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COMMUNICATION AND MODERNIZATION: THE CASE OF LATIN AMERICA

By

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This paper is an attempt at answering two questions: How much progress has Latin America achieved in developing a system of social communication in line with its needs for overall modernization? What major problems need to be solved before that system attains maximum effectiveness?

The first part of the paper describes the main activities so far conducted in production, research, teaching, and promotion of developmental communication in the region. It emphasizes the operations in the public sector and specifies the contributions of the international organizations that are supporting the efforts of national communication agencies.

The second part of the paper mentions several of the barriers impeding the growth of social communication for national development. It then focuses attention on four central explanations for those problems. Three of them fall within the area of the attitudes of policy-makers and development planners. The fourth refers to the ways in which the archaic social and political structure of the region makes modernizing communication a very difficult enterprise.

A section including a tight summary and a few conclusions closes the paper.

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I. INTRODUCTION

As a minimum target for the less developed countries, UNESCO[1] proposed the following standards of mass media availability per 100 inhabitants: 10 newspaper copies; 5 radio receivers; 2 cinema seats; and 2 television receivers.

Where does Latin America stand in relation to those goals?

UNESCO[2] itself provided this answer:

> On the basis of total newspaper circulation and totals of radio and television receivers, the mass media are more highly developed in Latin America than in South East Asia or Africa.

Specifically, UNESCO[3] reported that, by 1961, there were for every 100 Latin Americans 7.4 copies of daily newspapers, 9.8 radio receivers, 3.5 cinema seats, and 1.5 television receivers. Added a researcher equally familiar with communication in the region: "Several of these figures, especially those for the broadcast media, have undoubtedly risen considerably since then."[4] Indeed Latin America may soon meet most of those standards and could well surpass some of them in the near future.

That is plausible. But it doesn't mean that the region has already been able to organize a system of social communication suited to meet the needs

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[1] UNESCO, Mass Media in the Developing Countries, Paris: UNESCO, 1961, p. 35.

[2] Op. cit., p. 25.

[3] Op. cit., pp. 24-28.

[4] John T. McNelly, "Mass Communication and the Climate for Modernization in Latin America," Journal of Inter-American Studies, Vol. VIII, No. 3, July, 1966, pp. 346-357.

of national development. Much remains yet to be done to that end. And the degree to which social communication has advanced in the region cannot solely be judged by the number of media institutions existing in it and the percentages of people they apparently reach.[5] Behind such figures--regardless of how encouraging they may get to be--several basic problems of communication still demand solution.

This paper is about those problems.

Before going into them, however, at least a partial account of some activities of the key public[6] communication organizations of the region appears both fair and useful. It is, in fact, the existence of those organizations and the nature of these activities what leads to believe that such problems will actually be solved.

II. OVERVIEW OF THE PIONEERS

The main functions performed by the region's public communication institutions have been: production and distribution of materials; training of personnel in communication principles and methods; research in communication

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[5] First, the percentages do not--of course--show that the production and consumption of messages is, actually monopolized by a few. Second, availability is not the same as access, access is not equivalent to exposure, and exposure is no guaranty of effect. Third, figures also cloud the fact that the orientation of most mass media institutions is against social change. And, lastly, along with other, and more reliable, measures of communication growth, data on non-mass media institutions (such as combinations between radio programs and discussion groups) must also be taken into account in appraising the region's progress in communication.

[6] The description will concentrate on government-owned communication agencies and on the support provided to them by official international organizations. It is those types of institutions--not, save rare exceptions, the commercially-owned information entities--which show concern with educating the masses for development.

problems; and promotion of communication as a discipline, by means of professional exchange, coordination, and publications.

Unavoidably, perhaps, the major proportion of the effort has gone to serve production and distribution. Slowly, training gained what approximates to a second priority level of importance. Research is still a most neglected function. And, had it not been for the stimulation provided by some international agencies operating in the region, promotion may not have even started.

Characteristically, the main beneficiaries of all those efforts in communication have been the government organs in charge of agriculture, education, and health.

A-V Aids, Radio Schools, and Agricultural Information

Those have been the three main lines of the communication production activity of the region and though some of their origins can be found around 1930 they did not become appreciably activated until around 1950 when extra-regional support came into the picture.

The A-V Movement

World War II taught the United States much about educational technology; both for military and for civilian (industrial) purposes, much experimentation was carried to improve communication. As soon as the war was over, the lesson started to be applied to school education, advertising, agricultural extension, health education and other fields. Shortly, thereafter, the U.S. started passing that experience on to other countries.

Under U.S. Government sponsorship, four inter-American seminars on audio-visual education were conducted in the region between 1952 and 1964. During the same period, "Point Four" established large audio-visual centers in

Paraguay, Bolivia, and Ecuador, and helped organized similar institutions in Brazil and, to a lesser extent, in other countries of the region.

The main concern of those centers was with improving the countries' abilities to produce materials which would be adequate to the audiences being served by the national development agencies. Perhaps precisely the exaggerated emphasis on production over training and the indifference for research contributed to making the existence of most of those centers a relatively short one. By then, however, a sizable number of Latin Americans had been trained in audio-visual communication skills in the United States. Today, several countries have their own well established audio-visual education systems. Outstanding among them are those of the Ministries of Education in México and in Venezuela.

The Lesson of Sutatenza

Completely on his own, a Colombian priest started in 1947--in the remote Andean village of Sutatenza--an experiment of education by radio which has had success beyond the most enthusiastic expectations. Father Joaquín Salcedo set up then a 100-watt transmitter, gave peasant groups three battery-run receiving sets, and started to use radio both to fill the absence of enough schools in the countryside and to lead the peasantry to engaging in community development.

The institution which emerged from Sutatenza is called A.C.P.O. (Cultural Popular Action)[7] and it has become one of the world's largest and most promising attempts to educate the rural masses through the combined use

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[7] ACPO, What is, What are the Objectives, What does Acción Cultural Popular, Bogotá: Editorial Andes, 1965.

of a mass medium and face-to-face communication. It enjoys today 11 transmitters that total up to almost 650,000 watts, by far the most powerful broadcasting system in the region. But, beyond the now famous "radio schools," a millionaire multi-media institution of massive rural education, which uses simultaneously some 10 different channels of communication, reaches a huge audience, and operates a constant feedback mechanism[8] emerged.

Though eventually fostered by the Catholic Church and partially assisted by the Government of Colombia, ACPO is a private and non-profit communication institution devoted to public service. UNESCO has given clear support to it and, recently, the Government of Holland made a sizable contribution to its operations.

To different degrees and with some adaptations, several Latin American countries have followed, in the last 10 years, the Sutatenza lead and count now on "radio school"[9] organizations.

Linking the Peasants to the World

The chief promoter of improvements in agricultural communication in the region has been the Inter-American Institute of Agricultural Sciences, IICA,

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[8]A descriptive summary of ACPO's vast and complex organization can be found in Luis Ramiro Beltran S., "Radio 'Forums' and Radio 'Schools' in Rural Mass Education for National Development, East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University, 1968 (Mimeo). Also see Hernando Bernal Alarcón, Effectiveness of the Radio Schools of Acción Cultural in Promoting the Adoption of Innovations, M.S. Thesis, The University of Wisconsin, 1967, and Sister V. M. Primrose, A Study of the Effectiveness of the Educational Program of the Radiophonic Schools of Sutatenza on the Life of the Life of the Colombian Peasant Farmer, Ph.D. Thesis, Saint Louis University, 1965 (Mimeo).

[9]"Radio forum," a combination of radio with formal discussion groups of peasants, has shown high effectiveness in India and Ghana, which patterned their organization after now extinct English and Canadian formats. In Latin America, only Brazil seems to have done some experimentation with this method.

one of the specialized branches of the Organization of American States. In close association with the Technical Cooperation Program of the Organization of American States, IICA started helping the Latin American countries improve their rural information services as early as 1952. Training, advisory services, professional exchange, promotion, and the publishing of technical manuals, in communication have been IICA's main lines of activity in this field.

Working through its missions in the countries, and often in connection with the United States Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Agency for International Development, AID, gave appreciable and continued support to the development of information organs in the agricultural research and extension services of Latin America. Training and production were their basic lines of operation.

Later, in association with IICA, the American International Association, AIA, a member of the non-profit agencies of the Rockefeller brothers, established the Inter-American Popular Information Program, with headquarters in Costa Rica. PIIP, as the program was known in Spanish, added some impulse to training but its most valuable contribution was in the area of research.[10]

Finally, although to a lesser extent and concentrated mostly on fostering the improvement of rural radio communication, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, FAO, also came into the scene.

Many national agencies benefited from this intra-regional and extra-regional assistance and stimulation. Among those which excelled in developing their agricultural communication services were: OTIA, the Technical Office of Agrarian Information, of Perú; ABCAR, the Brazilian Association of Credit

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[10]Unfortunately, AIA-PIIP is no longer in existence.

and Rural Assistance; Argentina's National Institute of Agricultural Technology, INTA; and the Colombian Institute of Agrarian Reform, INCORA.

Mexico has just started a program which, if properly carried in accordance with its stated objectives, may help incorporate thousands, if not millions, of peasants to the active sectors of both the economy and the culture of the country. The potential of PCP, the Peasant Productivity Program,[11] for the whole region seems to be such that the agency in charge of it, the National Productivity Center of Mexico, is receiving substantive technical and financial assistance from BID, the Inter-American Development Bank, whose entering into promoting agricultural communication is highly promising for Latin America.[12]

The Making of a New Profession

The joint efforts of all the international and inter-American agencies, and of many national organizations as those mentioned above have resulted, so far, in the capacitation--through intensive courses of usually short duration--of some 1,000 communication specialists for agriculture, education, health, land reform, colonization, resource conservation services, and other developmental programs. In addition, probably as many as 5,000 "change agents"--for instance, agricultural extension field personnel--have received at least basic notions of informal communication methodology.

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[11] For a complete description of this program see Luis Ramiro Beltrán S., Programa Campesino de Productividad en México, México, D.F.: Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo-Centro Nacional de Productividad, 1968.

[12] Another promising addition is that of the newly established CIAT, International Center of Tropical Agriculture, an institution fostered by three foundations: Rockefeller, Ford, and Kellogg. Specific plans are not yet available, but CIAT--located in Colombia--does expect to contribute to the improvement of agricultural communication in the region.

The Pains of Adolescence

The great majority of the persons trained as communication specialists were, however, either non-professional people or sub-professional people. This presented a problem which seemed almost unsolvable. On return to their countries, most of those trainees were so poorly payed as before, had still a low status in their organizations, and were rarely ever given opportunities to apply their new knowledge to appreciably improving the communication activities in which they participated. Many of them tookjobs withcommercial communication organizations, while others left the field altogether.

As the wisdom of investing in such a level of training became, thus, questioned, the need for long-term training at the professional level became a pressing one. Only the national universities, could, however, undertake this responsibility. Yet, except for one in Mexico--the Universidad Iberoamericana, which offers complete 5-year studies in sciences and arts of communication--and for another in Brazil--the School of Cultural Communication, of Sau Paulo, which is about to become a complete communication school-- the universities of the region did not offer this kind of training at all.

The First Steps Up

At this point, CIESPAL, the International Center of Superior Studies in Journalism for Latin America, a UNESCO-OAS fostered institution, with headquarters in Quito, came to give a very valuable contribution. Through a series of meetings of the deans of the many university-level schools of journalism existing, CIESPAL promoted the evolution of those schools towards teaching communication, in general, instead of specializing only in journalism. Since then, several of the schools have modified their curriculum, methods,

and staff composition so as to teach communication--not only as an art, but also as a science--and thus train, in addition to journalists, advertisers, radio and TV experts, public relations specialists and even educational communicators.[13] Peru and Bolivia, through private university efforts, have just started to create "schools of social communication."

The potential of motion pictures for both informal and formal education is, in Latin America, probably greater than that of television.[14] Thus, about a decade ago, UNESCO and the Government of Mexico created a needed institution: the Latin American Institute of Educational Cinematography, ILCE. The expectation in many countries of the region was, probably, that ILCE would capacitate--at a level comparable to that of undergraduate training--experts in educational movie-making. The production of films usable across the region and the investigation on the cinematographic techniques most applicable to the region's culture were also areas in which ILCE could have made a very significant contribution to Latin American popular education. Unfortunately, the institution does not seem to have ever passed the stage of making series of filmstrips, the majority of which were addressed to the vocational schools of Mexico.

On the agricultural front--so vital to the livelihood and growth of the region--the Inter-American Institute of Agricultural Sciences of the OAS, again, became active at the undergraduate level of communication training. It established in 1965, initially with financial support from AID, three programs

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[13]Professor Raymond B. Nixon, of the University of Minnesota, is presently in Latin America updating a study of journalism education in the region. CIESPAL's operations will probably occupy an important place in the survey.

[14]The fine films made by the Division of Community Education of Puerto Rico are a demonstration of those possibilities.

of communication: one for agricultural extension, another for land reform, and the third for higher agricultural education.

That latter program was designed to aid Latin American colleges of agriculture in building their own communication organs. In addition to helping the instructors with assistance in teaching methods and materials, the college communication specialists were to teach communication principles and skills as applied to rural development. They were to do so at two levels: introductory courses for all the students, and advanced courses for those wanting to take communication as a minor area of specialization. The program has, so far, been more successful in improving the teaching methodology of those colleges than in establishing communication as one of the options for specialization. This has partly been so because the college administrators were more easily aware of the importance of improving classroom methodology than of the usefulness of communication as a career. But another very important reason for it was that the colleges just could not find, even when they wanted them, the men capable of establishing the proposed communication units.[15]

The Time of the Communication Scientists

The realization of that handicap actualized a project that Michigan State University and the Inter-American Popular Information Program had been considering for some time: to help offer a Master's degree, in Spanish, in Latin America. In 1966, the Midwest Universities Consortium for International Activities and the Inter-American Institute of Agricultural Sciences of the

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[15] A third serious limitation, yet, was--and still is--the lack of textbooks and teaching materials in Spanish and in Portuguese. For Spanish, three institutions have contributed to alleviate a little such deficiency: CIESPAL (Ecuador), IICA (Costa Rica), and RTAC, the U.S. Regional Technical Aids Center in México.

OAS joined efforts with the Agrarian University of Peru and established such a graduate program in La Molina, Lima. The first students, who came from different countries in the region, are now starting to graduate from it. And, although the program is still confronted with financial restrictions and other limitations, the expectation is that Peru will be able to take it over, and run it on its own as a regional facility, by 1972.[16]

At the end of 1968, the Graduate College of Chapingo, México, established its own program to give the Master's degree in communication, thus expanding the intra-regional capability of training at this level. This was the work of a group of Mexican agricultural communicators trained at the graduate level in Wisconsin. They benefited from the untiring inspiration and assistance provided by the communication office of a regional Rockefeller-sponsored agricultural project headquartered in Mexico City.

La Molina and Chapingo have similar programs of study. Cooperation between them appears much more possible than competition. Both, in fact, want the same: to give Latin America a nucleus of top-level communication scholars, with solid background in the social sciences, with some practice in the skills of communication, and with ability to formulate communication strategies for national development.

Because of the nature of their training and their high academic level, these persons should attain the status and influence which most of their predecessors did not enjoy. Adding their energy to that of the few communication scientists existing in the region,[17] they should be able to conduct

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[16]Only one Peruvian, who was not employed by La Molina, holds a degree in communication. The Agrarian University intends now to send two persons to the U.S. for similar studies. Meanwhile, the Wisconsin and Michigan-graduate specialists of IICA and MUCIA hold the front in the Lima program.

[17]There are about 20 Latin Americans holding degrees in communication--

research, to consolidate and improve the undergraduate-level training in their discipline, and to exert the order of leadership that should gain them places at the development planning boards of their countries.

Another important contributor to high-level communication training in the region has been the International Center for Superior Education in Journalism for Latin America. This UNESCO-OAS supported center offered yearly non-degree short courses at its Quito headquarters. Through them, hundreds of newspapermen have had the kind of training yet unavailable in their countries: the understanding of mass communication as a scientific discipline that must serve the goals of modernization. Although the average level of the students has not always been proportionate to the exceptional hierarchy of the international faculty recruited every year, CIESPAL performs a key role in the improvement of journalism in Latin America.

Assistance has also been given to the region's newspapers by SIP, the Inter-American Press Society. The technical center it established in New York City for that purpose has offered several seminars in both technical and administrative aspects of newspaper management. It has also provided advisory services to some journalistic enterprises.

Research: The Road Has Been Open

No attempt can be made here to summarize, even in the briefest way, the scientific studies so far conducted in the area of communication in Latin America. They are probably 50, at the most--a small number for science, a large number for reporting about them. Suffice it to say that the region has made a

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some 5 of them at the Ph.D. level--and most of them graduated from the University of Wisconsin, Michigan State University, and Stanford University.

valuable start in the systematic inquiry of the numerous problems that impede communication and hinder modernization. Four have been the nuclei of that effort: (1) the Inter-American Popular Information Program, in association with Michigan State University; (2) a UNESCO-AID combination which also drew talent from that university; (3) the University of Wisconsin, through its Land Tenure Center, its School of Agricultural Journalism, and its School of Journalism; and (4) the National School of Agriculture and the Graduate College of Chapingo, México, with the cooperation of what is now known as CIMMYT, International Center for the Improvement of Corn and Wheat (Rockefeller).

There have been other important institutional contributions, some international communication research has included Latin America, and several independent researchers have also added to the increase of knowledge about communication in the region. But the bulk of the job has been done so far by the four groups mentioned above.

Probably, one half of the studies have dealt with questions of adoption and diffusion of innovations in agriculture. Considerable attention has been paid to understanding the mass media exposure patterns of Latin Americans. A few investigators have cared to study the news flow in the region. And a little interest has been shown in comparing the effects of different channels on different types of audiences for different kinds of messages.

The micro-psychological approach -- the search for linkages between personality variables and communication behaviors--would seem to have dominated macro-social and political concerns.

The preceding statements express, however, only quick and off-hand reactions. In fact, what actually appears very desirable is the systematic collection of those studies in order to analyze them comparatively and to find

trends and patterns. Excellent guidance could emerge from it for future research, which is certainly needed.

Satellites to Reach the Masses

In July of the present year, the Inter-American Development Bank, the United Nations Development Program, and a group of Latin American countries[18] signed, in Washington, D.C., what amounts to the birth-certificate of the Interamerican Telecommunication Network.

The contract specified the agreements to build a system which will connect the national telecommunication networks of those countries among themselves and with the rest of the world. The multiple linkages will be achieved by a combination of microwave stations, submarine cable, and satellites.[19] The system will provide telephone, telegraph, and telex services, as well as radio and television channels.

The Inter-American Development Bank had estimated, in 1967, that such a network could be put into operation by 1973 at a cost of $300 million, of which $50 million would be spent in constructing 8 earth stations for satellite communication. Today four of them--those in Mexico, Panama, Brazil, and Chile--are already in operation. The other "towers"--Argentina, Venezuela, Colombia, and Peru--are either being constructed or about to be so. The Bank has granted loans for a total of about $20 million to Chile, Bolivia, and the Central

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[18] Argentina, Barbados, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Eduador, Haiti, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Republica Dominicana, Trinidad y Tobago, Uruguay y Venezuela. The telecommunication systems of these countries will, on turn be linked to those of Mexico and Central America, now in construction.

[19] For a summary explanation of satellite communication and its uses for Latin America see Arthur W. Le Brun, "La Telecomunicación Mediante Satélites," Temas del Bid, Año IV, No. 8, Septiembre de 1967. Also--about the uses of

American countries to modernize their telecommunication systems.[20]

Television: At Last on Its Way to the Majority?

Satellite communication will, of course, expand immensely the possibilities of reaching millions of human beings even in remote regions of Latin America.[21] However, the increment of physical facilities for communication need not, by itself, result in aid to the incorporation of forgotten human beings to the invisible network of social communication upon which the existence of real nations is based. Hardware alone cannot do the job.

Latin America's commercial television--which started as early as 1950, in Mexico--has not distinguished itself by its eagerness to help educate the masses for development. It has no interest in the millions of persons who can buy nothing from what the little screen offers. With minimal exceptions, peasants just do not exist for the privately-owned channels and their advertising sponsors.

It was for the governments, then, to worry about how to use the new medium to serve the majority. And most of them have also been quite indifferent

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satellites for massive social communication--see UNESCO, "Las Comunicaciones Espaciales y los Medios de Información Colectiva," (Informe de la Reunion de Expertos), La Radio y la Televisión Frente a la Necesidad Cultural en América Latina, Informe Final, Quito: CIESPAL, 1966, pp. 312-381.

[20]Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo, "La Red Interamericana de Telecomunicaciones se Acerca su Realización," Comunicado de Prensa, Washington, D.C.: B.I.D., Julio 28, 1969.

[21]See Wilbur Schramm et al., Satellite-Distributed Educational Television for Developing Countries--Volume III--The Case of Latin America, Menlo Park: Stanford Research Institute, 1968.

to the problem. In a few cases, however, the scene is brighter.

México, Colombia, and El Salvador already have sizable organizations for instructional television that is, they use the medium mostly as an aid to regular school teaching, as a remedy in the absence of schools, or as both.[22] Chile, Brazil, and Argentina have achieved some progress in educational television; that is, they are putting the medium to good use mostly as non-class room type of cultural diffusion. Brazil is likely to be the first country in the region to take advantage of tele-satellite communication. In Mexico, the private TV networks will actually have to give free telecasting for public service to government agencies. And in Bolivia, a country which has just inaugurated its first television station, the government has announced plans for promptly making the medium reach at least the less remote segments of the peasantry.

But the most auspicious recent event in this area has been the establishment of a Multinational Project of Educational Television by the Organization of American States, as one of the activities of the newly--and perhaps providentially--born Inter-American Cultural Council.

Operating, in 1969-70, with probably as much as $800,000 and constituting, on the basis of existing national ETV facilities, four regional centers for educational television, the brand new project may have a major impact in improving the utilization of that medium so that it gets to reach the masses

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[22]See Dirección General de Educación Audiovisual, Telesecundaria, México, D.F.: Secretaría de Educación Pública, 1968; Pilar Santamaría de Reyes, Informe sobre la Televisión Educativa en Colombia, Bogotá: Instituto Nacional de Radio y Televisión, 1969; and Emile G. MacAnany, et al., The El Salvador Educational Reform: Some Effects of the First Teacher Retraining Course, Research Report No. 2, Institute for Communication Research, Stanford University, 1968.

with developmental messages.

The program's technical staff of about 20 experts is expected to be completed by the middle of next year. The first specialists of the program will already be teaching audio-visual education in Venezuela and Brazil next January.[23]

But neither the sizable initial magnitude of the project, nor the appreciable addition it represents to the region's investment in communication are as important as its philosophy of operations appears to be. Far from being concerned only with improving production techniques in the countries, the program intends to organize research for the application of technology to education. Moreover, it wants to help the countries to fully perceive the educational media as functional parts of greater concerns: the whole educational process and, ultimately, the national development system. Finally, it aims at promoting--at the highest level of decision-making of the governments--the awareness of the vital role communication plays in modernization. This is unusual language and it leads one to be unusually hopeful about the prospects.

A Word for Agitation

International technical meetings on social communication have at least two advantages. They facilitate the organized exchange of experiences among

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[23]For detailed information on the objectives, organization, operations and budget of the program, read Inter-American Cultural Council, Proposed Program and Budget of the Special Multilateral Fund (FECIC), Washington, D. C.: Organization of American States, May 1969; and Consejo Interamericano Cultural, Proyecto Multinacional de Televisión Educativa, Washington, D. C.: Organización de Estados Americanos, Junio de 1969.

professional communicators. They bring about public attention to the value of communication for national development. Much of this needs to be done yet in Latin America. But there have already been some good beginnings.

For instance, working together, the Inter-American Institute of Agriculture Sciences of the OAS and the U.S. Agency for International Development organized, early in the present decade, meetings of agricultural communicators in Costa Rica and Peru. The same Institute, in association with the Inter-American Popular Information Program, and with the Ministry of Agriculture of Chile, organized a meeting on the role of communication in economic development; it took place in Santiago in October of 1964.[24]

Also in October of 1964, but in Mexico City, four agencies of the Mexican Ministry of Agriculture and the University of Wisconsin sponsored an inter-American round-table which reviewed several scientific studies in communication for agricultural development.[25]

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, FAO, has not so far been very active in promoting the development of rural communication in Latin America. It did offer, however, in Mexico, at the end of 1965, a high level seminar and course on agricultural broadcasting.[26]

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[24] IICA-PIIP-Ministerio de Agricultura de Chile, La Comunicación en el Desarrollo Económico, Santiago de Chile, 1964.

[25] D. T. Myren, ed., First Inter-American Research Symposium on the Role of Communications in Agricultural Development, México, D.F.: Ministry of Agriculture of México and University of Wisconsin, 1964.

[26] FAO and Secretaría de Agricultura de México, Programa del Seminario y Centro de Capacitación en Radiodifusión Rural, (Auspiciado por el Gobierno de México y el Fondo de Timbres Postales de la Campaña Mundial contra el Hambre), México, 12 de Octubre- 6 de noviembre, 1965.

Quito, Ecuador, was the seat of an Inter-American seminar devoted to analysis of the responsibilities of radio and television in relation to the cultural needs of the region. The seminar was sponsored by the International Center for Superior Education in Journalism for Latin America in July of 1966.[27] Even more recently, a similar technical inter-American encounter on educational television was held in Lima, Peru, under the sponsorship of the Institute for International Solidarity, a branch of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, of Germany, which has a unit in Lima for promoting the growth of educational radio and television in Latin America.

One of the earliest and, undoubtedly, one of the most important meetings in the area was that organized by UNESCO in 1961 to analyze the situation of communication media in the region.[28]

Meetings such as those listed above--well organized, and attended by competent people--are fruitful. The ideas and recommendations emerging from many of them do trace the roads to be followed.

III. ANATOMY OF INCOMMUNICATION

Much of all the preceding information may produce the idea that "all goes well" in Latin American communication. Unfortunately, that is far from true. In spite of all the appreciable progress and meritorious efforts which have heretofore been reviewed, many problems still raise huge barriers for communication in the region and present its development strategists and communication practitioners with crucial challenges. It is thus unavoidable to pay also attention to this ugly side of the coin.

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[27] CIESPAL, La Radio y la Televisión Frente a la Necesidad Cultural en América Latina, Informe Final, Seminario Regional efectuado en Quito del 25 al 29 de Julio de 1966.

[28] UNESCO, Los Medios de Información en América Latina, París: UNESCO, 196

Some of Latin America's most serious problems of social communication in relation to the needs of national development are the following:

1. A marked lack of awareness, on the part of policy-makers and development strategists, of the significance and functions of communication in modernization.

2. An assignment of very low priority to communication work in government plans and, thus, an inadequate allotment of funds for it in the national budgets.

3. A virtually complete inarticulation between general development strategies and specific communication strategies for that development.

4. An insufficient availability of government-owned mass media needed to establish and maintain an efficient two-way communication system between the public officers and the broad population, as well as among the different sectors of that population.

5. An exaggerated preference, on the part of government agencies, for one kind of content, institutional publicity (i.e., political propaganda), as well as for one kind of channel, the printed word (which is easiest and perhaps cheapest to use but reaches only a minimum of people).

6. An unduly pronounced concentration, on the part of government agencies, on an unplanned production of messages, at the expense of tasks such as proper distribution, research, evaluation, training, and promotion, which are at least as important as production.

7. A prevalence of deficiencies in physical infrastructure--such as lack of roads, lack of electricity, and lack of modern communication equipment--which makes the existence of a truly national network of social communication extremely difficult.

8. A high level of illiteracy which, coupled with the poverty of the majority of the people and aggravated in some cases by the existence of languages other than Spanish or Portuguese, imposes heavy restrictions on the use of the printed media.

9. An absence of motivation on the part of the mass media institutions--most of which are privately owned--to actually reach the broad masses and, particularily, the rural masses; they remain content with reaching the elite and the upper middle classes in the cities.

10. An insufficient growth of national and regional associations of professional communicators, such as journalists, audio-visual

specialists, agricultural editors, and the like.

11. A lack of effective and independent national information agencies and, especially, of some such an agency Latin American in scope; this permits a virtual monopoly of the international news flow by extra-regional news services which neither inform the region objectively about world events nor report fairly about events in the region.

12. A weakness of the national private advertising firms that allows extra-regional advertising consortiums to control much of the internal advertising market of the countries.

The problems which have merely been listed above are, certainly, not exclusively Latin American. They are common to very many of the countries of lesser development, with differences only of intensity.

What is behind those shortcomings? Where do they originate? Are there any basic factors--in addition to intrinsic communication deficiencies--which explain those problems of communication for modernization?

At least in the case of Latin America, four major general factors do seem to be at the roots of those problems. Three of these factors refer to some attitudes of top policy-makers and development planners in the region. The other pertains to the nature of the power structure in the Latin American society.

Human Behavior: The Neglected Dimension

Not much more than a decade has passed since the Latin American countries started having formal plans for overall national development. Major decisions within those plans have usually been made, of course, by political leaders who have major influence on matters of broad government policy. Those decisions were based on specific technical guidance provided--predominantly if not exclusively--by economists, engineers, and managers. The politicians were also assisted, to a lesser extent, by statisticians, geologists, ecologists,

geographers, agriculturists, mineralogists, and zoologists. Probably at a still lesser level of contribution, lawyers, educators, health specialists, demographers, taxation experts, and specialists in public administration shared in the responsibility of planning. Even when available, sociologists, educational and social psychologists, cultural anthropologists, political scientists, linguists and--particularly--communicologists have hardly ever been called upon to serve in the development planning teams.

Therefore, the very professionals who specialize in the study of human conduct, and in the design of behavioral changes in people, without which modernity is unattainable, have been almost totally absent from the scene of strategy-making. The implication of that absence is that Latin American development has been, and is being, blue-printed almost exclusively on the basis of attempting to predict or regulate non-human behaviors. It is control over the behavior of the market, over the performance of machines, and over the responses of soils, waters, plants, and animals, what would seem to be considered necessary and sufficient for attaining adequate national development.

Presumably, then, the modernization of nations is being understood as a process mostly dependent upon economic regulation, ecological manipulation, and technological innovation. The implicit assumption appears to be that, given the proper mix of variables within those three factors, the desirable human behavior will follow, more or less automatically. Thus, social engineering specifically addressed to attaining massive and accelerated cultural change seems, probably, unnecessary in the eyes of most of the present planners.

There is no need, or room, in this paper to engage in a lengthy argumentation against such fallacious assumptions. Suffice it to say that they

are being seriously challenged today by numerous experts in development, including economists and including Latin Americans.[29]

What is pertinent here is to note that, very probably, one of the reasons explaining the persistence of some of the communication problems described above is precisely the belief of many a Latin American planner that human behavioral changes are solely a by-product of economic fiat. As long as that kind of thinking prevails, the Latin American governments will not be able to get the most from organized social communication in the service of national development.

Organized Persuasion: The Forgotten Condition

The second general factor behind inadequate social communication in Latin America is also in the realm of policy-making and planning for development. It refers to the procedures countries choose to achieve modernization.

Two main procedures have been used by the Latin American countries. Revolution has been one. Induced evolution, the other. Selecting revolution implies opting for coercion as the chief method of social change. Preferring induced evolution involves voting for persuasion as the main instrument of social change.

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[29] See, for instance, Robert L. Heilbroner, The Great Ascent, New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1963; H. Belshaw, "Some Social Aspects of Economic Development in Underdeveloped Areas," in L. W. Shannon, ed., Underdeveloped Areas, New York: Harper's, 1957; Egbert De Vries and José Medina Echavarria, eds., Social Aspects of Economic Development in Latin America, Paris: UNESCO, 1963; John Kenneth Galbraith, Economic Development, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1964; Bert F. Hoselitz, Sociological Aspects of Economic Growth, New York: The Free Press, 1960; Neil J. Smelser, The Sociology of Economic Life, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963; and J.J. Spengler, "Breakdowns in Modernization," in Myron Weiner, ed., Modernization: The Dynamics of Growth, New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1966.

México, Bolivia, Cuba and now, presumably, Peru have chosen the road of revolution. The rest of the countries in the region have, implicitely at least, chosen induced evolution. The former need perhaps to worry less about communication than the latter since their governments do not have to rule out the use of force to produce the desired behaviors in people. But the countries that embraced induced evolution committed themselves--knowingly or not--to organize their social communication system so that they can persuade the people to willingly accept their behavioral propositions.

Unfortunately, none of the countries in that latter category would seem to be even vaguely aware of the communication responsibility they were undertaking when they decided to stick to evolution. In fact, had they been aware of it, some of the problems mentioned at the beginning of this article would have never existed in those countries, and other of those problems would be clearly on their way to solution.

Communication: The Social Force Taken For Granted

The third general factor here perceived as hindering communication in the region is also attributable to some attitudes of policy-makers and planners of modernization. As a rule, those in the non-communist countries do not include the organization of efficient social communication among the chief considerations for development.

They seem to think either that effective communication is not indispensable for modernization or that it is something which occurs automatically and necessarily.

In Latin America, for instance, very few countries have Ministries of Information and almost none has communication strategists located in the upper

levels of the political and administrative hierarchy. In matters of inducing behavioral changes, they prefer to invest mostly in formal schooling and in anti-illiteracy campaigns. By contrast, Pool[30] observed:

> The practice in the Communist countries is also to spend heavily for literacy and education but in addition to support expensive programs of exhortation addressed to adults. They invest much in the press, movies, loud-speaker systems, etc.

As Pool himself has noted, one of the explanations for the reluctance of non-communist developing countries to give mass communication the key role it should play in modernization seems to be a duality of attitudes. On the one hand, the leaders of some of those countries seem to deny the mass media real effectiveness in generating behavioral changes in the masses. On the other, they often appear to attribute strong negative capabilities to the media, such as inducing disorientation, fostering triviality, standardizing the people's mentality, numbing public consciousness, and even treacherously leading the individuals to socially ill-behaviors. To that is added, at times, a feeling that officially-owned mass media are necessarily undemocratic.

For such reasons, most governments would hesitate to spend even 2 per cent of their yearly budgets in the overall improvement of massive social communication but--in addition to easily spending 20 per cent or more in military activities--they usually do not hesitate to spend 5 per cent, or more, of the budget to take care of physical communication needs, such as those of renewal and enlargement of telegraphic equipment.

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[30] Ithiel De Sola Pool, "The Mass Media and Politics in the Modernization Process," in Lucian W. Pye, ed., Communications and Political Development, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1963, pp. 234-253.

The Masters Who Wouldn't Yield

The fourth, and last, general factor under consideration constitutes, in all probability, the major explanation for the insufficiencies of developmental communication in the region. It refers to the kind of social structure that prevails in this region.

That structure is designed, as if it were, to impede the occurrence of national development. Its central characteristic is a degree of concentration of power--based on the monopoly of land and wealth--which ranks among the most pronounced on earth. Among dozens of coincident analysts, Veliz[31] notes:

> There exists in the region a resilient traditional structure of institutions, hierarchical arrangements, and attitudes which conditions every aspect of political behaviour and which has survived centuries of colonial governments, movements for independence, foreign wars and invasions, domestic revolutions, and a confusingly large number of lesser palace revolts. More recently it has not only successfully resisted the impact of technological innovation and industrialization, but appears to have been strengthened by it.

Minute minorities preside--overtly or not--over the destiny of the majority of the 260 million inhabitants of Latin America, a region which lives mostly out of agriculture and where, according to Carroll,[32] 10 per cent of the people own 90 per cent of the land.

What interest can those minorities have in seeing change occur? On the contrary, and naturally, any proposition of change spells danger for the

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[31] Claudio Veliz, "Introduction," in Claudio Veliz, ed., Obstacles to Change in Latin America, London: Oxford University Press, 1965, p. 1.

[32] Thomas F. Carroll, "The Land Reform Issue in Latin America", in Albert O. Hirschman, ed., Latin American Issues, New York: The Twentieth Century Fund, 1961, pp. 161-201.

maintenance of their unfair privileges.

Genuine national development involves a radical change of the structure from which those oligarchies benefit. It implies a democratic redistribution of power, and wealth. Not only do the oligarchies oppose vigorously any such social structural change--for instance, land reform--but they even show very little interest in changes in social functions, such as improving the methods of agricultural production. Again, this is easily explained since, with minimum investment, with a most primitive technology, and with the unlimited supply of cheap and semi-enslaved labor they enjoy, the big landowners are already as rich and as powerful as they wish to be.

Communication as a Deterrent To Change

What, in general, is the role communication plays under such circumstances? Obviously, one of helping to perpetuate the status quo. To do so the head figures of the Latin American power nuclei rarely ever have to engage in public opposition to changes in society. They entrust the role of consistently praising compliance and discouraging deviance to the system of commercial mass media which they control almost completely. Domination over the system is attained by devices such as the following:

1. Monopolizing the ownership of mass media institutions, particularily dailies, national magazines, and television stations.

2. Influencing other privately-owned but independent mass media institutions by means of discriminatory advertising concessions.

3. Manipulating the media content in such a way that (a) it includes little information that people can use to improve their lot and much information which is either superfluous or escapist; (b) it identifies nonconformity with extremism and protest with delinquency whereas it equates conservatism with peace and democracy and submissiveness with order and patriotism; and (c) it detracts attention from crucial social

problems and emphasizes triviality, bizarre events, crime and, some times, even scandal.

A few specific illustrations suffice to support the precedent assertions.

All the Keys in One Hand

As reported by García,[33] of 10 dailies in Santiago de Chile, 3 belong to a powerful banking group, 1 to the Army, and 1 to the Church, the traditional supporters of the status-quo.

As reported by Malpica,[34] of 8 dailies in Lima, Perú, 2 belong to a group of owners of large farms, mines and industries; 2 belong to two interlocked groups of merchants and industrialists; 1 belongs to a family which owns a large bank, insurance companies, cement factories, several real estate firms, and a petroleum concern; and 1 belongs to a magnate of the fishing industry, who in addition has a chain of four provincial newspapers and a number of specialized magazines of national circulation. Some of the owners of dailies also own television channels and radio stations; a group of brothers own 1 television channel and 11 radio stations; the owners of a daily and a television channel are also the proprietors of 13 radio stations; and a single person possesses 45 radio stations spread all over the country!

As reported by Mas,[35] one man monopolized the Mexican television system for 15 solid years, and the man who--prior to Castro's revolution--dominated the Cuban television system now owns in Argentina the largest television pro-

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[33]Antonio García, El Problema Agrario en América Latina y Los Medios de Información Colectiva, Quito: Centro Internacional de Estudios Superiores en Periodismo para la América Latina, 1966, p. 188.

[34]Carlos Malpica, Los Dueños del Perú, Lima: Ediciones Ensayos Sociales, 1968, pp. 28-31.

[35]Fernando Mas, "La Televisión contra la Cultura," Visión, October 10, 1969, pp. 32-42.

duction company of Latin America. The same man, according to Malpica,[36] shares in the ownership of one of the two most important television networks of Peru.

Ads Can Be Weapons

So much for an illustration of media-ownership patterns. Exemplary of the influence of the oligarchy over independent mass media institutions through discriminatory advertising, is a case in Venezuela. As reported by Mujica,[37] the daily with the largest circulation in that country was forced to subscribe to an anti-Cuban line of editorial and informative policy by means of a strong advertising boycott organized by the national association of advertisers, with militant support from foreign advertisers such as Sears, Rcebuck Co., General Motors, and Pan American Airways. The pressure of the ultra-conservative sectors of the country was so effective that it determined the resignation of the company's president and the "depuration" of the newspaper staff.

Just one illustration will be given here for each of the three instances of media-content manipulation mentioned before as another mechanism through which Latin American conservatism uses communication as a deterrent to change.

Few Readers and Little for Them to Read

First, the case of irrelevance. Even in Mexico, (the precursor of revolution in the region and the first country in which peasants rose to break the power of the landlords), most of the sizable rural population is ignored by

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[36] Op. cit., pp. 29-30.

[37] Hector Mujica, El Imperio de la Noticia, Garacas: Universidad Central de Venezuela, 1967, pp. 238-239.

the mass media. Newspapers and radio stations gear their messages almost exclusively to city people. And, even in this case, much of their content is futile or alien to the nation's struggle for development.

According to García,[38] while the average number of newspaper copies available for each 1,000 inhabitants approaches 300 in the federal district, it is below 10 copies in the five states which form the corn belt characterized by subsistance agriculture. Moreover, De Almeida[39]--doing comparative-content analysis between a large national daily and a number of local dailies in a provincial city of México--found that agricultural topics occupied as low as 1.6% of text space and 0.5% of advertising space in the national dailies, and no more than 5% of text and 3% of advertising in the local dailies which . . . operate in an area predominantly populated by rural dwellers.

Can Words Stop Rebellions?

Second, the case of bias and distortion. As one of the countries where land monopoly reaches its worst extremes, Peru has often witnessed, in the last decade, invasions of the huge oligarchical farm estates by groups of landless peasants made desperate by seemingly endless exploitation. Roca[40] studied the behavior of 6 Lima dailies in a 45-day period in 1963, of acute increment of the invasions, which had involved the death of 25 persons. His content-analysis included three categories of materials referrent to the

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[38] Op. cit., p. 189

[39] Gastao Thomaz de Almeida, "Prensa y Desarrollo Rural," Estructura y Desarrollo de las Comunidades Rurales; Estudio de un Area del Bajío (Guanajuato), México,: Programa Interamericano de Ciencias Sociales Aplicadas, Escuela Nacional de Antropología, 1964, pp. 418-479.

[40] Luis Roca, "Los Intereses Económicos y la Orientación de Noticias sobre el Movimiento Campesino," Campesino, Año I, No. 1, Enero-Abril, 1969; pp. 37-52.

invasions; editorials, news, and advertisements. Of the 391 items analyzed, putting together all categories, the researcher found 290 items in favor of the landlords and against the peasants, 39 against the landlords, and 62 neutral. In the category of advertisements, taken in isolation, there were 105 issues in favor of the landlords against zero neutral and not one in favor of the peasants.

Roca[41] also found, at least for three of the dailies under study, that they (1) were directly related to agricultural societies owned by the landlords, and (2) that their editorials, news, and advertisements usually presented the invasions exclusively as the product of political agitation and leftist subversion; thus, the invasions were included--at the very least implicitely--in the category of delinquent and anti-patriotic behavior.[42]

The Entertainment Curtain

Third, the preference for trivia. Commercial television, which now exists in every Latin American country, has followed the classical content-orientation pattern: superficial reporting and non-controversial opinion; indifference towards public service; lack of commitment to national problems and goals; and very low cultural standards. To that has been added a complete disinterest in producing programs relevant to national values, history, traditions, preoccupations, achievements, etc. In fact, the greater proportion of programs come "canned" and dubbed from English into Spanish or Portuguese.

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[41] Op. cit., 42-45

[42] For a study of how a Chilean newspaper treated the radical student reform movement at the Catholic University of that country, see Jose Joaquin Brunner, "'El Mercurio,' la Educacion y el Orden Vigente," Mensaje, Vol. XVIII, No. 181, Agosto 1969.

Notes Mas[43] on the topic:

> Latin America consumes annually North American "series" and films for no less than 80 million dollars, which represents an evasion of foreign exchange of impossible recuperation: the North American market spends not a dollar on Latin American films series.

Newspapers do not fare any better. On their own, many of them include far more sports, show business, crime, and fashion materials, as well as comics, than news of developmental activities, articles of analysis of the national reality, and technical and educational informations. In addition, their disregard for the latter types of messages is aided by the disinterest that the foreign news agencies serving the region have for events denoting social crisis and people's unrest. The fondness of some foreign press correspondents for "color" and sensationalism, and the degree of influence which some extra-regional propaganda systems would seem to have at times over some of the media, contribute also to fill the newsprint with materials hardly desirable for the aims of national development.

There is evidence that Latin American metropolitan newspapers carry a much higher proportion of foreign news than do the North American dailies of comparable scope.[44] While this may indicate, up to a point, the presence of parroquialism in the North American press, it needs not be taken as an indicator of genuine universalism in the Latin American press. Orientation towards the world is indeed healthy for modernization but not at the expense of concern

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[43] Op. cit., p. 40. (Translated from the Spanish original by the present writer.)

[44] See James W. Markham, "Foreign News in the United States and South American Press," Public Opinion Quarterly, XXV, Summer 1961, pp. 249-262.

for significant events in Latin America itself and in the other less developed countries. And, in contrast to the perceptions of some North American analysts,[45] the observations of some of their Latin American colleagues reveal that, at times, some European dailies may include far more material on the less developed nations than some of the major Latin American newspapers do.

For instance, a Venezuelan newspaperman[46] compared the amount of space allotted, in the same day, to materials on the "third world" (the developing countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America) by one French newspaper and by two dailies of Latin American countries. He found that the European newspaper assigned much more space to that area of the world than one of those Latin American dailies, and only slightly less than the other.

The Witch, the Pig, and the Alimony-Paying Woman

Furthermore, the Venezuelan analyst found that the French daily used most of the 343 centimeters-column that had assigned that day to the "third world" for reporting about substantive events and vital problems of that area. One of the Latin American dailies had, instead, used 80 of the 220 centimeters it had assigned to the area that day for materials about the death of a North American movie actor in Guatemala, about the influence of black magic in Liberia, and about a picturesque demand of inheritance in Peru. The other Latin American daily had done much the same but to a lesser extent.

Thus, the indifference towards the plight of the Latin American masses

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[45] See, for instance, John T. McNelly, "Mass Communication and the Climate for Modernization in Latin America," op. cit.

[46] Eleazar Diaz Rangel, Pueblos Subinformados: Las Agencias de Noticias y America Latina, Caracas: Universidad Central de Venezuela, 1967.

which at least some of the region's main dailies seem to have is suggested[47] not only by space allotments but also by content preferences. And not only does it exclude reference to substantive political events or economic realities, but it overpasses other types of information as well, while choosing to play up epidermic "human touch" stories that do little favor to the region's world image. In fact, Diaz Rangel[48] denounces:

> Twenty members of the Tegucigalpa children's chorus group died in an automobile accident. One agency summarized this news in 80 words and another sent 200 words on it. Some dailies did not print it. Others, such as El Espectador, printed it in 10 centimeters but gave twice as much space to the death of actor Steve Cochran! Other news on Latin America were: detention of a witch in Bogota, birth of a two-legged pig in Caracas, a sentence condemning a Lima woman to pay alimony to her husband, whom she had just divorced!

The Art of Knowledge-Deprivation

Incommunication can be a social control instrument as effective as communication. And the power-holders of Latin America seem to know it too. They control, as has been exemplified above, the production of messages emanating from the commercial mass media. But they also profit from the many physical and cultural barriers that prevail in the region for the distribution of messages. Therefore, the consumption of mass media messages remains a privilege of the urban minority which lives around the power nuclei.

Only extremely small segments of the peasant population are being reached occasionally by some mass media messages, with radio being the channel

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[47] Diaz Rangel recognizes that his sample does not allow him to generalize irrestrictedly. His is not a unique case, however, since--as McNelly has pointed out--systematic-content analysis is not yet done in Latin America.

[48] Op. cit., p. 32. (Translated from the Spanish original by the present writer.)

less low in penetration. Yet, availability is not equal to access, and access is no guaranty of exposure. Illustrative of it is the case in Jamundí, a rural community located at less than an hour by bus from Medellín, one of the major cities of Colombia. In addition to its favorable location, Jamundí has an unusually high level of literacy: 85 per cent. Yet, 51 per cent of the peasants interviewed in a recent study made there[49] told the researchers they had never read a newspaper in their lives! Poverty? Of course. Non-rural media content? Most likely.

Unless the masses--the rural ones in particular--are rescued from that state of virtual incommunication in which they are intentionally kept, genuine, accelerated, and widespread modernization is unlikely to occur in Latin America.

It is not that no one is trying to help the peasants become full members of a national communication network. Many progressive groups and institutions are striving for it, as has already been described in this paper. And they are making some gains. But the power elite does not want such a thing to occur. Sometimes, not even when the Catholic Church sides with the people instead of supporting the oligarchy--a rare event--and promotes the "concientizacion" (the coming into awareness of the situation) of the peasantry through special organs of mass communication.

Alert, organized peasants are dangerous for the Establishment. And communication--face-to-face or via the mass media-- is a powerful alerter. It can induce, as research[50] in the region itself has demonstrated,

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[49] Jaime Gutierrez Sanchez and Robert L. McNamara, "Algunos Factores que Afectan el Proceso de Comunicacion en una Vereda Colombiana," Revista ICA, Vol. III, No. 3, Septiembre de 1968.

[50] See Everett M. Rogers, in association with Lynne Svenning,

nonconformity, innovativeness, and the will to change things here and now. Therefore it is logical for the oligarchy to impede communication, to secure--rather--the isolation of the masses from the political and technical leadership that can help them be free.

In fact, so far, the ruling minorities have succeeded in keeping communication within the limits of rigid stratification that they have imposed on the life of the region. Observed a communication scientist who is among the persons best acquainted with the problem:

> The overall diversity of Latin America is reflected in the availability of mass media. The differences are tremendous, not only between but also within the countries. In the big cities we find the full-range of media readily obtainable, both print and electronic, except in a few cities still without television. In the hinterlands there are few if any media to be found.[51]

To that can be added that differences are appreciable even within the cities, as research has also shown.[52] A few television antennas do show in the mushrooming slums, but that is not equal to saying that most of their inhabitants--predominantly refugee peasants--are not also undercommunicated persons.

Two studies, one at each extreme of the stratification scheme, provide evidence of the strong disparities prevailing in the region's communication structure.

Modernization Among Peasants: The Impact of Communication, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1969.

[51] John McNelly, op. cit., p. 347.

[52] Paul J. Deutschmann, John T. McNelly, and Huber Ellingsworth, "Mass Media Use by Sub-Elites in 11 Latin American Countries," Journalism Quarterly, Vol. 38, No. 4, Autumn 1961.

The High Consumers

Deutschmann, McNelly and Ellingsworth,[53] in a study of mass media use by what they appropriately called "sub-elites" of 11 Latin American countries, compared a sample of professionals and technicians of those countries with equivalent groups of North Americans. They asked the subjects (115 of which had received advanced training in the United States and 99 of which had not received such training) questions about their use of radio, television, newspapers, books, movies, and technical publications.[54]

The researchers found that the members of those "sub-elites" use the mass media each day to about the same degree that professional and managerial people in cities of the United States of America. Moreover, the Latin American subjects were shown to consume more book and radio information than the subjects in the U.S. studies.

It is plausible that the Latin American technocrats were found to be so high in communication intake. But such should be balanced against different findings obtained for other Latin Americans; for instance, for those at the bottom of the information pyramid.

The Voice of the Hoes

Díaz Bordenave[55] conducted, in 1963, a study of agricultural communication in the state of Pernambuco, Brazil, an area characterized by acute land

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[53] Op. cit.

[54] Subjects which had been trained in the U.S. were more likely to use television, and to consume U.S.-originated materials, than subjects who had not gotten that training.

[55] Juan Díaz Bordenave. Orientación "Desarrollista" en la Comunicación Colectiva, San Jose: Servicio Interamericano de Comunicación, Instituto Interamericano de Ciencias Agrícolas de la OEA, 1965.

monopoly which had pushed thousands of peasant families to struggle for survival on minimal patches of land.

The 221 peasants interviewed lived no more than a two-hour drive from Recife, the state capital, which already had almost one million inhabitants. Nevertheless:

> 94% of them did not know that Brazil's main export was coffee;
>
> 80% had no meaning whatsoever for the word "democracy";
>
> 73% did not know who Fidel Castro was;
>
> 65% did not know what a dollar was; and
>
> 48% did not know the name of the incumbent President of their country.[56]

Diaz Bordenave was also interested in finding out how the peasants go about trying to communicate their problems, needs, aspirations, and reactions, to the government. Most respondents expressed, often only in indirect ways, skepticism about the interest the government might have in listening to them. But one farm laborer, as recorded by the researcher, said to the interviewer:

> Look, Mister, the government hardly knows that I exist, and the only way by which it may become aware of it is if I break with my hoe the head of one of the authorities around here.[57]

Perhaps the irritated Brazilian peasant was speaking for millions of forgotten Latin Americans who seem no longer willing to endure serfdom.

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[56] Such critical case of subinformation is not unusual. For a Colombian example, see Gutierrez y McNamara, op. cit., p. 151.

[57] Orientacion Desarrollista en la Comunicacion Colectiva, op. cit., p. 4. (Quote translated from the Spanish original by the present writer.)

IV. SUMMARY

According to UNESCO, on the basis of total newspaper circulation and totals of radio and television receivers, the mass media are more highly developed in Latin America than in other regions of the "third world." The degree, however, to which social communication has advanced in the region cannot be judged exclusively by the number of media institutions it has and the percentages of people those institutions presumably reach. Many other factors of comparable, if not greater, importance must also be taken into account.

One way to expand the basis for appraising the growth of social communication in the region is to take a look--in addition to the mass media--at the public communication institutions and to analyze their principal operations.

The appraisal makes it readily evident that: (1) the three main lines of developmental communication activity have been: audio-visual education, "radio schools," and agricultural communication; (2) the production function has been emphasized over distribution and evaluation, as well as over training, research and promotion; and (3) the region already has, nevertheless, established communication training at the M.A. level, conducted about 50 scientific studies on communication for development, and organized a useful series of technical meetings with purposes of professional exchange and promotion. Furthermore, the region is now constructing a complete system of telecommunication which includes satellites, and has just established a special inter-American program to foster the application of audio-visual education and educational television to the goals of national development.

In sum, Latin America's achievements in communication for modernization are considerable and plausible. This is not equal to saying, however, that the region counts already on a system of social communication adequate to the needs of integrated, widespread, and accelerated national development. Far from it,

Latin American communication still confronts many serious problems. Twelve of the main ones are stated in the text, ranging from the inarticulation prevailing between general development strategies and specific communication strategies to the insufficiency of intra-regional and national news agencies and advertising firms.

Behind all those problems, however, four major general factors seem to account for the present situation. Three of them pertain to attitudes of top policy-makers and development planners, and the other refers to the fact that Latin America is a highly stratified social structure.

Those attitudes are the following: (1) a vision of national development as a process which can be effected almost exclusively on the basis of economic regulation, technological innovation, and ecologial manipulation; (2) a failure to realize that choosing induced evolution or reform--over revolution--as the road towards modernity implies the organization of persuasion on a massive scale; and (3) a confused notion of what mass media can do to people, which results in giving it minimal importance as it is reflected in low priorities in the programs and low allotments in the budgets.

The oligarchy which dominates the life of the region is naturally not interested in change and is conscious that improved and truly massive social communication will lead to breaking the status quo. Thus it controls the production of messages, it benefits from faulty distribution facilities, and it does its best to restrict the consumption of those messages to a minimum proportion of the population. Monopoly in media ownership; discriminatory advertising concessions to independent information organs; and biased, distorted, and irrelevant media content are among the tools the power nucleu i use to keep communication operating as a deterrent to change, as an instrument of compliance.

The essential conclusion is that, as long as such attitudes prevail and as long as such oligarchical structure remains unchanged, social communication will not be able to really serve the aims of genuine national development in Latin Ame

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