were interviewed. The study used mainly descriptive statistics in the analysis.

What people want

The results show that most people want the government to communicate more to them through the available media, door-to-door campaigns, information centres for easy access to government development plans, and political rallies and meetings to educate the public about some of its programmes. The use of public audio-visual facilities like open air cinemas is encouraged, while passing information through women's groups, youth groups and self-help would also do some good. A majority of the respondents (69%) did not know about the existence of the poverty reduction strategy paper and programmes.

People also want the government to improve the social amenities in the areas, such as health centres/clinics/dispensaries/hospitals, roads, water, and schools. They want free health services, education and water. A large number of the urban poor have no piped water, so their main source of water is from water vendors (58.4%). The 37.6% who use piped water say the source is unreliable owing to either disconnections or illegal water connections around. This situation is a major challenge to efforts to meet the United Nations eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – which range from eradicating extreme poverty to halting the spread of HIV/AIDS and providing universal primary education, all by the target date of 2015.

There is also a major concern about the security situation in the areas where the respondents live, with high rates of muggings, rape incidents, theft and robberies. This is likely worsened because of high unemployment among the youth; one remedy is to create more job opportunities for the youth.

The limited access to the media, and patchy reliance on various sources of information, point to the need to rethink methods of reaching the people the poverty programmes are intended to help. The most important conclusion is that when the government is designing its poverty eradication programmes, all stakeholders should be involved and the programmes should have a well thought out communication strategy.

The government apparently uses the administrative system to get in touch with the targeted people. The ministry of planning communicates with the district development officers who relay the messages to the chief and assistant chiefs. The information is also communicated in chiefs *barazas (regular gatherings of people in a locality).* Such a method may not be effective particularly in urban areas where people rarely attend these *barazas*.

Communication strategy

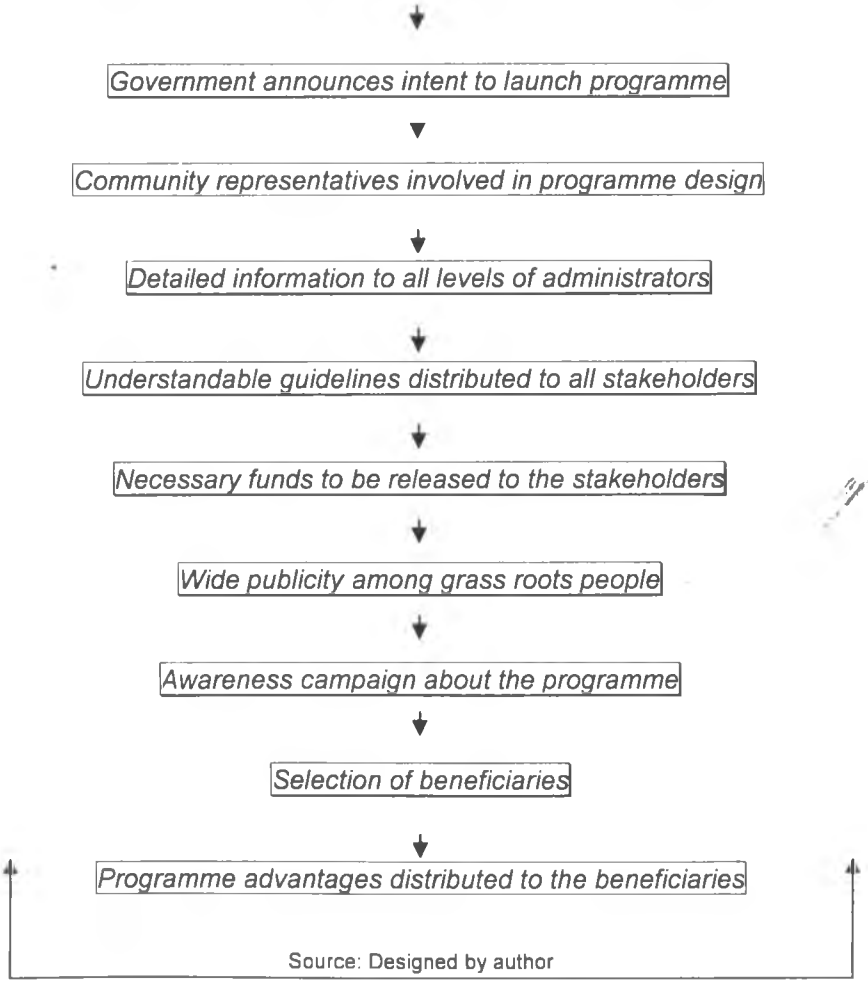
A communication strategy is a document that clearly outlines the rationale for, and desired outcomes of, a proposed information campaign. The communication strategy should define very specific objectives to provide a clear framework within which to formulate objectives, and against which to evaluate outcomes. It is a written statement of what communication actions an organization or a government intends to take to support the accomplishment of specific organizational goals, the time frame for carrying out the plan, the budget, and how the results will be measured. It is developed to create clear and consistent messages and for making the best use of resources for communication work. A communication strategy defines products and internal processes for optimizing communication with important stakeholders and decision makers in the community. A good communication strategy is formulated on the following guiding principles:

- Communication processes must be clear and known to all members.
- Wherever possible, communication must be purposeful and timely, particularly in relation to consultation and decision making.
- Wherever possible, communication must be open, honest and frank.
- In general, relevant information will be available on an open basis, and only in exceptional cases (e.g., to preserve confidentiality), is it not made available.
- Communication is a two-way process. It is not just a question of messages being passed down from the government to urban poor: upward and horizontal communications are equally important.

- Effective communication increasingly depends on information systems, which must be easy to use, accessible, robust and reliable.
- The government must communicate effectively within itself and with the community it serves.
- Decision making and organizational structures will support effective communication wherever possible by, for example, ensuring clear accountability for outcomes.

Most importantly, communication should be made as open and easy to use as possible. The steps in the flow chart in Figure 7 can be followed for proper and efficient programme implementation.

Figure 7: Flow chart for a programme implementation



Source: Designed by author

Appendix A

Research Questionnaire

This questionnaire is being addressed to the urban households, particularly in the Eastland city of Nairobi. The questions are basically on matters that pertain to the poverty eradication policies and government communication strategies among the urban poor. All responses will be treated confidentially. The final results will be published in a research report. Would you like to be one of the participants?

Thank you very much!
Author: ***Charles Owino***

Section I: Background

1. Please indicate information of people in your household

Names of household members	Relationship	Female	Male
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			
11.			

Relationship to the household head: Household head =1, Spouse=2, Son/daughter=3, brother/sister=4, Brother in law=5, Sister in law=6, Parents=7, Niece=8, Nephew=9, Cousin=10, other (specify) =11

2. Please indicate which of the following items are available in your household

Score			
1.	Electricity	☐	☐
2.	Radio	☐	☐
3.	Television	☐	☐
4.	Refrigerator	☐	☐
5.	Bicycle	☐	☐
6.	Cell phone/Mobile phone	☐	☐
7.	Car	☐	☐

3. Please indicate the main source of drinking water in your household

Score			
1.	Piped water	☐	☐
2.	Water vendors	☐	☐
3.	Borehole	☐	☐
4.	Well	☐	☐
5.	Dam	☐	☐
6.	Bottled water	☐	☐
7.	Other (specify)	☐	---------

4. **Please indicate the kind of toilet facility you use**

Score			
1.	Flush toilet	☐	☐
2.	Traditional pit latrine	☐	☐
3.	Ventilated/improved pit latrine	☐	☐
4.	No facility/bush/filed	☐	☐
5.	Other (specify)	☐	---------

5. **Please tell indicate the type of materials used on the walls of your house**

Score			
1.	Blocks/ Bricks/Cement	☐	☐
2.	Clay/mud	☐	☐
3.	Iron sheet	☐	☐
4.	Wood	☐	☐
5.	Other (specify)	☐	----------

6. **Please indicate your main source of income**

Score			
1.	Employment in the civil service	☐	☐
2.	Employment in the private sector	☐	☐
3.	Business/self employed	☐	☐
4.	*Jua Kali*/informal sector	☐	☐
5.	Casual work	☐	☐
6.	Pension	☐	☐
7.	Other (specify)	☐	--------

7. **Please tell us where you go for medical services?**

Score			
1.	Visit a consultant in a private clinic	☐	☐
2.	Visit local private clinics	☐	☐
3.	Local council dispensaries/health centres	☐	☐
4.	Kenyatta National Hospital	☐	☐
5.	Major private hospitals	☐	☐
6.	Buy medicine is local shops	☐	☐
7.	Visit herbalists	☐	☐
8.	Seek divine intervention	☐	☐
9.	Other (specify)	☐	--------

8. **Please indicate main type of roads in this area**

Score			
1.	Tarmac roads	☐	☐
2.	Murram roads	☐	☐
3.	Dry weather roads	☐	☐
4.	Paths	☐	☐
5.	Other (specify)	☐	--------

9. Please indicate the main type of transport system you use

Score			
1.	Private cars	☐	☐
2.	Taxi	☐	☐
3.	Public transport (*Matatus*)	☐	☐
4.	Public transport buses (Bus Track)	☐	☐
5.	Public transport (*Tuk tuk*)	☐	☐
6.	Public transport bicycles (*Boda boda*)	☐	☐
7.	Private bicycle	☐	☐
8.	Walk	☐	☐
9.	Other (specify)	☐	--------

10. Please indicate the type of schools in this area

Score			
1.	Private high cost schools	☐	☐
2.	Private low cost schools	☐	☐
3.	Government City Council Schools	☐	☐
4.	Church sponsored schools	☐	☐
5.	NGO sponsored schools	☐	☐
6.	Makeshift public schools	☐	☐
7.	Other (specify)	☐	--------

11. Please tell us the main type tertiary institutions in this area

Score			
1.	Private high cost colleges	☐	☐
2.	Private Low cost colleges	☐	☐
3.	Government colleges	☐	☐
4.	Church sponsored colleges	☐	☐
5.	NGO sponsored colleges	☐	☐
6.	Makeshift public colleges	☐	☐
7.	Other (specify)	☐	--------

Section II: Access to the media for information/communication

12. Please tell us how often you read the newspaper

Score			
1.	Every day	☐	☐
2.	At least once a week	☐	☐
3.	Less than once a week	☐	☐
4.	Not at all	☐	☐
5.	Other (specify)	☐	--------

13. **Please indicate how often you listen to the radio**

Score			
1.	Every day	☐	☐
2.	At least once a week	☐	☐
3.	Less than once a week	☐	☐
4.	Not at all	☐	☐

14. **Please tell us how often you watch a television**

Score			
1.	Every day	☐	☐
2.	At least once a week	☐	☐
3.	Less than once a week	☐	☐
4.	Not at all	☐	☐

15. **Please indicate which of this item according to you was most common in the media**

Score			
1.	Entertainment	☐	☐
2.	Politics	☐	☐
3.	Educative features	☐	☐
4.	Health matters	☐	☐
3.	Development matters	☐	☐
4.	Other (specify)	☐	☐

Section III: Awareness about government National Development Plans.

16. **(a) Please tell us if you have ever heard about any National Development Plans in Kenya**

Score			
1.	Yes	☐	☐
2.	No	☐	☐

(b) If yes, how did you get the information?

Probe			
Score			
1.	Newspaper	☐	☐
2.	Radio	☐	☐
3.	Television	☐	☐
4.	Bill board	☐	☐
5.	Poster	☐	☐
6.	Sticker	☐	☐
7.	Opinion leader	☐	☐
8.	Government agent (District Officer, Chief)	☐	☐
9.	Others (specify)	☐	----------

17. (a) Please tell us if you know about Poverty Reduction Strategy Programme (PRSP)?

Score			
1.	Yes	☐	☐
2.	No	☐	☐

(b). If yes, please tell us from which source you got your information?

Probe			
Score			
1.	Newspaper	☐	☐
2.	Radio	☐	☐
3.	Television	☐	☐
4.	Bill board	☐	☐
5.	Poster	☐	☐
6.	Sticker	☐	☐
7.	Opinion leader	☐	☐
8.	Government agent (District Officer, Chief)	☐	☐
9.	Other (specify)	☐	----------

18. (a) Please tell us if you understand what the Millennium Development Goals are

Score			
1.	Yes	☐	☐
2.	No	☐	☐

(b). If yes, what was the source of your information?

Probe			
Score			
1.	Newspaper	☐	☐
2.	Radio	☐	☐
3.	Television	☐	☐
4.	Bill board	☐	☐
5.	Poster	☐	☐
6.	Sticker	☐	☐
7.	Opinion leader	☐	☐
8.	Government agent (District Officer, Chief)	☐	☐
9.	Other specify	☐	----------

19. (a) After learning about the PRSP did you ever talk about it with your family, friend or neighbours around?

Score			
1.	Yes	☐	☐
2.	No	☐	☐

(b). If yes, please tell us what their reaction or feelings were about these PRSPs?

Probe			
Score			
1.	Would like to hear more	☐	☐
2.	Have heard enough about them	☐	☐
3.	Are irrelevant to their lives of the poor	☐	☐
4.	Government needs to do more to reach poor	☐	☐
5.	PRSP is a very strange animal	☐	☐
6.	Other (specify)	☐	----------

20. Please give us your suggestion(s) on how the government can improve the effectiveness of communicating such programmes to the urban poor?

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21. Please tell us about yourself now: (Check all that apply)

Name of your Estate:	_____	**Gender:**		**Female** ☐	**Male** ☐
Occupation:	Employed in public or private sector ☐	Business Man/ Self employed ☐	*Jua Kali* (informal sector) *Fundi* ☐	Casual Labourer ☐	Other (*Please specify*) _____
Income per month:	< 3,000 ☐	3,001-5,000 ☐	5,001-10,000 ☐	> 10,000 ☐	
Level of education:	Primary ☐	Secondary ☐	Tertiary ☐	Other (*Please specify*) _____	
Marital status:	Married ☐	Divorced ☐	Widow/widower ☐	Single ☐	
Religion:	Christian ☐	Muslim ☐	Non-believer ☐	Other (*Please specify*) _____	
Languages spoken:	English ☐	Kiswahili ☐	Mother tongue ☐	Other (*Please specify*) _____	

Other details

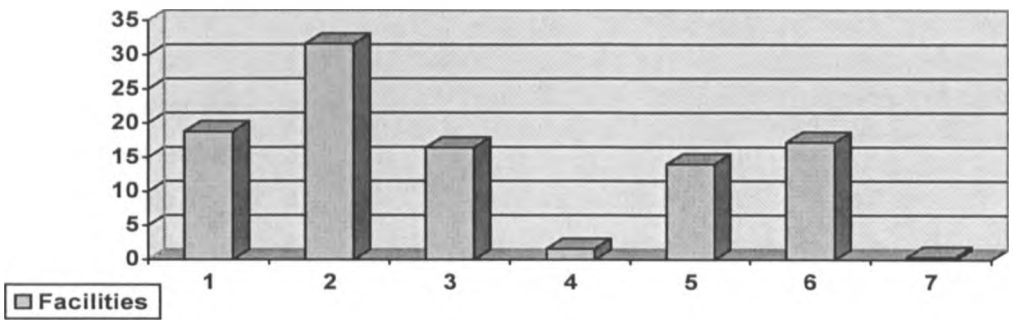
Visits details	_____	**Visit 1** ☐	**Visit 2** ☐	**Visit 3** ☐
Interview:	Date _____	Time start _____	Time end _____	Interviewer's name _____	Supervisor's name _____

Appendix B

Diagrammatic Presentation of the Results

The X-axis shows the variable and the Y-axis denotes the level of percentage (%).

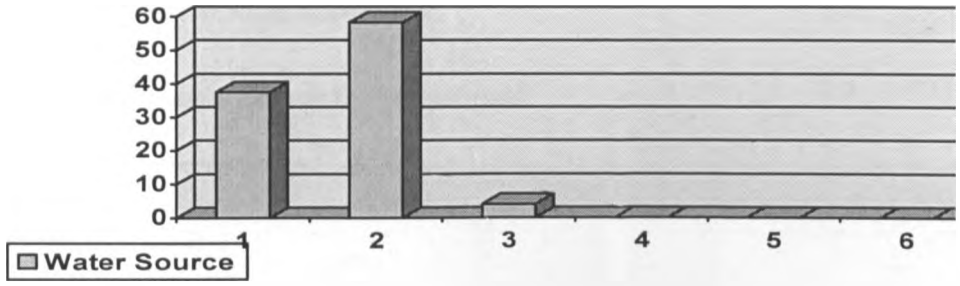
Figure 8: Available items in households



Electricity	1
Radio	2
Television	3
Refrigerator	4
Bicycle	5
Cell phone	6
Car	7

Source: Computed from survey data by author.

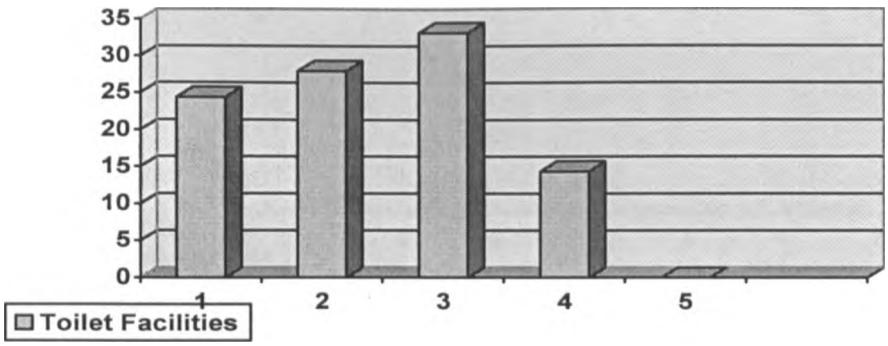
Figure 9: Water source for households



Piped water	1
Water vendors	2
Bore hole	3
Well	4
Dam	5
Bottled water	6

Source: Computed from survey data by author.

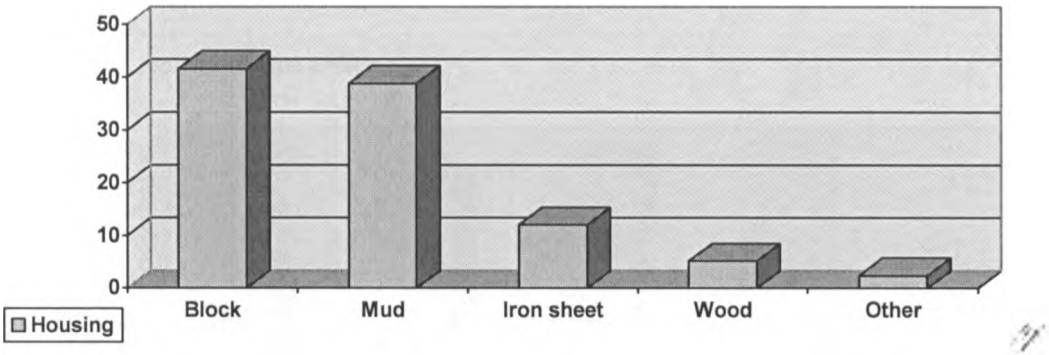
Figure 10: Toilet facilities for households



Flush toilet	1
Traditional pit latrine	2
Ventilated pit latrine	3
No toilet facility	4
Other	5

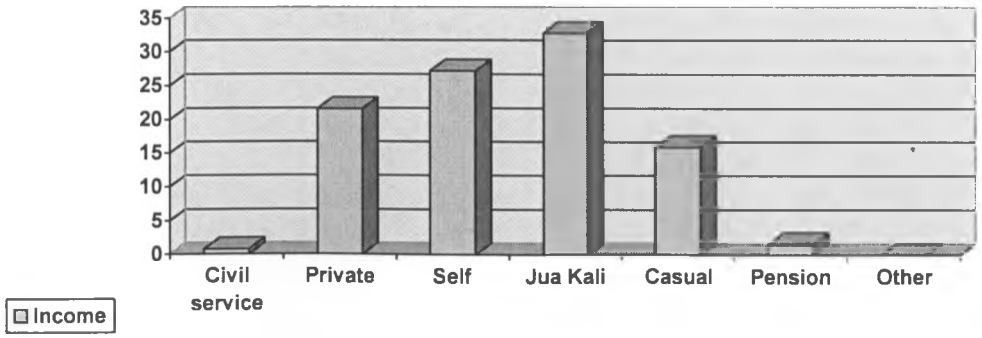
Source: Computed from survey data by author.

Figure 11: Housing structures



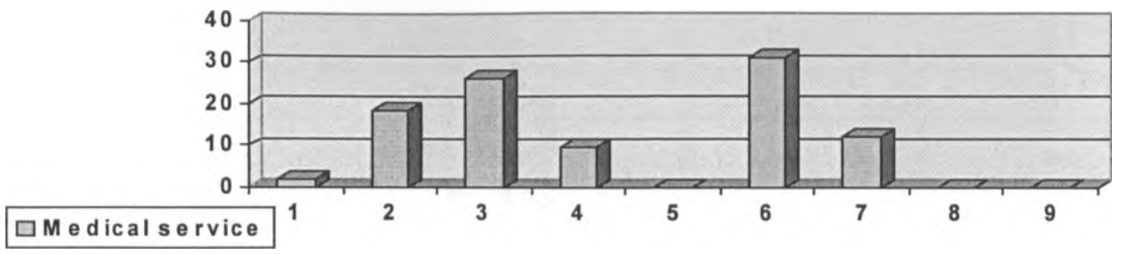
Source: Computed from survey data by author.

Figure 12: Income source for households



Source: Computed from survey data by author.

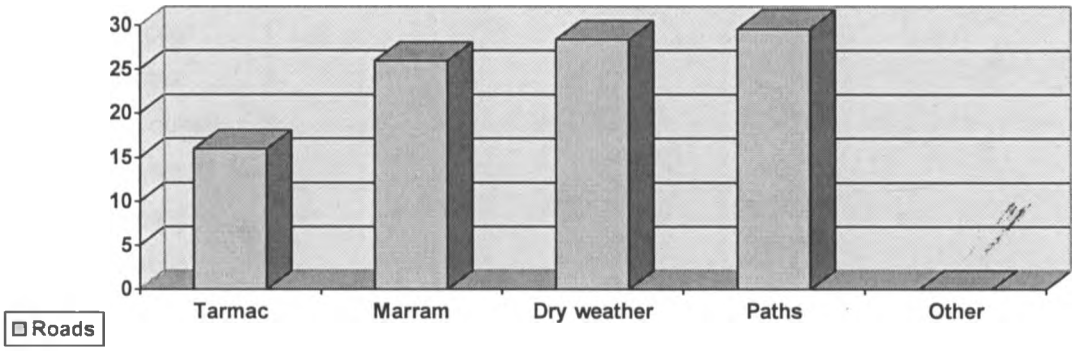
Figure 13: Medical service sought by households



Consultation	1
Private clinic	2
Dispensary	3
KNH	4
Private hospital	5
Local shops	6
Herbalists	7
Devine intervention	8
Others	9

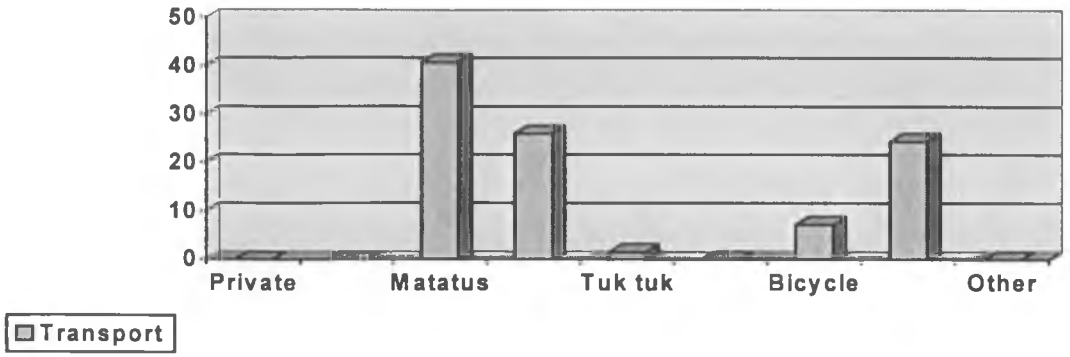
Source: Computed from survey data by author.

Figure 14: Roads in the areas



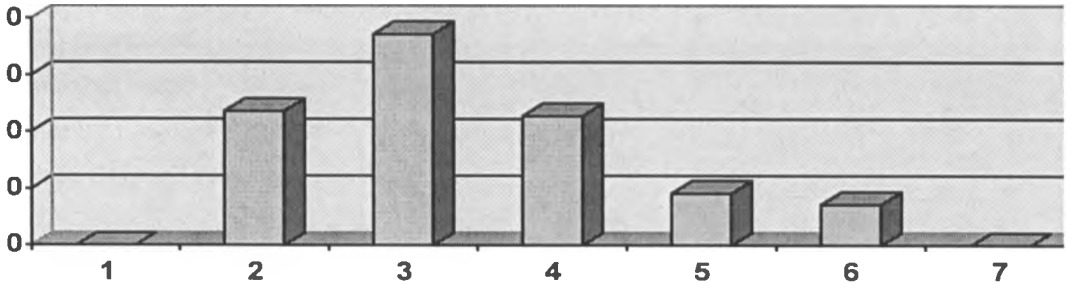
Source: Computed from survey data by author.

Figure 15: Mode of transport around the areas



Source: Computed from survey data by author.

Figure 16: Schools in the area

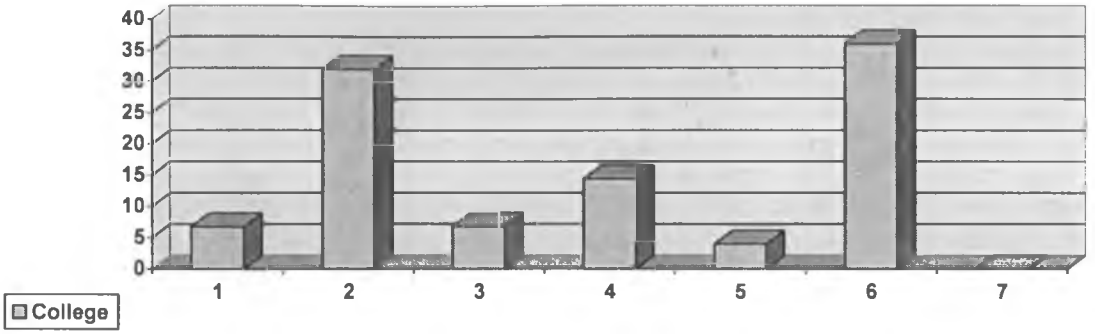


Key

Private high cost	1
Private low cost	2
Public City Council	3
Church sponsored	4
NGO sponsored	5
Makeshift public	6
Other	7

Source: Computed from survey data by author.

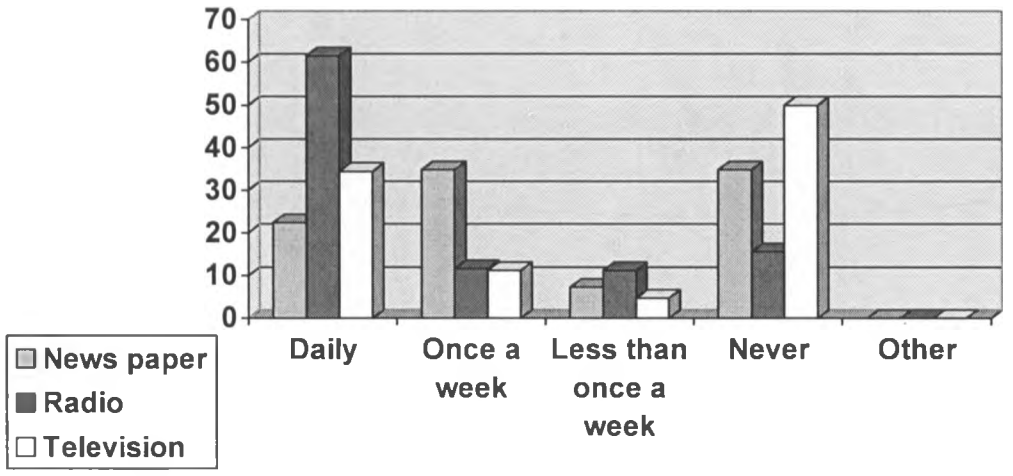
Figure 17: Tertiary institutes



Private high cost	1
Private low cost	2
Public City Council	3
Church sponsored	4
NGO sponsored	5
Makeshift public	6
Other	7

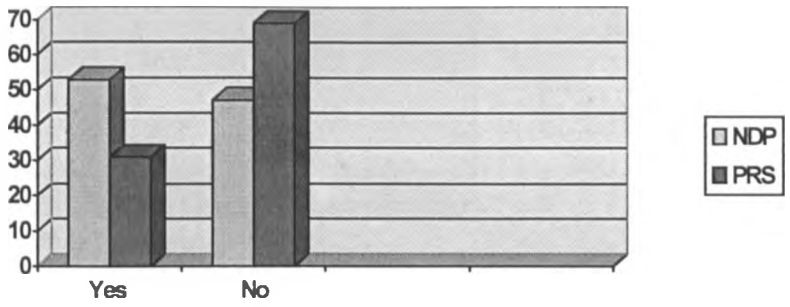
Source: Computed from survey data by author.

Figure 18: Correlation on access to the media



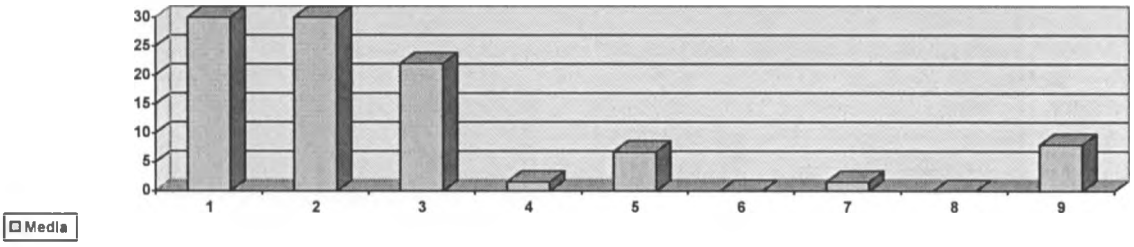
Source: Computed from survey data by author.

Figure 19: Correlation on awareness about national development plans and poverty reduction strategy programmes



Source: Computed from survey data by author.

Figure 20: Media through which one heard about national development program

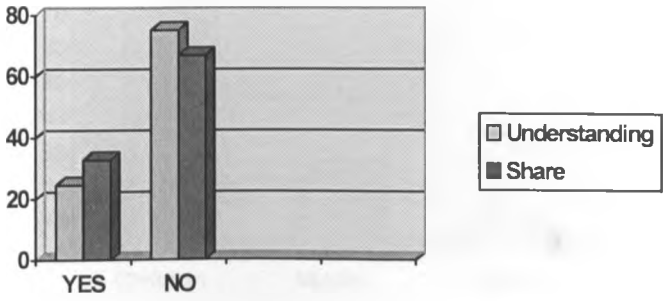


Key

Newspaper	1
Radio	2
Television	3
Bill board	4
Poster	5
Sticker	6
Opinion leader	7
Govt. agent	8
Other	9

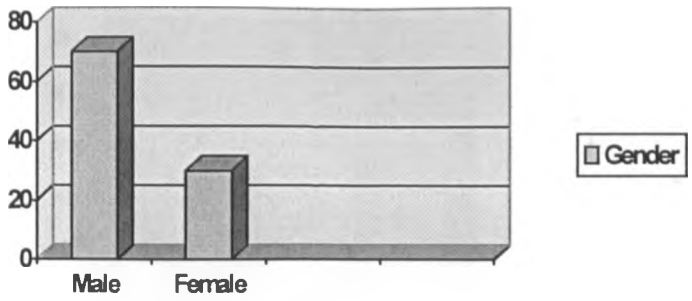
Source: Computed from survey data by author.

Figure 21: Correlation between understanding (MDGs) and information sharing



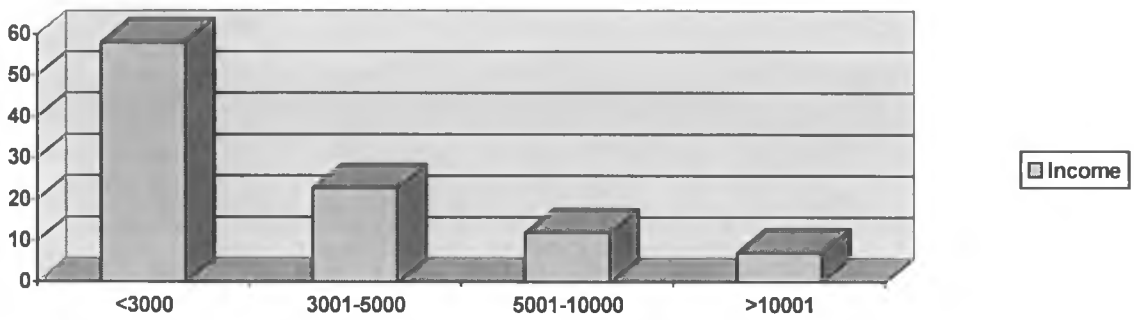
Source: Computed from survey data by author.

Figure 22: Gender



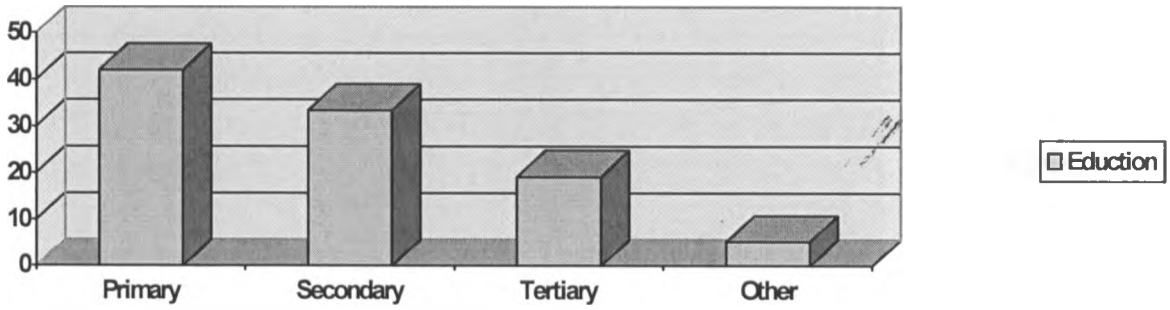
Source: Computed from survey data by author.

Figure 23: Income levels



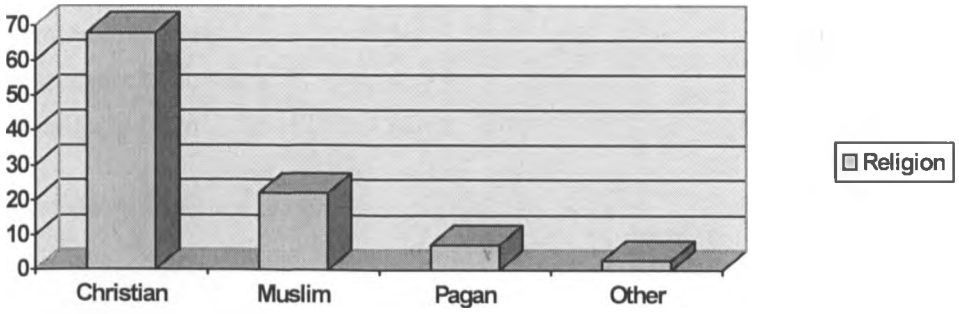
Source: Computed from survey data by author.

Figure 24: Education levels



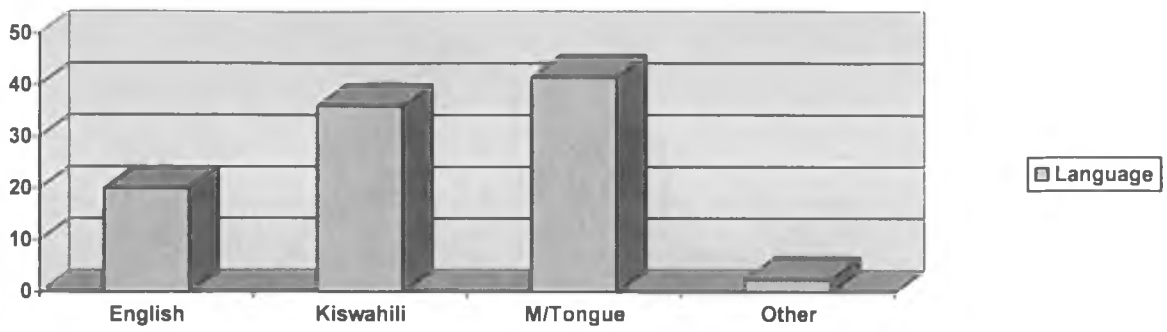
Source: Computed from survey data by author.

Figure 25: Religion



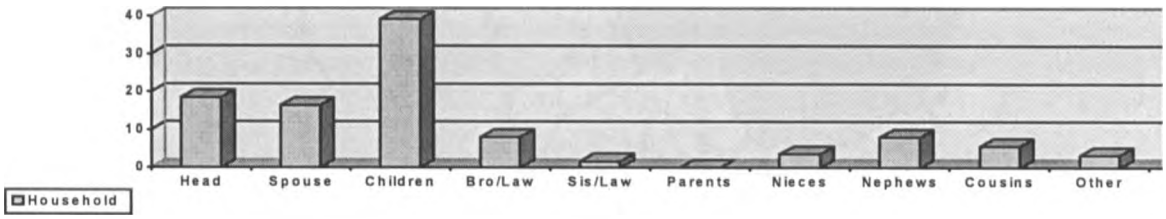
Source: Computed from survey data by author.

Figure 26: Languages



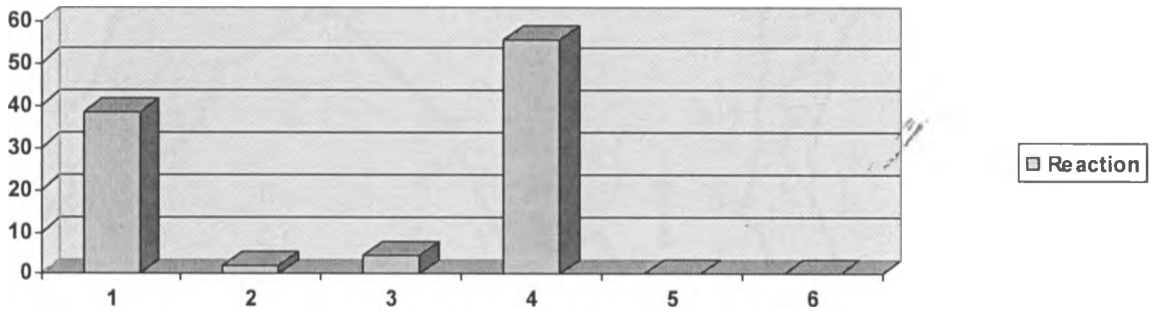
Source: Computed from survey data by author.

Figure 27: Households



Source: Computed from survey data by author.

Figure 28: Reactions if shares information about PRSPs

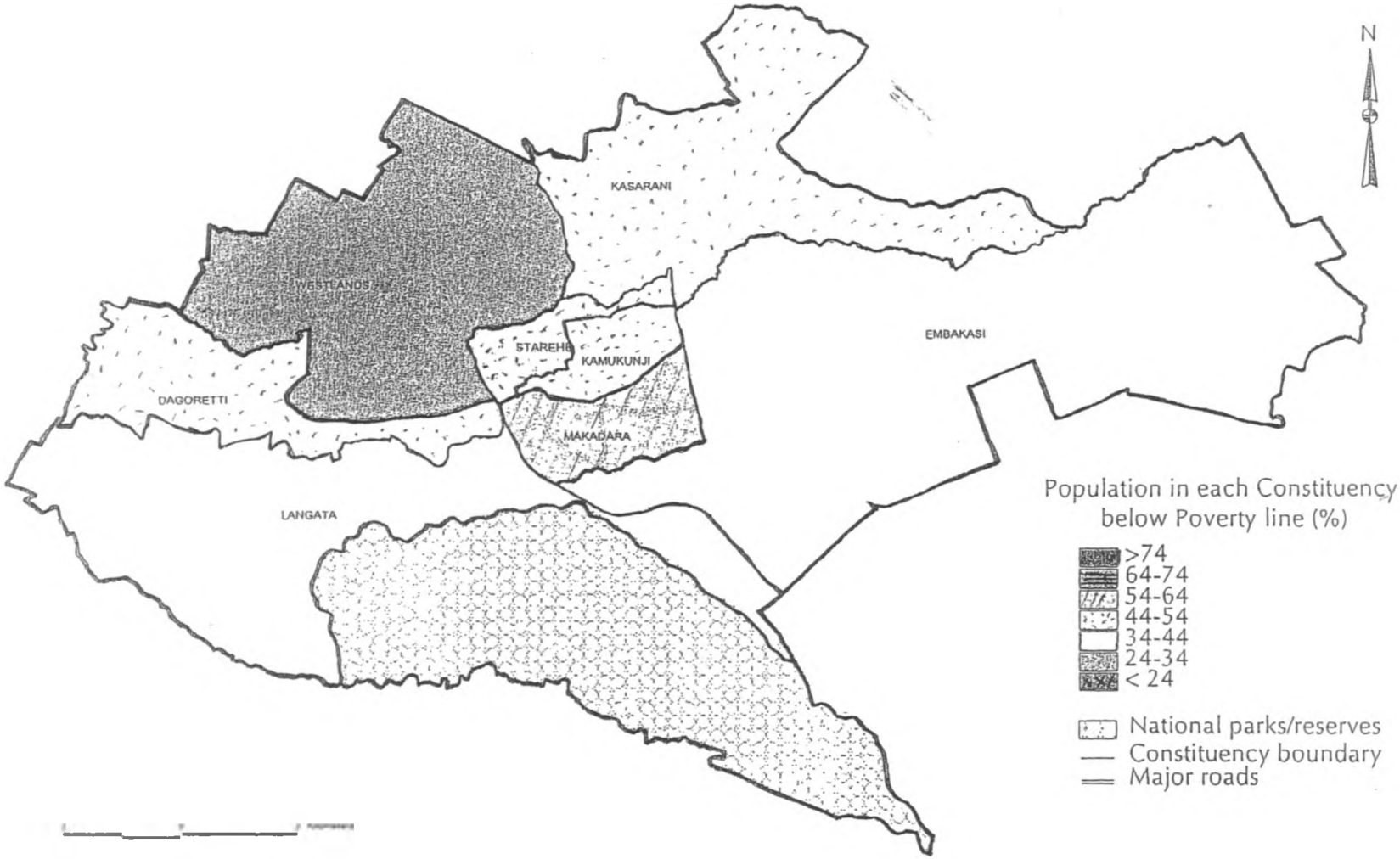


Key

Would like to hear more	1
Have heard enough about them	2
Are irrelevant to their lives	3
Government needs to do more	4
PRSP is strange to them	5

Source: Computed from survey data by author.

Constituency Level Poverty Incidence - Nairobi



List of Abbreviations and acronyms

EPRSP	Enhanced Poverty Reduction Strategy Programme
HIV/AIDS	Human immunodeficiency virus/Acquired immune deficiency syndrome
IPRSP	Interim poverty reduction strategy paper
LSMS	Living Standards Measurement Survey
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NDPs	National Development Plans
PPAs	Participatory poverty assessment
PRFG	Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility
PRS	Poverty reduction strategy
PRSP	Poverty reduction strategy paper
SAP	Structural adjustment programme
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Scientists
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WMS	Welfare Monitoring Survey

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