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DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION:
ALTERNATIVE SYSTEMS

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DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION: ALTERNATIVE SYSTEMS

World War II was decisive for defining development, communication, and the composite development communication in the light of the twentieth century realities. The chief winner in the conflict, the United States of America, made then substantive contributions to the theory and practice pertinent to the three processes. These approaches exerted a very strong influence in many parts of the world and went undisputed for several years. Only as of the middle of the 60's, and especially throughout the 70's, those concepts came to be challenged and the practices were critically assessed. On to the 80's moved attempts at proposing "another development" and forging "alternative communication".

THE OLD APPROACHES

Understanding the relationship involved in the concept "development communication" requires ascertaining what is understood by "development" and by "communication". The concepts of one and the other born with World War II have come nowadays to be regarded old as opposite perceptions have emerged involving fresh approaches.

There appears to be a logical correspondence between given concepts of development and certain concepts of communication. This is reflected in the relationship postulated between development and communication in the realm of the old approaches, as well as in that of the new ones.

The Classic Development Models

Brought about by the great bourgeois revolutions of Europe in the eighteen and nineteen centuries, the idea of progress prevailed until World War II. It portrayed the faith in a necessary evolution of nations

and persons towards ever higher levels of richness accumulation assumed capable of generating well-being and happiness for all. An offspring of empiricism and rationality, this notion came to be somewhat displaced by that of development, borrowed from biology, only after the conflagration. Marking a key difference between "natural" progress and induced development, a measure of government intervention became acceptable in Western academic and government circles. Through the planned application of adequate capital inputs and advanced technologies to the control of nature, it was believed, development could be made to happen. And this could now take place not anymore in centuries but within mere decades if the developed nations were to transfer technical know-how and provide financial assistance to those countries still not developed. Thus, as a chief element in the expansion of its leadership to the whole world, the United States of America built and run in the early 50's a foreign aid program charged with the mission of teaching in Africa, Asia and Latin America the creed and making of "national development".

Between the late 50's and the early 60's U.S. scholars from several disciplines proposed many diverse conceptualizations of the development of nations. In spite of their differences in explanatory approaches, a number of those theoreticians seemed to somewhat share a core of beliefs. First, they assumed change goes from "traditional" to "modern" forms of individual and societal behavior; that is, from primitive, irrational, conservative, isolated and unproductive communities to civilized, rational, progressive, integrated and productive nation-states. A corollary of it was the belief that traditionalism was necessarily counterproductive for development whereas modernity was universally desirable and attainable. Second, although they varied in positing a prime mover of change, they largely agreed in perceiving economic growth as the chief goal of national

development. This growth was seen as essentially achievable by the transfer of sophisticated capital-intensive technologies for agricultural and industrial production as well as for transportation and communications. The economy had to evolve from its farming base to an industrial one and, in the process, most people had to move from rural dwellings to urban residence. Coupling the augmented production of goods and services with increments in consumption standards will secure the material advancement of people. In turn, this advancement should facilitate improvements in literacy, formal education and cultural activity.

Third, people will have to learn to save and invest so as to accumulate wealth to secure continued well-being even if this takes deferring gratification. Fourth, modernizing the economy may involve sacrifices and perhaps even some social disruptions at the beginning but ultimately it should lead everybody to enjoy a prosperous and democratic way of living.

Fifth, although factors in the natural environment and in the social context are not irrelevant, the key to national development lies in the mentality of persons. As long as they keep embracing archaic erroneous perceptions of nature, human life and the world, development cannot be achieved. Thus, development involves as a sine-qua-non condition erasing from the minds of individuals traditional values, images and beliefs and substituting them for those adequate to help them join modernity. It is only upon the advent of such psycho-cultural-metamorphosis that the individuals become apt to generate economic growth and material advancement. And sixth, the causes of underdevelopment lay chiefly within the developing nations, not in the nature of their external relationships with advanced countries.

Measurement of modernization or development was a concern common to many of the builders of paradigms. In addition to the set of economic

indicators presided by the GNP, they also included physical indicators such as kilowatts spent, kilometers of roads built, etc. Likewise, social factors were quantified: for instance, number of hospital beds and medical doctors per each thousand inhabitants, number of classrooms, students and teachers by levels of instruction, percentages of literacy and numbers of newspapers, radio receivers, cinema seats and television sets per thousand inhabitants. Applying indicators as these statisticians built scales on which countries were ranked as highly developed, developed, underdeveloped and least developed.

Three development conceptualizations proved most influential and exemplified well the beliefs just briefly reviewed: the theory of modernization postulated by sociologist Daniel Lerner in 1958 through The Passing of Traditional Society, the model presented in 1960 by economist W.W. Rostow in The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto, and the paradigm of Diffusion of Innovations proposed by rural sociologist Everett Rogers in 1962.

Rostow figured out societies moving from a traditional stage to a modern one through a transitional interlude (in which pre-conditions appeared), a "take-off" point, and a moment of drive to maturity. To reach said development-launching platform a country's economy had to raise savings and investments from 5 percent or less to 10 percent or more and double its rate of capital formation. This was normally to occur in a relatively short period of radical change characterized by a substantive increase in the rate of technological advancement. At the culmination of the process, the stage of "high mass consumption" the modernized country should have acquired the ability for self-sustained growth, essentially indicated by the evolution of the Cross National Product (GNP).

Lerner hypothesized that the starting point of modernization was a minimum critical level of urbanization. Only after a country reached a growth of 10 percent in that process the next stage turned possible: the joint expansion of literacy and communications (measured in terms of mass media exposure) side by side with urbanization to about 25 percent. Economic advancement (in terms of higher per capita income) and increase in political participation (in terms of voting) completed the process made possible through the interplay among all these factors, each stimulating growth in the others. Behind it all operated an even more important influence, empathy, a person's ability to envision himself capable of attaining major changes in his status as well as of placing himself in the situations of others. This accounted for a sort of "psychic mobility" which enabled the person to function innovatively and thus turn prone to modernization by becoming rational, future oriented and confident to fulfilling improvement aspirations.

For Rogers an innovation is an idea perceived as new by an individual and communicated through certain channels, over time, among the members of a social system. He proposed that the stages through which the innovation passes were awareness, interest, evaluation, trial and adoption. The diffusion of innovations depended upon the rate of adoption of them. A few individuals would venture to readily adopt an innovation and, at the other extreme of the continuum, a few individuals would never come to adopting it. In between those poles of "innovators" and "laggards", the majority of people perform the adoption in a normally slow fashion; an innovation may indeed take years to be adopted in a whole social system. Innovators are usually those members of a social system ranking high in income, education, communication and cosmopolitanism. "Opinion leaders" constitute a main source of persuasion to bring about adoption.

The Traditional Conceptions of Communication

Rooted in Aristotelian thinking, the prevailing conceptualizations of communication also originated with World War II and mostly in the United States of America.

Aristotle had seen "rhetoric" as composed of the speaker, the speech and the listener and perceived the aim of it as "the search for all means of persuasion". In other words, he had identified as basic to the communication phenomenon these elements: who, what, to whom, and proclaimed influence on the behavior of others as the chief intention of the communicator. Only one element had escaped the attention of the Stagirite, the medium.

Harold Lasswell took care of that omission by adding the how; on the other hand, he stipulated the what for in terms of the consequences of the communicator's intent on the communicatee's conduct. His, widely accepted paradigm was enunciated interrogatively:

Who

Says What

In, Which Channel

To Whom

With What Effect?

From Lasswell on, communication was understood as the transmission of ideas and emotions through symbols. That is, persons transferred via some channels (means for conveying symbols) knowledge and feelings to other persons through the mutual use of some code (set of signals conventionally representing elements of perceived reality) they happened to share, like verbal or gestural languages. Likewise, the notion

of persuasion as the purpose of communication permeated the definitions. These two features proved so pervasive that came to jointly characterize communication, in summary, as an act of transmission for persuasion.

More than a decade after the appearance of Lasswell's model, a mathematical theory of communication was formulated by U.S. engineers Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver. They perceived communication as including "all of the procedures by which one mind may affect another". In their view, a general communication system had a source of information, which emitted a message through a transmitter carrying the signal that conveys the message to a receiver which converts the signal into said message so as to deliver it to the destination.

This model was adapted for social communication by U.S. scholar Wilbur Schramm in 1961 stressing the ability of the human mind to encode messages into signals and, alternatively, decode from signals the messages. He perceived communication as the sharing of experiences, ideas or attitudes. Another U.S. scholar, David Berlo, stressed the two-way nature of communication and proposed to understand it as an ever dynamic and changing process, not as an isolated act.

Another concept stemming from engineering and physiological domains, feedback, also was applied to social communication. Postulated already in 1950 by Norbert Wiener, this cybernetic concept referred to message control mechanisms enabling machines or organisms to automatically adjust their behavior to varying goals. The notion fitted well with the requirements of effectiveness in persuasion. Feedback was a device for the communicator to assess whether he was accomplishing his purpose of producing given effects on the behavior of others. By exerting such

control, he could adjust his messages to his receiver's reactions so as to be sure of attaining his purpose.

Articulation and elaboration of propositions as those just reviewed produced a communication paradigm that was to gain ample diffusion: the "S-M-C-R" model synthesized by Berlo. It was called so because its components were identified as Source - Message - Channel - Receiver. The encoding function of the source and the decoding function of the receiver were acknowledged. Feedback was included. And persuasion remained the predominant motive of communicative behavior.

Development Support Communication

Already before World War II, the U.S. created and successfully run, in cooperation with the Land Grant colleges, "agricultural extension" services in charge of communicating scientific information on production technologies to farmers. Likewise, during the war, the country learned well how to use audio-visual communication implements as aids to rapidly train factory workers to substitute for those joining the army, as well as to help civilians quickly master military skills. Once the conflagration was over in the middle of the 40's, as the victorious nation moved into becoming the world's most influential power, its foreign assistance agency started passing on to the non-industrialized countries of Asia, Latin America and Africa the principles and techniques for "farm information" and "audio-visual education". Through "Point Four", the program which sought to emulate the success of the Marshall Plan, the practice of "development communication" evolved from those bases as of the 50's assisted first by training of communication specialists native of the "developing" countries and later by U.S.- based and field research.

In 1958, aware of the deficiencies suffered by the non-industrial states in matters of communication, the General Assembly of the United Nations called for a program of remedial action. It asked Unesco to blueprint it on the basis of a survey of mass communication resources in those countries. This assessment was conducted in the early 60's through regional meetings of experts of Asia, Latin America and Africa. Their recommendations lead the General Assembly of the United Nations to express, in 1962, the conviction that "information media have an important part to play in education and in economic development and social progress". Hence the international organization recommended governments to include in their plans for economic growth resources for expanding and improving communications in the service of development. As a contribution to these concerns, Unesco commissioned the Director of the Institute for Communication Research at Stanford University, in the U.S.A., Wilbur Schramm, to undertake research that would provide concrete guidance in this area. First published in 1964, the study Mass Media and National Development: The Role of Information in the Developing Countries is the landmark of the discipline and established Dr. Schramm as a pioneer builder of practice-based theory on this field in the world.

Using as a framework the general functions for communication formulated by Lasswell, Schramm perceived the broad roles of communication as naturally fitting with specific and essential requirements of modernization that could be expressed in terms of people's requirements. People need, he believed, to be informed about the development plans, tasks, achievements and problems to be made participant in decision making on matters of development and to be taught the skills which the development challenge demands them to command.

Schramm envisioned the mass media as performing, in close relation to those types of needs, the roles of "watchman", "policy maker" and "teacher". He proposed that, in the "watchman" role, media can widen the horizons of people so that they benefit from opportunities for improvement, direct people's attention to matters deserving emphasis in the process of change and raise the people's levels of aspirations so that, removing fatalism and passivity, they become motivated for achievement. These three functions were regarded by Schramm as instrumental to the creation of a general "climate" favoring modernization. In the "policy-making" role, he saw the media as capable of facilitating the spread of knowledge and the acceptance of emerging values and norms, of augmenting the number of people sharing in political discussion, of granting status to development leaders, and of serving as supporters of key development activists that multiply the mass media stimuli through interpersonal contacts. Sharing the view that mass media can much better create in people new attitudes than modify existing ones, Schramm believed that this could well apply to fostering the social unity indispensable for securing nationhood. And, in the "teacher" role, he attributed the media a clearly large potential to reinforce other educational vehicles and, when needed, to substitute for them.

Several other U.S. scholar shared with Schramm viewpoints as these and suggested other roles of communication in development. For instance, Daniel Lerner thought the media capable of raising new aspirations, fostering increased social participation, helping generate new leadership and, above all, teaching "empathy". So confident seemed to be Dr. Lerner in the mass media powers that he feared they could

exacerbate wants beyond the possibility of satisfying them and thus generate frustration and aggressiveness. Ithiel de Sola Pool was persuaded that media create in people pro-development images such as that of life as subject to deliberate change or economic growth as something attainable. He also believed that media promote a willingness for planning and for operating on a large stage, as well as foster national consciousness and produce identification with new symbols, objects and situations. Emphasizing political development, analysts as Lucien Pye proposed that media provide a basis for rationality in mass politics, as well as a framework for prospecting the future and gauging the degree of vision of development leaders.

Evidently, these and other theoreticians, including India's Lakshmana Rao, had in common with Schramm much faith in the capabilities of press, radio, film and television as powerful supporters of modernization anywhere in the world. Some researchers and many practitioners in several developing countries came to share this optimistic perception. And the United Nations established a Development Support Communication organ.

In 1964, under Schramm's inspiration and chairmanship, a multidisciplinary group of scholars involved in development communication reflection, action and research discussed the situation in a Hawaii meeting. Out of it came in 1967, edited by Lerner and Schramm, Communication and Change in the Developing Countries, a valuable reader epitomizing the "enthusiastic position".

Meanwhile, in the developing countries, the practice of development communication was far more prominent than theorization. Some countries, especially in Asia and Latin America, firmly embraced the audio-visual

education and agricultural extension formats. A few imaginatively developed new strategies suited to their specific realities, like the farm radio forum of India, later replicated in Ghana, or the radio schools created in Colombia by a priest in the remote Andean village of Sutatenza and rapidly spread across the Latin American region. Both these formats combined the only mass medium capable of reaching the rural population there with action-oriented community listening groups. Their success was comparable to some later experiments with instructional television like the well known one in El Salvador or India's site satellite project.

THE FRUSTRATING EXPERIENCES

Has development taken place? Did communication help it occur? Negative answers began to be provided already in the 50's. By the onset of the 70's it became very evident that the dreams of generalized modernization had not materialized and that communication had hardly performed the roles expected from it in the service of the former. In the middle of the 80's, aggravated by the aftermath of universal economic recession, underdevelopment looks even more acute in some aspects. And, in spite of major technological advancements, few would see these days in communication a hope for development.

Development's Shortcomings

Forty years have elapsed since World War II was over, the United Nations Organization was established and assistance from the developed countries to the underdeveloped ones started. Thousands of millions of dollars were spent during this period in support of development

efforts. Economic growth and material advancement were attained to a notorious extent in many of the underdeveloped countries, especially over the last 20 years or so. And significant gains in health and education were recorded in several of them. But the uneven economic patterns traditionally prevailing between developing nations and within each of these latter remained for the most part unaltered, making wide-spread and self-sustained development close to impossible. In both cases, the rich became richer and the poor turned poorer.

By 1980, after two U.N.-proclaimed "Development Decades", the gap had rather widened. The developing countries had accumulated a foreign debt of practically 440.000 million dollars whereas in 1971 that debt had been of only 68.000 million dollars. Between 1971 and 1980 interest rates had grown by more than 800 per cent. Three fourths of the world's population, some 3.200 millions of human beings in 140 developing countries, accounted in 1980 for only 20% of the world's gross product. Some thirty of these countries, the least developed, had a yearly per capita income of less than 300 dollars; that is less than 25 dollars per month or 80 cents per day. The annual figure for Bangladesh was below 100 while that for the U.S.A. was above 10.000.

Not even the most basic of all human needs, food for survival, has been yet satisfied. While the world squanders in 1985 about 800 billion dollars in military expenditures, more than 800 million human beings still suffer from chronic malnutrition and some, as the recent tragedy of Ethiopia illustrates, are wiped off from earth by famine. Asia, Latin America and Africa were net exporters of grains until World War II; after it, as the technologically advanced nations expanded their foreign sales of surplus food stuffs, many countries of those regions became importers of grains. In 1974 they had to pay prices three or four times

higher than in 1972 for importing staple foods as wheat. Latin American food imports grew by 128% between 1973 and 1983. On the other hand, the oil crisis of the early 70's affected the developing countries more than it affected the developed ones as the former proved much more vulnerable.

At the beginning of the "Third Development Decade", between 1981 and 1983, as a derivation from the recession affecting then the industrial nations, the worst crisis since the Great Depression of the early 30's gave a devastating blow to the economies of the developing countries. Latin America was most seriously affected by it. The growth rate of its gross internal product collapsed from 5.5% for the 1950-1980 period to minus 0.9% in 1982- With its production and export indices abruptly down, lacking employment for almost 40 million people, haunted by inflation and afflicted by high prices versus low salaries and with per capita income back to the mid 70's level, this part of the world saw virtually halted its aspiration to overcome underdevelopment. Its foreign debt jumped from 67 billion dollars in 1975 to almost 300 billion in 1982, with the most indebted countries being Brazil, Mexico and Argentina, the least underdeveloped in the region. At the beginning of that year Mexico had to commit to repayment as much as 85% of its export earnings. As the situation deteriorated further in the years thereafter, several countries are presently overwhelmed by the burden of the debt to a point of regarding it almost unmanageable. Some can now only make payments on interests while seeking to renegotiate their debt. Opposing the policies of the International Monetary Fund, Peru intends not to apply more than 10% of its export earnings to the service of the debt. "Banks can wait, hunger cannot", contends its president, social democrat Alan Garcia. "The developed countries have unleashed a commercial war against the Third World", claimed the Colombian delegate

to the 1985 general assembly of FAO. And the World Bank reports that "dozens of countries have lost ten or more years of development".

North-South Confrontation

They have indeed. But why? Can they be blamed for the failure or is there, rather, something wrong with the theory and practice of development as inspired by the most advanced nations in the world?

For Northern eyes, explosive population growth rates, cultural backwardness, lack of entrepreneurship, ill planning, poor management, technological incompetence, bureaucratic corruption and the inability to apply foreign aid are the central explanations.

For Southern eyes, the paramount explanation is the accentuated inequality in economic relations, especially with respect to trade exchange between industrial and non-industrial states. Southerners claim that the international division of labor determined by the winners of World War II assigned the developing countries a primitive role comparable to those performed by colonial territories: to produce raw materials and to consume imported manufactured goods. As the power for establishing prices for these transactions lies essentially with the advanced nations, the developing countries have to sell cheap and buy dear. This generates a chronic trade imbalance for them, which determines an ever-growing budgetary deficit. To cope with it the handicapped countries get indebted with the same industrial nations, which increasingly charge them higher interests and give them shorter repayment periods, forcing them to apply to the debt's service inordinately high percentages of their export earnings. On the other hand, the developed countries impose on developing countries's exports costly tariffs and other protectionist barriers closing their markets to competition in

manufactured goods. Furthermore, in recent years, developed countries have even become producers of some raw materials traditionally exported by the developing countries. No amount of aid can compensate for this kind of trade, Southerners feel.

It is, in the Southerners' views, this increasingly unfair structure of economic relationship what, more than anything else, acts to perpetuate underdevelopment. And the present extreme crisis situation, they conclude, is but the product of the cumulative effects of said dependence taken to a point of exacerbation.

The North-South controversy on matters of development is not new. The South established already in 1955 in Indonesia its first associative effort to search for development as an entity independent from either capitalist or socialist industrialized powers: the "Third World". Indeed it was in that year in Bandung where, according to U.S. scholar Denis Goulet, the developing countries "declared their intention of intervening in the processes whereby technological mastery is acquired over the universe of things and of resisting the domination exercised by societies already developed." In 1960 the UN General Assembly adopted a Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, which was to lead more than 50 of them, into nationhood over the next 20 years.

From these roots evolved, as of 1961, the Movement of the Non-Aligned Nations. They urged the establishment of the United Nations Conference of Trade and Development (UNCTAD), a neutral forum for North-South discussion which met for the first time in 1964. UNCTAD I, in turn, inspired the creation in the same year of the "Group of 77," a mechanism

for general and continuous coordination among developing countries within the United Nations system. Postulated by the Non-Aligned Movement and embraced by the United Nations General Assembly in 1974, the establishment of a "New International Economic Order" was proposed, seeking a fair balance in the trade relationship between North and South and the elimination of exploitative "neocolonial" practices. Acknowledged from the Pearson Report of 1969 to the Brandt Report of 1979, the voice of the "Third World" proclaimed the will of attaining "justice, not charity".

The Domestic Suffocation of Development

The ideal of justice cannot be only pursued in the sphere of relationships between nations if development is going to come for all the people in the Third World countries. Within each of them injustice also prevails blatantly. This is so in manners and degrees having such similarity with the prevailing international regimen that, in the eyes of analysts as Mexico's Pablo Gonzalez Casanoza, amount to "internal colonialism". In the rigidly stratified societies minorities concentrate economic, political and cultural power at the expense of deprivation and, often oppression for the majorities. Showing at times ideological affinity and coincidence of interest with the developed world, native oligarchies also monopolize whatever benefits may accrue to their countries from development-oriented activities, including those supported from abroad. And, just as on the international scene, the abyss between the rich and the poor is dangerously expanding instead of being bridged. Although acknowledged as a sine-qua-non conditions for democratic development, land reform has taken place only to a most negligible extent while the peasant population keeps growing and is

forced to flood the cities where no housing or jobs await them either. Rather than becoming evenly redistributed, income further concentrates in the hands of the few. Popular reform-minded movements of social democratic leanings are usually discouraged and often forcefully repressed. In some countries, given the absence of alleviation for the plight of the masses, rural guerrilla warfare and urban terrorism regrettably introduce violent strategies to the struggle for social transformation in search of justice, adding fuel to the potential for chaos.

Several developing country leaders are conscious of the need for seeking emancipation from both external dependence and internal domination, which they see as reinforcing each other. Jamaican Michael Manley once said: "I wish to make clear that we do not speak of the New International Economic Order as an excuse for shortcomings in our own development process... Nor do we believe that the developed world owes its former colonies a living. Equally, I accept, indeed assert, the obligation of the Third World countries to pursue unflinchingly the objectives of equity and social justice within their own systems." This attitude looks quite different from that of other developing country leaders prone to lambasting foreign imperialism while practicing quasi-feudal domination at home.

Critique of the "Dominant Paradigm"

The systematic observation of sad realities as those reviewed above lead to challenging many of the basic tenets of classic development theories already by the middle of the 60's. Latin American economists as Argentina's Raul Prebisch and Brazil's Celso Furtado were among the earliest critics. They shared with other scholars of the region, as

Fernando Henrique Cardoso, the structural view of underdevelopment and contributed to building dependency theory along with a few U.S. scholars as Andrew G. Frank. Their essential contention is that genuinely democratic development can only occur if crippling international and intranational power relations (economic, political and cultural) are re-structured in the direction of justice and liberation for the majorities. Coincidentally Indian researcher Inayatullah raised already in 1964 a voice of caution about "Western ethnocentrism" in modernization theory. In 1969 U.S. banker David Rockefeller conceded that "by confussing development in the broad and proper meaning of the term with growth, it seems to me we have again fostered and illusion while at the same time belittling the real achievements that have been made."

In the early 70's a number of meetings in diverse parts of the world started to acknowledge the shortcomings of development programs and shed doubts on the usefulness of the main models inspiring them. This was the case, for instance, of the Stockholm Conference on Human Environment, of the Bucarest World Population Conference and of the Rome Food Conference. Dissatisfaction was expressed in them with the rather frustrating results of development efforts and the need for more realistic conceptualizations and more effective strategies began to be voiced. By 1974 the discontent had taken the U.N. General Assembly, as has already been noted here, to fostering the proposal for a "New International Economic Order".

In the same year, an international gathering in Colombia, sponsored by Cornell University, recorded objections from a Latin American speaker to the classic development model which was seen as "sacrificing the

highest values of human beings- dignity, justice and freedom - to abundance and prosperity at any price... for the privileged minorities". A year later, a gathering at Iran questioned that model for finding characterized by "ethnocentrism, unidimensionality, and on the whole deterministic and ahistorical perspectives". This critique of researcher Majid Teheranian was contemporaneous with similar ones from Phillippine researcher Juan Jamías and by Latin American scholars Juan Diaz Bordenave and Jose Marques de Melo, among others. Also between 1973 and 1974 European critiques were added through works as those of Swedish researcher Andreas Fuglesang and British researcher Peter Golding.

By the middle of the 70's disenchantment became also evident in the United States of America. At a Hawaii gathering convoqued by Wilbur Schramm in 1975, he acknowledged the fact that the "condition of a large proportion of the people of the developing world was, at best, not much better in 1975 than in 1964". In this meeting, S. Eisenstadt conducted a critical overview of modernization doctrine and performance which inventoried the main inadequacies of classis paradigms as ~~that~~ of Lerner. Lerner himself admitted concern and, advocating for more realistic formulations, Schramm recommended: "Back to the old drawing board!"

In a remarkable critical revision of convictions he had shared, Everett Rogers, the U.S. author of the world known model of diffusion of innovations, announced in 1976 "the passing of the dominant paradigm." He summarized the errors of it as follows:

1. It assumes a rational economic man. The profit motive is

assumed to bring about behavioral changes.

2. It measures development in terms of the gross national product or per capita income. It ignores the equality of distribution of development benefits.

3. It assumes infinite growth and ignores the limits imposed by population growth, pollution, etc. Thus it does not take into account the "quality of life".

4. It assumes the need for central economic planning thereby showing an "aggregate bias". It does not take into account the possibilities of autonomous development as exemplified by China and emulated by Cambodia.

5. It emphasizes technology and capital rather than labour thereby bringing about economic dependence on advanced countries. Low priority is given to agricultural development.

6. It blames the developing countries for their underdevelopment because of "traditional ways of thinking, beliefs and values", inefficient bureaucracy, land-tenure system, etc., and ignores the external factors.

7. It gives priority to modernization of traditional individuals. Thus it suffers from an ethnocentric bias.

8. It equates poverty with underdevelopment.

Likewise, a 1977 gathering of U.S. and foreign scholars in Houston made a resume of elements of the classic development modernization model found seriously lacking in validity. The following were among those stressed: the notion of stages, including a "take off" point; the proposition of a "trickle down" effect; the import substitution strategy along with the creation of internal versus external markets; and the priority on heavy industrialization.

In the last analysis the classic development theories were seen more as a recollection of how material advancement had occurred in what today are Western industrial societies than as a valid universal formulation to predict development in settings as different as those of the Third World.

At the beginning of the 80's, in the face of disinterest from the developed world now worried with its own problems, the stagnant developing countries had to pay more than academic attention to the pressing need for viable alternatives to the old development approaches that had not worked for them.

Communication's Impotence for Change

Given the close relationship between development and communication as postulated in the classic models, does the failure of development imply the failure of communication for it in the Third World? An affirmative answer seems in order but requires qualification.

When attempting to transfer the development communication notions originated in advanced countries to the developing ones, a first noticeable difference lies in the fact that mass communication in most of these latter is not, strictly speaking, communication in which the masses actually share. Very often the availability of press, radio, film and television is rather one more privilege enjoyed essentially by urban minorities. In spite of the transistor, not even radio, the most wide-spread medium, reaches everybody yet. Thus mass media cannot be taken, from start, as vehicles for reaching the totality of a developing country's population with development messages.

Assuming however that very many people are reached through those channels, the next question of importance is content. Research found that, as a rule, mass media content in the developing countries hardly includes much items pertinent to principles, programs and problems of national development. In those countries where State ownership is quasi-monopolistic, the media's chief role is often that of giving coverage to government activities and seek the population's support to them; this may include development matters at times. In those countries where, instead, private ownership is markedly predominant, indifference to development concerns is evident and the media's content orientation normally favors information on unusual events, crime, sports and entertainment fare. Strongly influenced by advertising, often originated with transnational corporations, the media are accused of fostering the expansion of consumption standards regardless of the people's needs and possibilities. This effort, however, is addressed essentially to the upper layers of society in large cities to the exclusion of the poverty-stricken peasantry, for that who is not in the market is not in the audience.

What about postulated roles as "fostering national unity" and acting as "teachers" of the principles, values, and skills deemed indispensable to attain development? Private mass media tend not to regard such functions a part of their interest. They attribute to the State such social duties but, in general, the State does not fulfill them either. Failure to perceive the importance of communication for development, lack of funds and preference for political propaganda are the most frequent explanations of this omission. Another yet is the fact that public media are few and weak

and, when governments attempt to bolster them, they are often inhibited by strong opposition from the commercial sector.

Closely related as they normally are in the undemocratic power structure to economic and political oligarchies, the mass media in much of the Third World cannot, furthermore, be expected to function as agents for pro-democratic social transformation. Understandably, most of them act as instruments for preserving the privileges of the ruling elites.

Assessing in 1975 development communication, Wilbur Schramm asked whether communication had been expected to accomplish too much by itself. It had indeed. Today it is clear that communication cannot on its own produce substantive and accelerated changes in the unfair structure of archaic undemocratic societies. Mass media have no supernatural powers to emancipate by themselves the Third World peoples from the double grip of external dependence and internal domination. Instead, some feel in the Third World, they can be expected to act as contributors to perpetuating one and the other.

International Communication Imbalance

Very significant growth in communications has taken place, over the last fifteen years or so in many of the developing countries, especially in the realm of electronic mass media. Radio's growth has been the most impressive of all. In the "Decade of the Transistor", between 1963 and 1973, the number of receivers in the Third World grew by 100 million units, more than quadrupling the figures for Asia, more than tripling them for Africa and more than doubling them for

Latin America. Facts as these appeared encouraging. "But let us not forget"- warned Wilbur Schramm -"how far behind the rich countries these poorer countries are. Even the rather spectacular growth in radios must be interpreted in light of the fact that two-thirds of the world's people still have no more than one-fifth of all the world's radios, less than one-fifth of the newspaper circulation, less than one-tenth of the world's television receivers, one sixteenth of the world's telephones."

Such a marked imbalance is rapidly increasing and does not occur only in the area of receiving and transmitting mass communication facilities. It occurs also in areas as television programs, foreign news and advertising in which the predominance of the developed nations, especially the United States of America, has become overwhelming. Far more uncontested yet appears to be today the U.S. predominance in the transnational information industry of satellites, computers and other highly advanced communication technologies. This causes concern in the Third World countries as many of them feel their cultural integrity and even their national sovereignty is threatened by such a mighty alien influence.

The concern turned combustible in the middle of the 70's after the Non-Aligned Movement proclaimed in 1976 the need for a "New International Information Order" and Unesco sponsored in the same year in Costa Rica the First Inter-Gubernamental Conference on National Communication Policies. An international controversy erupted not purely between "North and South" this time but between those in developed and developing countries who proposed said change, deeming it indispensable to attain development, and those who resisted it

regarding the proposals conspiratory against freedom of information. The debate reached high temperatures at times, especially around a Unesco Declaration proposed by the URSS, finally approved by consensus in 1978 and around the work of the "MacBride Commission", a consultative body of experts from many nations and ideologies who delivered to Unesco's General Conference of 1980 the report Many Voices: One World. While the early part of the 80's was comparatively tranquil in this respect, by the middle of this decade the withdrawal of the United States of America from Unesco, in part moved by these concerns, gave the confrontation a grave major episode.

THE NEW APPROACHES

"What now?" was the natural question after the evidence of failure of traditional approaches to development became indisputable. The Third World had to keep struggling somehow to overcome underdevelopment. Old models and strategies could be dismissed as inappropriate but was there anything available to substitute for them? Beyond criticism and lamentation, could something be done constructively? Likewise, granted that conventional conceptions and practices of communication did not contribute to bringing about development, were there replacements for them?

New approaches to one and the other did appear in the horizon by the middle of the 70's when proposals for "another development" and "alternative communication" began to be made in developing and developed countries. Expectedly, most were based on the premise that egalitarian structural change of relationships within nations

and between them is the fundamental prerequisite. Some partially sought inspiration in distinct experiences as those of China, Tanzania and Yugoslavia.

Towards Another Development

An early Bolivian proponent condensed his vision as follows:

"National development is a directed and widely participatory process of deep and accelerated socio-political change geared towards producing substantial changes in the economy, the technology, the ecology and the overall culture of a country so that the moral and material advancement of the majority of its population can be obtained within conditions of generalized equality, dignity, justice and liberty".

The proponent regarded this kind of perspective "a humanized, democratic, structural and integral conception of a nation's development based on a reverent vision of man's life and destiny."

Another early proponent, U.S. scholar Denis Goulet agreed in perceiving development as economic growth plus social change for "human ascent and maturation". "Genuine development", Goulet believes, "is the symbiotic combination of certain tangible benefits (the what of the development process) and humanizing modes in which these benefits are sought (the how of the process)".

In most propositions as these the evident precondition for development is the redistribution of power, the genuine democratization of society. As envisioned by Brazilian scholar Carlos Henrique Cardoso, this political transformation in favor of the majorities

entails a new conception of democracy itself: "Not a democracy relegated to the almost mystic body of a party or to a liberalism that confuses representativity with a division of powers and confines the whole effective political play to the top of the large State organizations, to parliament, the executive and the judiciary. Democracy of participation, an inherent part of 'another development', is from start more demanding and more inclusive. It turns towards the new arenas in which decisions are made in contemporary societies: the educational system, the world of labor, the organizations controlling mass communication... Participatory democracy means to discuss, at the level of working, educational and political communities the what, the why and the for whom of decisions..."

Chilean theorist Angel Flisfisch sees the emergent sketch of the new democracy as characterized by an increment in self-government practices, an expansion of the aspects of life subject to personal control, the fragmentation or socialization of power and the restitution to the community of certain capabilities presently lost. This involves a tendency to reduce the suffocating power of the State and increase that of multiple social organizations and political movements, enabling them to better check government performance. In turn this implies diminishing the leading role of conventional political parties in the conduct of society and curtailing the authority of technical experts and bureaucratic officers in matters of development. In short, what apparently is wanted is the true and full realization of the old ideal of government of the people, by the people and for the people.

U.S. scholar Everett Rogers summarized his perception of the key features of the new approaches to development as follows:

(1) equality in the distribution of information, socioeconomic benefits, etc., (2) popular participation in self-development planning and execution, accompanied by decentralization of certain activities to the village level, (3) self-reliance and independence, with emphasis on the potential of local resources and (4) integration of traditional with modern systems so that modernization is a syncretization of the old and the new with allowance for particular variations.

The Founex Report of 1971 and the Cocoyoc (Mexico) Declaration of 1974 were among the first international documents outlining some bases for new development paradigms in the Third World. Building on them and on other antecedent efforts, Sweden's Daj Hammarskjöld Foundation prepared, with the assistance of a large number of specialists from many countries, a Report on Development and International Cooperation which was brought to the attention of the Seventh Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York in September of 1975. It contained an outline for "another development" which came to ably conjugate and summarize several concomitant propositions.

Coordinated by Marc Nerfin, this report characterized the new development envisioned in terms of it being (1) geared to the satisfaction of needs, beginning with the eradication of poverty, (2) endogenous and self reliant; that is, based upon the strength of the societies which undertake it, and (3) in harmony with the environment. In reference to the first point, the report worked on the premise that "whether in food, habitat, health or education,

it is not the absolute scarcity of resources which explains poverty in the Third World, but rather their distribution..." Also it stressed that no less basic than material needs related to survival were others needs related to human enhancement, such as the right to express one self freely, to take part in decision-making on matters of public interest and to defend one's beliefs, as well as the rights to education, to information and to sharing in the production and distribution of goods and services. In reference to the second point, the report attributed endogenous and self-reliant development the capability of stimulating creativity, especially in relation to production, and reducing vulnerability and dependence. It defined those traits in these terms: "If development is the development of man, as an individual and as a social being, aiming at his liberation and at his fulfillment, it cannot but stem from the inner core of each society. It relies on what a human group has: its natural environment, its cultural heritage, the creativity of the men and women who constitute it, becoming richer through exchange between them and with other groups". In reference to the third point, the report claimed that, assuming that resources are limited, the pertinent question is who consumes them and for what purposes. The answer it provided was that, at the global level, it is neither the poor nor the satisfaction of their needs that is endangering the "outer limits" but the monopolization of the resources and the wasteful and damaging use that the developed world makes of them. Through "ecodevelopment" instead, population growth and the satisfaction of its needs will be kept in a harmonious relation of equilibrium with the preservation and renewal of natural resources through nonpredatory uses of them and equitable distribution

allied with voluntary limitation of family-size.

"Another development" proclaims structural change as the sine-qua-non condition for its realization. This involves ending the elitist concentration of political, economic and cultural power and equitably redistributing it. Among the mechanisms for it are deep reforms of traditional patterns of property or tenure of the means of production, as well as of trade, finances, education and communication. But domestic democratization is only one element of the structural modifications required. The other is changing the pattern of exploitive economic, political and cultural relationships between developed and developing nations in terms of both trade and aid so that fairness and balance are attained.

In line with many of the above propositions, a "Latin American World Model" came to be formalized in 1976 through an ambitious study of Argentina's Fundación Bariloche coordinated by Amilcar Herrera and supported by Canada's International Development Research Center. Published under the title Catastrophe or New Society?, this work challenged the "Club de Roma" conviction that the main problem of the world is population growth in the Third World and that, if universal disaster was to be avoided, it was essential that said growth be contained, whereas pollution control and a more rational use of resources were accessory considerations. The Bariloche group of development scientists contended that the major problems facing world society are not physical but sociopolitical. "These problems are based, affirmed the report," on the uneven distribution of power, both between nations and within nations.

The result is oppression and alienation, largely founded on exploitation. The deterioration of the physical environment is not an inevitable consequence of human progress, but the result of social organizations based on destructive values" What is proposed then is a shift towards a society rooted on equity and widespread participation of the people in decision-making as well as intrinsically compatible with its environment through the regulation of economic growth. And this is deemed viable "only through radical changes in the world's social and international organization".

The Bariloche study is based on these central assumptions:

1. There are no unsurmountable limits to growth. Population expansion can be controlled to the point of equilibrium by raising the standards of living, especially in terms of basic needs, through distributive justice, appropriate technology and non-destructive use of natural resources. This equilibrium can be attained before the world's ability to produce food comes to a halt.
2. The final goal is an egalitarian society, at both national and international levels, based on the recognition that each human being, simply because of his existence, has inalienable rights regarding the satisfaction of basic need as food, habitat, health and education.
3. The society proposed is not a consumer society. Production is determined by social needs and not by profit motives. Consumption is not an end in itself. Needs are established through the generalized and active participation of the people and decisions are applied through collective voluntary action.
4. Property, private or public, as a means for exploitatively concentrating power and privilege, will not exist. It will be replaced by a non-centralized system of collective use and management agreed and operated through democratic discussion and allowing for a multiplicity of formats.

This proposal for a new society constitutes the conceptual model

in the Bariloche study. It included a documented assessment of the World situation prevailing in the middle of the 70's in reference to ~~non~~renewable resources, energy and pollution. Through this analysis it was demonstrated that absolute physical limits do not exist and cannot be anticipated in the foreseeable future. To test through simulation the material feasibility of the conceptual model, a mathematical model was built with world-wide pertinent data. Centered around the satisfaction of basic needs, this instrumental model distinguished five sectors in the production system: nutrition, education, housing, capital goods and consumer good plus other services. A mathematical mechanism, assigned resources to each of the sectors so that life expectancy at birth is maximized at each point during the run. This indicator rather than the GNP, "truly reflects the general living conditions of the population". Goal attainment is foreseen as feasible for through very high economic growth but through reduction of nonessential consumption, increased investment, the elimination of socioeconomic and political barriers currently hindering the use of land for both food production and urban planning, the egalitarian distribution of basic goods and services and, in the case of developing countries, the implementation of an active policy to eliminate deficits in international trade.

The model did demonstrate that it is materially possible for all of humanity to attain an adequate standard of living, within a period not much longer than one generation, without being stopped by any physical limits.

The Bariloche scientists were fully conscious, however, that

the ultimate test of viability for their paradigm of "a new society instead of catastrophe" would only be given by solving the problems of power concentration. Thus they said:

"Their solution is not at all easy, because to change the organization and values of society, as history has shown, is much more difficult than overcoming physical limitations. To attempt the task, however, is the only way open to an improved humanity."

Acknowledgment of these realities in the U.S. is exemplified by this recent statement of Emile McAnany, professor of international communications of the University of Texas at Austin: "Whatever we want to call the new development paradigm, one dimension of it that must be included is something that the dependency writers introduced almost two decades ago: Third World economies, and the most vulnerable sectors of those economies in rural areas, are affected by the structures of the international economic systems. It is not just dependency thinkers who recognize this but the neoclassical economists at places like the World Bank".

Abraham Maslow had proposed in 1954 in the U.S. that the basic needs of human beings embraced essentially these areas: physiology and safety, belongingness and love, esteem, self-actualization, cognition and aesthetics. Also in the U.S. Denis Goulet suggested in 1971 a somewhat different hierarchy: needs of the first order (food, clothing, shelter), enhancement needs (actualization and transcendence) and luxury needs. He acknowledged the paramount importance of the first category, stressed then key contribution of the second to improving the "quality of life" and regarded the third the least plausible.

Associated with the proposal for "another development", the concept of "basic human needs" (BHN) was proposed in 1978 by Reginald Herbold Green, a member of the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex in England, capitalizing on several related antecedents, such as an Indian perception of "minimum needs", an Egyptian one on "mass needs" and the "gapmanship" model of the U.N. Economic Commission for Latin America. He gave precedence in his approach to the satisfaction of primary -community and individual- requirements "as perceived by workers and peasants".and postulated these clusters of needs: (1) basic consumer goods and other socially defined necessities, (2) basic services as pure water, health care, education and communication, (3) productive employment and equitable remuneration for it, (4) infrastructure for the production of goods and services capable of generating surplus to support basic communal services and (5) participation in decision-making, in development projects' implementation and in control of leaders. This is one of the first conceptualization that includes communication among the basic needs of human beings. Another is that of Chilean economist Juan Somavía who argues as follows: "Satisfying the need for communication is as important for a nation and its citizens as ensuring health, food, housing and employment, together with all the social needs that make it possible for its members to develop fully in justice and autonomy. The social need to inform and to be informed is one of the fundamental human rights, since it is an essential component in the improvement of mankind and in a society's capacity for development."

The Search for Democratic Communication

Again Latin America happens to be the part of the world where

critical questions about the prevailing classical concepts of communication were first raised. The best known precursor of such concerns is Venezuela's Antonio Pasquali, a philosopher of culture and communication scientist who already in 1963 published a book denouncing conservatism in international communication and exposing undemocratic aspects of national communication. Founder of the region's first communication research institute, ININCO, Pasquali soon became broadly influential especially in reference to the critique of commercial electronic media and the proposal for overall democratic communication policies and institutions.

Also in 1963 U.S. scholar David K. Berlo criticized in the classic model of communication the notion of transmission of thoughts or feelings as a matter of dumping them from the mind of a source to the mind of a receiver. In addition to objecting this mechanistic and unilinear view of communication in favor of "response elicitation", Berlo rejected the static view of communication as an act and argued that it was rather a perpetually dynamic process.

At about the same time a Brazilian catholic educator, Paulo Freire, started a conceptual and methodological revolution in adult education, which was also going to influence innovative communication thinking. Working among the downtrodden peasantry of the Northeast of his country, he conceived and successfully tested a "pedagogy of the oppressed". He condemned traditional literacy training as characteristic of authoritarian "banking education", one in which teachers "deposit" the set of values of the rich in the minds of the poor, who can later "cash in" on those "deposits" for material goods given them as a reward for submission and passivity. Traditional

teachers, Freire claimed, actually never communicate with the people which they treat as animals or things. Genuine communication, he argued, is free dialogue aimed at actively sharing experiences and jointly re-constructing reality, and this would deprive such teachers of their ominous advantage: manipulation for domestication in the service of status quo. Education "as the practice of freedom", he contended, is creative discovery of the world, not transmission of knowledge and values from the powerful to the powerless. To attain it he proposed instead "conscientization", a democratic method for people to gain collective awareness of natural and social realities so as to overcome oppression. This method is based on non-directed discussion of individual and community problems in small "cultural circles" stimulated only by the use of "generative words" selected from the people's "minimal linguistic universe" and devoid of imposing instructions from above or persuasion attempts from outside. This process of autonomous education, Freire predicted, will show the exploited and dominated minorities that nature is controllable and society changeable and should ultimately lead them to become liberated from oppression. This conviction sent him to exile in 1964 when the military overthrew the reform-minded regime of President Goulart. Hosted in Chile by christian democratic President Frey, the Brazilian pedagogue elaborated and tested further his proposal from a position in the country's land reform institute, ICIRA. Referring to the "agricultural extension" format transplanted from the U.S., he regarded it opposite to true educational communication since it wrongly assumed something could be transferred "from the seat of wisdom to the seat of ignorance". As to the mass media, he regarded them essentially tools for securing the oppression of the many by the few. Freire

rapidly gained prestige in the region, attracting many disciples. By 1969 he was teaching his approach at the Harvard School of Education and later moved to Geneva to work for the World Council of Churches. His theory of "cultural action for freedom" had earned him world-wide notoriety.

The first attempt at transposing to the communication domain the provocative postulations of Freire, along with the seminal ideas of Pasquali, was conducted in Bolivia in the early 70's by two catholic communication practitioners, a North American, Frank Gerace, and a Latin American, Hernando Lázaro. Their reflections -including the outline for a strategy they called "community brain"- were published only in 1973 in Peru in a little volume titled Comunicación Horizontal. Soon a related work by Francisco Gutierrez published in Argentina, Lenguaje Total, was to accompany them. In both books dialogic interaction was stressed as crucial to democratic communication. Coinciding with them in time and partially in approach, Jean Cloutier proposed in Canada the "EMIREC" scheme which attempted to bring together Emitter and Receiver.

In 1971 belgian Marxist scholar Armand Mattelart wrote, in collaboration with Chilean analysts Biedma and Fones a book on mass communication and socialist revolution which also meant a substantive input to the nascent reflections about change-oriented popular communications. Mattelart became thereafter the best known critic of communication for domination and a researcher of vast international reputation.

Also in the early part of the 70's concern with some of the

inadequacies of the traditional models of communication came to permeate the thinking of world-known U.S. scholars as Harold Lasswell, Wilbur Schramm and Daniel Lerner. Analysing in 1972 the future of world communications in relation to national development, Lasswell spoke of two contrasting paradigms: the transnational "oligarchic model" and the "participatory model". Referring to the transmission notion characterizing the classic models of communication, Schramm said: "I am going to ask whether this is any longer the most fruitful way of looking at communication". Answered Lerner: "Today even sober professionals like ourselves recognize that two-way interaction and feedback are essential concepts in our thinking about communication and its future." Unfortunately, however, communication as true interaction was in practice still being confused in many quarters with one-way information provision. And feedback was perceived only as a controlling device to secure persuasion.

Dismay with the slowness of evolution was expressed in 1974 by a Bolivian critic: "What often takes place under the label of communication is little more than a dominant monologue in the interest of the initiator of the process. Feedback is not employed to provide an opportunity for genuine dialogue. The receiver of the message is passive and subdued as he is hardly ever given proportionate opportunities to act concurrently as a free emitter also; his essential role is that of listening and obeying... Such a vertical, asymmetric and quasi authoritarian social relationship constitutes, in my view, an undemocratic instance of communication". In the U.S. Everett Rogers agreed admitting that "the linear models imply an autocratic one-sided view of human relationships".

By the middle of the 70's, at the peak of the North-South debate on the proposal for a "new international information order", many aspects of communication fell under scrutiny by reform-minded people in several countries. One was that of communication rights; after challenging the traditional concepts of freedom or the press and free flow of information, new postulations were discussed in many international gatherings. Along with it some proposed the inclusion in the debate of concepts as communication needs and communication resources. Jim Richstad and Stanley Harms carried out a pioneer effort to interrelate rights, needs and resources through an "interchange model of communication", which meant a U.S. contribution to the movement for effective democracy in communication. Other new concepts initially discussed at that time were those of access and participation, both phenomena being deemed highly instrumental to bring about the democratization of communication. Josiane Jouet contributed an early assesment of "participatory communication in the Third World".

In July of 1976 an Intergovernmental Conference on Communication Policies in Latin America and the Caribbean -the first of its kind in the world- was held in San José, with the sponsorship of Unesco and the Government of Costa Rica. This was another landmark in the movement for communication reform. Strongly attacked by the inter-American associations of mass media owners, who argued that intents at establishing overall national communication policies would be a threat against information freedom, the gathering nevertheless met its objectives. Through the Declaration of San Jose and a set of 30 recommendations, it did propose bases for the formulation of an overall pluralistic and legal communication policy in each country

so as to rationalize and improve the functioning of its communication system in the service of development. In addition the conference fostered communication planning and advocated in favor of a better balanced circulation of information at national and international levels. Moreover it recommended the establishment of supplementary communication systems and facilities as well as the strengthening of community media in order to "guarantee to all citizens the access and participation to which they are entitled". Coming from political decision-makers, the San Jose conclusions showed that the debate on democratizing communication was no longer confined to academic quarters.

With Swedish and Mexican support, a Latin American Institute for Transnational Studies (ILET) was established in 1976 with headquarters in Mexico City. Headed by economist Juan Somavía, it emphasized communication, for which a division was created under the responsibility of journalist Fernando Reyes Matta. Through a dynamic start, ILET rapidly established itself as a leading institution in the campaign for a new international order of both economy and communication addressed at building "another development" and "alternative communication". Somavía became one of the two Latin American members of Unesco's MacBride Commission on Communication.

Somavía argued that information is a social good, not a merchandise, and that consequently communication institutions cannot be regarded a business like any other governed by profit motives. Relatedly, he argued that, given that owning, using and controlling media afford power, in truly democratic societies power should be accountable to

the community and thus media behavior should respond to public service criteria and no longer be left exclusively in the hands of private merchants or public bureaucrats. In order to democratize communication, an evolution must take place, Somavía claims, "from private social monopoly to majority social representation". This requires structural changes towards the establishment of communication institutions genuinely representative of the major forces of society and responsible to it. And such changes may well have to include the creation of social property (i.e., communal, popular, collective) as different than State or private media ownership. New legislation and public financing, instead of that derived from transnational advertising, will also be required to attain this reform.

Elaborating further on these ideas and attempting to blend some conventional conceptualizations with innovative ideas, Reyes Matta proposed in 1977 a "model for democratic communication" based on ample and active social participation. The process is to be characterized by dynamic interaction not only between "receivers" and "emitters" but also by other key participants: community-appointed "entrepreneurs and administrators" of media institutions, communication "educators", communication "evaluators" and "political representatives" -in charge of formulating communication policies. Based on the perception of communication as a social good the model trusts its dynamics to the balanced interrelation among these elements: (1) the social function of information understood as a delegated right, (2) new social organization, coordination and professional structures, (3) education for communication and (4) access to and participation in the communication process for **organized audiences**. The Chilean theoretician understands **access as**

theory and rigorous models. A great diversity of approaches gave prodemocratic communication a variety of adjectives: dialogic, group, marginal, interactive, horizontal, liberating, popular, participatory and alternative.

Apparently "alternative" communication is the most pervasive of the propositions. Born with ILET in Mexico, it has produced elsewhere both adoption and doubts. Proponents of it, as Fernando Reyes Matta, take it as the option directly opposite to the prevailing undemocratic national and transnational systems of communication. As such he also regards it "alterative" since, in addition to objecting the old system, it seeks to alter it and, in as much as possible, replace it for a new one. From this perspective three challenges emerge: (1) to find opportunities within the existing communication system for the insertion of alternative messages, (2) to create alternative means proper, based on popular participation and (3) to foster among the people the ability for "critical consumption" of the non-alternative and undemocratic messages. Reyes Matta notes that the democratic reform of communication is necessarily a part of the broader political transformation required to bring about a new society free from external dependence and internal domination. He points out to three crucial tasks in the building of alternative communication: attaining participation in the process of creating the new ways and means, generating the alternative language on the basis of popular creativity and egalitarian dialogue, and organizing the communication institutions and process through direct ties with the social and political systems supporting them. As such, Reyes concludes, the final realization of "alternative communication" should occur when structural change has

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made possible "another development". One concurrent condition for bringing about that realization is, according to Diego Portales, the capability for integrating vertical and horizontal communication flows as well as artisanal and industrial forms of communication.

Contrary to what is often assumed in Western developed nations, a movement as this for democracy in communication in the Third World is not the product of communist revolutionary inspiration. Many proponents of these changes are rather non-partisan reformists of social democratic leanings and liberal humanists who tend to condemn authoritarianism regardless of whether it comes for the right or the left. And they know that communication in most communist countries, dominated by the one-party regime, is no less undemocratic than transnational capitalist communication. Furthermore, the main supporter in Latin America of these kind of justice-seeking concerns has been, since the middle of the 60's, the Catholic Church. Both these facts partially explain perhaps why neither in joining the plea for a new international information order nor in prescribing alternative communication formats have Latin Americans proposed State monopoly of mass media or government control of grass-roots communication institutions. A statement in the 1981 volume of Development Digest devoted by the Hammarskjöld Foundation, in cooperation with ILET, to the movement here reviewed puts it this way: "Another information requires that the principle of free flow of information be given its full meaningful and democratic content... A New Information Order and another information are not designed to replace the domination of the transnationals by that of national bureaucracies..."

Practice Ahead of Theory

The practice of prodemocratic communication is much older in Latin America than the theory about it. Some place its origin in lampoon journalism through the pasquines of independence war against colonial Spain and Portugal. Satyrical and opinionated, the small clandestine newspapers, often written in verse, are taken as the forebears of today's independence-oriented contesting press.

Probably nowhere in the Third World has radio been so broadly, imaginatively and intensely used for education, development and liberation as has in Latin America. Over fifty years old in the region, operating through some 4.000 stations throughout it and catapulted by the transistor, radio is by far the most penetrating medium and, as such, the least inaccessible for the lower strata of society and the most amenable to democratizing ends.

The oldest and most influential experiment of using radio for education is that of the "radiophonic schools" founded in 1947 in the Andean village of Sutatenza in Colombia by Father Joaquin Salcedo. Initially centered on literacy training and religious concerns, this strategy aptly blended special radio programs for peasants with organized community listening groups that would take action after the stimulation. The model was rapidly successful in Colombia and, less than a decade after, it began to spread across other countries of the region at about the same time when the similar farm radio forum strategy was successfully passing from India to Ghana. Through ACPO -Accion Cultural Popular- the Catholic Church organization later embracing the radio schools along with leader training institutes,

a peasant newspapers and other media— the strategy finally grew to inspire the creation of a Latin American Association of Radio Schools (ALER), headquartered today in Ecuador.

ACPO did come to enlarge its scope to embrace a general program of non-formal education for rural development. This however was for the most part cast in terms of the traditional paradigms of development, education and communication and unrelated to peasant organization struggling for social justice through land reform.

A few of the offsprings of ACPO in the region did, instead, evolve to use the radio school strategy somewhat under the inspiration of the emerging new concepts of development, education and communication. The earliest case of it was that of Movimento de Educacao de Base (MEB), inspired by Freire's thinking and techniques until his exile from Brazil in 1964. Later in the 70's, relating itself to peasant organizations, ACPO of Honduras, lead by Radio Suyapa, came closer to realizing the new approach. Some comparable cases are those of Radio Santa Maria in the Dominican Republic and Radio Huayacocotla in Mexico.

Perhaps less militant but no less committed to social change, still under the inspiration of the Catholic Church, nation-wide radio-school networks were established in a few of the countries where the autoctonous peasant population occupies the bottom of the underdevelopment scale, as in Guatemala and the Andean zone. The most notorious is Educacion Radiofonica Boliviana (ERBOL), a cooperative alliance of 12 stations working essentially in aimara and quechua, the native and majoritary languages of the country. Its powerful head

station, Radio San Gabriel is fully manned and managed today by 50 aimara peasants, its affiliate producer firm, Ecora/Khaña has earned an international reputation and its national network newscast is the country's first and most advanced.

But Bolivian peasants do not depend solely on religious or political support to gain access to radio and participate as producers of it. For some thirty years now, they monopolize the very early morning schedule of most stations in the country's capital city. Some do so as independent producers who rent out programming space from commercial stations and get ads to pay for it. Others are hired by such stations. And in one case, a former peasant owns a little station in the outskirts of La Paz. In all cases the audience is partly rural and partly made of former peasants residing in poor neighborhoods of the city of La Paz and its vicinity. As studied by Nazario Tirado and Carlos Suarez, these Indian broadcasters are autonomously fulfilling the services of journalism, postal and telephone services denied to them by urban-centered governments. It is alternative communication of peasants, by peasants and for peasants.

Ecuador is another country where native peasants are active recurring to radio for educational purposes and for cultural self-assertion. The protagonists are here Amazonian jungle communities as that of the shuar and high mountain quechua groups as those served by the Tabacundo and Latacunga stations. In this latter a creative innovation is facilitating the democratization of communication: in field cabins provided with simple equipment peasants trained as radio producers freely record messages news, and programs that are subsequently transmitted through the station.

Costa Rica has virtually no indigenous population and is a small country without major physical barriers for communication. But peasants are nonetheless somewhat isolated and forgotten. To help them improve their situation, the Instituto Costarricense de Educación Radiofónica (ICER) started shortly ago an ambitious project to take radio production capability to rural communities. An initial network of ten local radio stations has been established to act, through peasant administration, as democratic development activators in different parts of the country. To support community activity, training for self-expression and critical assessment of local and national problems, the stations combine their programs with participatory communication seminars and workshops on peasant organization and productivity. They all culminate in a "national festival of popular expression."

Since 1952, when a nationalist social revolution changed the basic structures of society in Bolivia, miners' labor unions established, financed and run their own radio stations (as many as 70 at a given time) without government support or the control of any given political party. They overcame in this manner the isolation to which commercial and official media had condemned them and were able to express themselves and defend their interests. These frequently came into clash with authoritarian conservative governments, some of which resorted to violent military repression to curb the workers' revindicatory militancy. As a part of it, their radio stations were often closed and at times destroyed but they were resiliently brought back to operations as soon as conditions permitted it. Furthermore, the federation of mining workers has a movies/video

training and production unit, a department of publications and a committee for popular art and culture, all participatory and self-managed.

Cuba has excelled in using radio for mass mobilization campaigns in association with thousands of voluntaries organized in small teaching "brigades". This strategy proved most succesful in the literacy campaign of the early 60's. A decade later Tanzania was going to use a similar method for massive health- promotion programs.

Alternative press is also important in the region but is often limited by barriers ranging from financial insuficiencias, through distribution difficulties, to outright censorship or seizure. Newspapers expressing the anti-establishment views of political parties and labor unions have always existed in spite of those barriers. But broader non-sectarian and independent publications critical of society and committed to real democracy are a relatively new phenomenon. Few if any are major and stable dailies most are small circulation magazines of rather precarious existence. Beyond communication firms as such, however, the significant growth occurs recently at the level of grass-roots communities that publish in small runs modest, often artisanal, papers channeling nonetheless genuine popular expressions not governed by political parties.

Authoritarian regimes, especially those not supported by large political organizations, find it often difficult to curtail the insurgence manifested through multiple "mini-papers" popping up in the stands. This was the case of the 20-year military regimes recently ended in Brazil. In such environment prensa "nanica" (midget press) flourished for a while almost uncontainably.

Even when dictatorial repression is most stern, the people seem to manage to communicate its rejection of it and not only through graffiti. "Catacomb journalism"- quick and mobile informative meetings held in churches in periods of total prohibition of radios and newspapers - was an illustration of such strategies in the days of the Somoza family in Nicaragua.

The main attempt at granting mass communication power to large popular organizations was conducted in Peru in the middle of the 70's by an unusual reform-minded military regime. All private dailies of Lima -representing entrenched political and economic interests affected by the regime- were expropriated and handed over to "labor communities" of peasants, factory workers and educators with the purpose of "socialization" of the press. Each was initially to be run by a committee composed of delegates of said organizations and of the newspaper workers themselves. In a year's time the property was to be legally transferred from the seizing State to independent "civil associations" to be established in that lapse to formally represent the above mentioned popular sectors; from then on, they were going to fully manage the papers without government intervention. It did not happen due to a complex set of reasons. Property was retained and management recaptured by the State after an internal crisis that produced the change of the president of the republic in the late 70's. Eventually the dailies were returned to their original commercial and conservative owners bringing to an end this unique experiment in creation of a third media ownership pattern which looked promising for alternative communication: social instead of private or governmental. The lesson is barely beginning to be learned but meanwhile the failure

lead to the birth of numerous new dailies and magazines of diverse tendencies now competing with the traditional ones.

Another innovation is slowly advancing towards its full realization in the area of journalism: alternative regional news agencies. Recommended by the Intergovernmental Conference on Communication Policies held in Costa Rica in 1976, the recently born ASIN and ALASEI do not seek to substitute for the prevailing international agencies dominating this field. ASIN, from headquarters in Costa Rica, is a cooperative pool of non-propagandistic and development-oriented news among central information offices of several governments in the region. ALASEI, hosted by Mexico, specializes in feature and background articles stressing topics normally not dealt with by the main newspapers and other mass media. Struggling to survive amid an indifferent if not unpropitious environment, they seek to change the negative image of Latin America usually carried by international news agencies as well as to stress those events expressive of the will to attain democratic national development. These efforts coincide with the much older of Interpress (IPS), the only international news agency with a Third World orientation.

The audio-visual electronic media have so far proved much less amenable to the pleas for democracy in communication than press or radio. Economic, technical and management reasons of a structural nature explain the difference. Film and television production processes are so complex and costly that no grass roots organization can afford to engage in them. There are, however, important differences between these media. Whereas film making does allow for independent and non commercial production, television hardly ever does. This difference strongly conditions the options for taking them as alternative media.

Dominated as television is by large conservative transnational advertising and given the complexity and high costs of its organization and operations, there is not one station identifiable as an alternative television channel. There are a few programs in public and at times in private channels showing prodemocratic contents but they are insignificant in proportion versus the alienating, mercantile and trivial fare that floods the medium either through canned imports or local productions. In very few instances modest and ephemeral attempts have been recorded at democratizing television. This was, the case of Bolivia's National University Television System, a network that proclaimed in 1979 an orientation of "communication for liberation". Only one of its eight member channels, that of Cochabamba, was able to follow this line in practice but just for a short while before repression ended it. Even in the very few cases in which television is a public monopoly, as in Chile and Colombia, or where a reform-minded governments comes to own TV channels, as was the case of Peru in the 70's, most programs are hardly distinguishable from the standard commercial ones. Those stations still depend partly on advertising and use standard foreign programs because such surplus-priced materials now cost much less than any local production. Also the mentality of common TV operators, established with the very introduction of the imported technology, stubbornly tends to keep reproducing the alienating values and modes. What advancements are being made in the region in this field are rather in terms of teaching audiences, especially the young stratum, the school teachers, the slum dwellers and the popular organizations, how to do critical consumption of television messages. This should help them counterpoise or diminish their noxious influences. Brazil, Costa Rica and Chile, especially through the work of the CENECA and ILET groups operating from Santiago, are outstanding in this effort.

Latin America has high-quality independent film producers that have earned prestige and international awards in the area of documentaries. Several of them, especially as of the early 70's, made films giving impressive testimonies of the people's struggle against underdevelopment caused by internal domination and external dependence. Glauber Rocha (Brazil), Jorge Sanjinés (Bolivia) and Fernando Solanas (Argentina) are among the most notorious of those film-makers. As reported by film historian Alfonso Gumucio, their commitment to structural change has costed dear such producers as they have often suffered repression ranging from censorship and seizure to exile and even, as in two relatively recent cases in South America, elimination. Another limitation these producers have traditionally met is the difficulty of inserting their films in the commercial circuit that helps pay production costs and goes beyond the "cine club" minority. To alleviate both problems and secure survival, notes analyst Oscar Zambrano, this communication activity is evolving from the level of "the necessary" to that of "the possible"; i.e., to attain acceptance by the broad audience market without abdicating from its reformist orientation but keeping protest outside subversion margins. Inspiring them since 1968, when the First Declaration of Motion Pictures Liberation was signed in Argentina, the alternative communication approach keeps nonetheless alive.

The eminent domain of alternative communication is that of the often called "mini media" a category embracing such a wide variety of adaptive formats and denominations that precludes their detailed inventory. They are interpersonal communication strategies (methods and materials) most often applicable to informal group interaction situations. Some are "traditional" as puppets, theatre, songs and festivals, other are "conventional" as posters, leaflets, flipcharts, phonographic records and "sonovisos" (combinations of photographic

slides with sound) and others yet are "modern" as audiotapes and videotapes. Most of these devices have been employed in the region for a number of years as "audio-visual aids" for classic educational communications. What is new is their use for alternative communication purposes, something attempted only over the last fifteen years or so.

An outstanding case of such utilization is that of Villa El Salvador, a huge Lima shanty-town populated mostly by quechua peasant migrants from Andean villages. Isolated from the downtown due to lack of roads, deprived of water and scarce of transportation and electricity, the slum dwellers endured misery hardly communicating even with each other. At the beginning of the 70's, however, some young teachers lead by Miguel Azcueta sought to help alleviate this problem and that of the irrelevance of mass media content for the people there. They sponsored group sessions to stimulate discussion of collective problems in search for solutions; natural leaders were identified and supported in this manner. Some of the sessions were aided by slides shows first and later by audiotapes as well. Soon a true community took shape and established, with a little support from the Peruvian government and Unesco, a humble but effective "mini multimedia system" through workshops for singing, theatre, audio-visuals and publications. Later a newspaper, loudspeakers and billboards in key gathering places, and even videotape facilities rounded off a structure of alternative communication completely designed and handled by the members of the poor but striving community born out of dignifying democratic dialogue.

There are other remarkable experiences, for instance, Mario Kaplun designed and tested in Uruguay in the middle of the 70's a

"rural cassette forum" strategy that constituted a valuable attempt at using audiotapes in a non-vertical manner as they had mostly been used until then in other countries, especially in Central America. This strategy was first tried out with the members of thirty local cooperatives of farm producers of a homogenous nature in terms of crops, farm size, educational and economic levels, etc. A central recording facility (not a an emitting radio station) sent a tape with a program recorded on one side to each of the groups committed to meet every two weeks for listening and discussing such programs. Provided with recorders and assisted by a locally appointed coordinator, each group recorded its conclusions and, if necessary, some questions on the virgen side of the tape and returned this latter to the central point. This then assembled the summaries of all groups and sent them back to each of them. Furthermore the succesive programs were built around those discussions. In this manner an open forum was established at the distance for peasants to freely and creatively discuss their problems without being "taught" from above by outsiders. Ultimately the questions in the individual tapes were not answered by the central point but by the field groups themselves through exchange of experiences, knowledge and viewpoints among peasants.

Can videotapes also be used as tools for alternative communication?

Easily one million videotape units are now in use in the region but almost all of them are owned by upper class members who enjoy them essentially as a sort of a home toy spelling modernity and cosmopolitanism. Almost all pre-recorded tapes are imported -whether legally or not- from the U.S. and Western Europe and provide contents derived from television programs and motion pictures films originated in that part

of the world. Can this admirable device come to be more than another exquisite privilege of the few and serve the liberation aims of the many? Some respond affirmatively since they see possibilities for democratizing uses of video through the increased facility for operating videocameras and editors and the decreased prices of them. These enthusiastic observers point out to potential uses as the following: recording of every-day life of the depressed strata of society; documenting the struggle for the construction of democracy; fostering critical awareness of social events; producing newsreels on events of interest for the majorities usually by-passed by television channels, and facilitating dialogue. Some of these prospects are already being realized to some extent in a few countries as Mexico, Venezuela, and Chile. Brazil is the first in having established a national association of "popular video" that fosters and teaches alternative uses of this medium to numerous grass roots groups and to agencies serving them. And for more than a decade now Manuel Calvelo has shown in Peru how to use videomobile facilities for non-oppressive education of peasants and in the service of literacy.

"Alternative communication for democratic development".

Dream or reality?

Paulo Freire once said: "That which is utopian is not that which is unattainable; it is not idealism; it is a dialectic process of denouncing and announcing; denouncing the dehumanizing structure and announcing the humanizing structure".

So be it.

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