

**Communism : A View From The United States**

**By**

**John Lent**

to file Devcom file.

development communication

1442

(1)

Devcom: A View from ~~the United States~~ <sup>the United States</sup>

by John A. Lent

Confusion marks the status of development and communication projects and studies in the 1980s--confusion concerning which projects and approaches have been successful; confusion concerning the direction the field should take; confusion concerning what the concept really means.

Listen, for a minute or two, to some of the people who have worked in development communication. Nora Quebral, one of the pioneers in the systematic study of development communication, recently wrote:

The low standing of the profession [of the development communicator] partly comes from mis-information...and from its rustic connotations. Much of it reflects the performance of those in the profession themselves. They simply have not shown that they deserve better. By and large they have merely attached new labels to old formulas. They have been coasting on old knowledge, most of it researched elsewhere. They have lacked the boldness and the prescience to break out of foreign moulds and recreate others more fitting (Quebral, 1985, p. 26; see also, Quebral and Middleton, 1983).

This statement fits so closely this author's perspective that my inclination is to conclude this presentation at this point and sit down. But, let's listen to more viewpoints--actually to Quebral's feeling ten years previously: "The climate has never been rosier for development communication as a profession and as a field of study..." (Quebral, 1975). At that time, she predicted that the principles of development communication would find use in depressed areas of more affluent countries and would move from solely rural to include urban concerns.

lent/2

American researcher, John K. Mayo, who has worked in development communication projects sponsored by United States academic and governmental agencies, also painted a chaotic picture of the field, writing about the hundreds of development communication projects of the past generation:

Many, if not most, have been terminated after a few months or years, often in anonymity [sic]. Others were able to stay afloat longer, but appeared to lose direction and to drift aimlessly without ever accomplishing what they set out to do. A fortunate few managed to accomplish their goals and, in so doing, have inspired others to follow in their wake, creating a sequence of related experiences which have substantively advanced our understanding of project behavior and impact (Mayo, 1986, p. 18).

Mayo's statement ends with a slight twinge of optimism, unlike African scholar Charles Okigbo's declaration that development communication is dead-- "suddenly grown out of fashion." Okigbo continued:

In nearly half a century of developing communication scholarship, we are still far from formulating an empirically verifiable theory of the role of the media in social development....Scholars have found themselves in a vicious cycle of self-defeating prophecy: poor results in efforts to formulate a theory of development based on the models of agricultural extension and knowledge gap lead to abandonment of further efforts to research communication and development; such an abandonment leads to even poorer results and much poorer research efforts and less results, and consequently removing scholars farther from formulating a grand theory of development communication (Okigbo, 1985, pp. 23-24; see also, Menon, 1986).

And, although he is discussing the New World and International Communication Order (NWICO), Indian researcher, S. M. Ali's comments equally

lent/3

apply to development communications:

Having read tens of thousands of words in US and British media about UNESCO and the NWICO in the past six months, I am convinced that the controversy very largely thrives on a set of hypothetical questions and lopsided premises, a series of ill-informed opinions, some unspoken fears and distrust of the intentions of a majority of the members of UNESCO who happen to be from the Third World and Socialist bloc and, last but not least, on inadequate homework on the part of media commentators on UNESCO documents (Ali, 1984, p. 10).

Having acknowledged that the field of development communication may be in disarray, it is the purpose of this paper to attempt an assessment of the growth/stagnation and changes in development communication over the past decade, ~~and~~ to look at possible causes for the confusion, and to try to determine <sup>United States</sup> ~~United States~~ views on the topic.

#### 1976-1986--Old to New to Old (in New Garb) Paradigms

Little doubt exists that many people working in development communication believed changes took place in the conceptualization of, if not practice in, the field. What they could not agree upon were: the nature of the changes and the number of dominant approaches concerning development and communication. For example, quoting Samarajiwa (1985, p. 5), one is reminded of the most significant change, i.e., that, "communication and development was once the study of Third-World peoples and societies by western researchers for western policy purposes. Now, Third-World scholars are active in the field." Agreed, but this triggers the questions: how much has changed if the Third World scholars continue to use uncritically Lerner's The Passing of Traditional Society (1958) or Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations (1962), or to substitute satellites for television as the panacea for developmental ~~problems~~ <sup>problems</sup>.

lent/4

One is apt to be equally frustrated trying to decide the major approaches that have come onto the scene in the past decade. The European scholar, Jan Servaes, ~~would believe~~ believe there are the three models of communication and development (diffusion of innovations, the concepts of Lerner and Schramm), technological determinism (technology will solve all problems) and dependency (for a different view on this, see Bitterman, 1985)<sup>1</sup>. Servaes has also listed what he believes to be the major changes in thinking about development and communication. These include:

- (a) from a positivist-instrumentalist approach, which uses mainly quantifiable indicators, toward a more normative standpoint that builds on qualitative and structuralist methods;
- (b) from a formal perspective, where development is defined in terms of universal goals that can be combined in a predictive model, toward a more substantive dimension where development involves societal change of a less predictable nature;
- (c) the shift from a western-or ethnocentric-to a contextual and polycentric understanding;
- (d) the change from endogenism over exogenism to globalism;
- (e) the shift from a predominantly national framework or reference, over an international perspective to mixed and combined levels of analysis;
- (f) from chiefly economic toward more universal and interdisciplinary approaches;
- (g) from segmentary to holistic and more problem-oriented approaches;
- (h) from an integrationist-reformist strategy over revolutionary options to combined policies of (r)evolutionary change (Servaes, 1985, pp. 2-3)

Wimal Dissanayake (1985, pp. 20-21) has categorised four approaches to development and communication, all of which have been vigorously debated during the past decade. He claimed that still dominant is the approach which emphasizes the need for rapid economic growth by means of industrialization, following the path of the more advanced countries. The works of Schramm, Lerner, Pool

lent/5

and Pye fall within this category. An approach that is less nation-determinist is that of Schiller, Smythe or Nordenstreng. They have stressed that it is futile to discuss communication and development in an essentially national setting without paying sufficient attention to "the trajectory of the historical evolution of each society and the manner in which the world economic system conditions and regulates its development." Dissanayake's other two approaches seem to be closer in conceptualization. One focuses on distributive justice, self development, the role of culture in development and the need to construct culturally-grounded, development models. This, according to Dissanayake, is a process-oriented and two-way model of communication. The fourth, which he said is gaining wide recognition, is the approach promoting integrated development, self reliance and people participation.

Still others, such as Tehranian (1985) and Schramm (1979, p. 11), have fashioned their own categorizations. Schramm said there were four categories, being Radio Forum, diffusion, package program and local strategy. According to him, the first three are variations of the diffusion model, while local strategy is different, starting not with experts but with local people. For purposes of discussion here, all this categorization will be collapsed into the following three approaches.

#### Old Paradigm.

~~represent the model~~ <sup>old here,</sup> represents the model proposed in the 1950s and 1960s, designed to solve the "backwardness" of parts of the world by bringing in western economic and political theories and practices (see Schramm and Lerner, 1976; Lerner and Schramm, 1967; Habermann, 1978). Time to explain this model in detail will not be used up here; rather, its description will be pieced together from the criticism made by various scholars since at least 1976. It was in that year that one of the researchers who made his career advocating the old paradigm, renounced its top-down flow, claiming that development had

not occurred in the 25 years it was in vogue. Writing in Communication Research, Everett Rogers, who at the same time latched onto the thinking of critical scholars such as Freire, probably shocked the many devotees of his diffusion of innovations (see Rajagopal, 1982, for review of Rogers' model; also, Hofmann, 1981-82). Two years later, he even redefined development, from his 1969 conception that said,

Development is a type of social change in which new ideas are introduced into a social system in order to produce higher per-capita incomes and levels of living through more modern production methods and improved social organization (Rogers, 1969),

to a newer version that proclaimed development to be,

a widely participatory process of social change in a society, intended to bring about both social and material advancement (including greater equality, freedom, and other valued qualities) for the majority of the people through their gaining greater control over their environment (Rogers, 1978, p. 68).

Joining in this <sup>seemingly</sup> redemption process was the foremost scholar of the communication and development paradigm, Wilbur Schramm. In 1979, he criticized his Mass Media and National Development (1964) in a not-very-widely-circulated monograph of the MacBride Commission. Perhaps he had wanted to ~~change his mind~~ <sup>change his mind</sup> earlier, for in Big Media, Little Media (1977), he showed reservations on the developmental benefits of introducing television into Third World societies. But there was not much hedging in 1979, when he said he should have been "more sceptical about the applicability of the Western model of development," adding,

I should have paid more attention to the problem of integrating mass media with local activity. Above all, I should have given more thought than I did to the social requirements and uncertainties of development, and in particular the cultural differences that make development almost

lent/7

necessarily different, culture to culture, country to country (Schramm, 1979, p. 1).

Admitting, much like Rogers, that two decades had failed to produce the improvements expected of development, he said this was chargeable to "strategy rather than tactics." What was wrong with the old paradigm? Among other things, according to Schramm, this western model was "history-specific," tailored to a situation different from that of the Third World. The Third World was expected to develop in 25 to 50 years to a stage that took the United States and Western Europe 300 years, he added (Schramm, 1979, p. 4). This point was not new for it was Schramm, years before, who said that some cultures, in an effort to catch up with the West, would leapfrog stages of development.

If scholars such as Rogers and Schramm seemed to be confessing to redeem themselves, Edelstein, in 1984, stepped to the fore to grant them absolution. According to him, scholars attracted to communication and economic development were "more applied in their orientation than those who had dealt with modernization," but they suffered "severe criticism" because of ideological reasons and because of a need to improve research. He gave as an example of the latter, that generalizations should proceed from the data rather than data being used to test preconceived ideas not scientific or empirical in origin. Although he acknowledged that some scholars were "data exporters," "self-enhancing theory-builders," "research bankers," or "instant research guns" for hire at a price, most development communication researchers were "emotionally committed" to helping host nations. <sup>Thus,</sup> Edelstein thought it was "out of keeping for them [devcom researchers] to have suffered so much criticism" (Edelstein, 1984, pp. 48-49).

One of the most insightful analyses of the communication and development paradigm was written by Sultana Krippendorff. Claiming the approach was fraught with problems, she said that while the tradition of mass media criticism in the

lent/8

United States favored the view that mass media were phillistine, trivial, distractive and harmful to social good, the devcom approach viewed media in the Third World as "all-good, thoughtful, dedicated and completely committed to bringing about large-scale positive change." She added that United States research was showing that media only reinforced pre-existing beliefs, while the devcom approach was claiming that media were capable of bringing about big changes (Krippendorff, 1979, pp. 74-75). Thus, among problems she saw with the approach were that it had "near-hypnotic fascination" with the powers of the media, viewed development to be "all-of-a-kind," and was highly prescriptive. Krippendorff added that the model assumed a passive, inert audience in the Third World, unable to resist the messages hurled at it by the new media,<sup>2</sup> and by "an all-good, unselfish group of people who could be relied upon to control the media in the interests of development alone." The model made a number of wrong assumptions, she said, among which were that Third World societies were essentially folk societies with a "homogeneous social base and low levels of economic aspiration" (Krippendorff, 1979, p. 76). Methodological biases permeated the model as well, Krippendorff added, because of a preference for "ideal type definitions and aggregate data." Because of the habit of "opting for dichotomous definitions" (traditional/modern, underdeveloped/developed neglected is a rich store of indepth knowledge picked up by area specialists studying single countries, she said (Krippendorff, 1979, p. 79).

An unfortunate circumstance of the 1970s' debates concerning the New World and International Communication Order, was the tendency to generalize and redefine development communication to fit ideological positions. It should be remembered that development and communication encompassed a set of western theory and practice, established mainly by United States scholars, used to bring about economic and social change. Alongside it, but created by a different group--independent, Asian working journalists--somewhat later, was development jour-

lent/y

nalism, which sought to tell the development story simply and comprehensively in the media with the intention of helping the masses. The latter, some writers believed (Lent, 1977; Chalkley, 1975), often became a type of government propaganda when the state coopted journalists to promote its programs and policies. It was not the intention, at least in the case of this writer, to lump all development journalism/communication into the press freedom versus government control issue. Nevertheless, that is what happened. The NWICO debates established two camps: those who pushed a western-style freedom in gathering and disseminating news and those who believed government input was needed, and once given, should be supported by media. By pushing the concept into this dichotomous categorization, other possibilities--such as a mixture of the two--were no longer considered.<sup>3</sup> Probably most responsible for confusing the issue and leading to the categorical condemnation of all development journalism/communication were the defenders of traditional, western style press freedom, organizations such as the Inter American Press Association, International Press Institute and Freedom House, and individuals such as Leonard Sussman, Rosemary Righter - (1978) and Dana Bullen (1981).

Sussman, at the vanguard of the crusade, wrote against what he termed developmental journalism as early as 1976, saying,

The planning of national and regional 'communication policies' is UNESCO's new rubric for promoting developmental journalism--the control of the press by government in the name of mobilizing economic growth (Sussman, 1976, p. 25).

Other passages are as condemnatory: "to that restrictive, backward-turning system--developmental journalism--UNESCO now lends its considerable expertise and moral authority"; the "moving spirit" behind internationalizing developmental journalism is Amadou Mahtar M'Bow, and developmental journalism is a serious threat to press freedom (Sussman, 1976, p. 25). Eventually so much

lent/10

fear and suspicion existed around the concept that, as Ogan (1982, p. 3) stated, the arguments came down to an "exchange of inflammatory rhetoric." In some parts of the West, especially in the United States press and among some American scholars, development journalism/communication became equated with communist efforts to control media. And efforts to untangle the issues of the debate invariably led to more confusion. Aggarwala (1979, pp. 180-181), for example, in trying to define development journalism, warned that western media confused development journalism and developmental journalism. He said that Sussman coined the latter to describe the use of mass media in the Third World for economic development and national integration and that it is akin to the United Nations' development support communication, defined as the use of communication means for promoting economic and social development. Aggarwala then explained that development news reporting is only a minor part of development support communication (Aggarwala, 1979, p. 181).

~~...the large number of individuals who... into the~~  
~~...K... (1981, p. 42) said, "anyone who has anything~~  
~~...to consider himself an expert." Although the~~  
resultant dialogue of the NWICO had many benefits for communication and development theory and practice, it also made "instant experts" of polemicists--whether they promoted the government, private media or other interests. These individuals' lack of background, and unwillingness to do adequate homework to get it, definitely confused issues and concepts.

#### New Paradigm.

Throughout the 1970s, and before Rogers' 1976 recantation, a new paradigm struggled to get afoot. Based on the philosophies in part of Freire, Schumacher, Díaz Bordenave, Fuglesang, among others, this model was characterized by its emphasis on self reliance, people participation and the faith in the people's ability to learn and change. It preferred horizontal to vertical flows of in-

lent/11

formation, showed the importance of traditional media and interpersonal communication channels and, instead of thinking of development mainly in economic terms, recognized people's values, beliefs, attitudes and opinions and their societal needs as components in development. Proposing a "pedagogy of the oppressed," Freire said it would be based on, 1. faith in people's ability to learn, to change, and to liberate themselves from oppressive conditions of ignorance, poverty and exploitation, 2. direct contact of the learners with their own reality and its problems and analysis of the constraints imposed on them by social structure and official ideology, 3. elimination of differences between educator and educatee in so far as both are learners, 4. free dialogue and 5. participation in liberating action (Freire, 1972). Schumacher (1973) proposed intermediate technology as an alternative in economic development, based on criteria of smallness, simplicity, capital cheapness and non-violence, which Lent (1978) applied to communication, and to which he (Lent, 1986)<sup>late</sup> added slowness. Latin American scholar Díaz Bordenave optimistically, and perhaps prematurely, saw media becoming,

more accessible to the participation of rural populations in programming; messages are originated among the rural populations, and government agents, technocrats and elites...are learning to become receivers; the content of the messages is more relevant to rural people's problems and needs....(Díaz Bordenave, 1977, pp. 22-23).

Others, such as Fuglesang, observed the communal patterns and "magical thinking" processes of rural peoples in the Third World, with the intention of learning to communicate better with them. Fuglesang went to extremes to denounce the role of mass media in social change, declaring recently, "Mass media have proved to be a string of rattling tin cans offering disinformation, educational irrelevance and noisy nothingness" (Fuglesang and Chandler, 1986, p. 2).

Out of this body of conceptualization came a number of practical alter-

lent/12

natives to older communication and development, such as the ruralization of bigger, formal media, the use of folk media and interpersonal communication patterns, the implementation of smaller media technology and reopening ancient lines of communication between Third World nations (Lent, 1978).

As indicated previously, prominent promoters of the older model, Rogers and Schramm, recognized the possibilities of the new paradigm. Relating a new conception of development and communication, Rogers, obviously borrowing from Freire and others, said it should include, 1. equality of distribution of information and socioeconomic benefits, 2. popular participation in self-development planning and execution, 3. self-reliance and independence in development and 4. integration of traditional with modern systems (Rogers, 1978, p. 67).

Schramm followed <sup>in the same vein</sup> ~~suit~~ saying that local strategy would be called for in a new model, elaborating that,

the center of development strategy, as far as feasible, will be the local area; local activity and, so far as possible, local decision making will become central in development planning; two-way, not one-way, communication will be emphasized, and horizontal communication will be emphasized at the expense of vertical communication (Schramm, 1979, p. 9).

To accentuate his switch to local options, Schramm wrote on,

There is little doubt that we are going to see variety of development strategies in different countries and different times during the next decades, for which the media will be co-opted and to which they will be expected to adjust (Schramm, 1979, p. 11).

Recognizing that big media will be at a disadvantage to conform to local models, where local and small media are more appropriate, Schramm said countries would have to decide methods of using large media for effective local development, the distribution of available resources for small and local media and the

lent/13

long-range plans for national communication media. Perhaps on the latter--whether to invest in smaller media or bigger, high-technology-oriented communications, the verdict has come in since Schramm wrote in 1979.

Schramm, again like Rogers, was impressed with China's model of using local activity and local communication for development. Curiously, China had been using this model for decades--and it was known about in the West--yet, some of these scholars praised it at about the time China switched to a more western-style modernization, emphasizing big media. Perhaps a better example using local activity for development is Cuba, where the CDRs (committees for the defense of the revolution) play such a significant role from the grassroots level (see Lent, 1985). If relationships between Cuba and the United States improve one of these days, maybe scholars who are camp followers of United States diplomatic policy, will "discover" that model.

#### Old (in New Garb) Paradigm.

The mass marketing of high technology--i.e., the Information Revolution, Communication Age--in the 1980s certainly overshadowed the efforts of small and local media proponents. On the heels of the World Administrative Radio Conference (WARC) of 1979, a number of individuals, again mainly from the United States, reverted to the older model of communication and development, but different this time in that it was dressed in the new garb of satellites and computers. Again, maximum effects were expected, usually vertical flows were promoted, economic development was emphasized and western domination prevailed.

Some of the promoters worked out of, or consulted for, institutions such as the World Bank, United States Agency for International Development, other branches of the United States government, or institutions such as Stanford, Harvard or Massachusetts Institute of Technology, which had long-standing, close ties with the government.<sup>4</sup> What have they been saying? Here's a sample; close your eyes and transform yourself to the 1950s and 1960s:

The development of the 'barefoot microchip,' that is, new technologies using microprocessing technology that are specifically adapted for rural use, has significantly changed the possibilities of using telecommunications in remote locations (Casey-Stahmer, 1985, p. 61).

To many developing countries telecommunication systems using satellites may stand between stagnation and progress....Development support communication policies will become more cost-effective with the use of new technology (Jussawalla, 1985, p. 66).

Saunders, Warford and Wellenius (1983) argue vigorously for telecommunications as a spur to economic development; Hudson (1984) extolls the benefits of telecommunications (especially telephones) to keep isolated peoples in touch, among other things, and Jussawalla promotes the idea that telecommunications is not only positively correlated to economic development, but should be recognized as a leading sector.

Of course, every campaign (or revolution, whatever the terminology) needs a commission with its long report, to lend it legitimacy. For the <sup>promoters</sup> ~~beneficiaries~~ of high technology, the ITU's Independent Commission for Worldwide Telecommunication, chaired by, and named after, Sir D. Maitland, and its report, The Missing Link (1984), served that purpose. Among other things, this report showed the disparity of telephone distribution, pointing out that in the Third World, phones are concentrated in urban areas and 90 per cent are used by government, industry, business, banking and transport. The report added that of the world's 600 million phones, three-fourths were in nine countries and that one-half of the world's population shared only 10 million. The conclusion: get more telephones into rural homes. Whose interest would be served? No doubt hidden behind the obvious answer of those of the rural peasants, are the economic interests of the transnationals who control the telephone industry.

Reacting to this re-emphasis of the old paradigm, through high technology, have been a number of scholars, including Schiller (1981), Jayaweera (1985,

lent/15

1986), Smythe (1985) and Lent (1985), among others. Jayaweera (1985), in capsulizing the changes in development and communication, showed how a full circle had been completed:

The Third World's preoccupation with satellites tends to repeat the cardinal errors of communication strategies of the 50s: the assumption that the cognitive element (access to information and knowledge) is fundamental to the development process....The return to the cognitive is fundamentally an unwillingness to see the problems of Third World poverty in structural terms....During the 70s we saw a growing tendency, particularly in Britain and Europe, to perceive communication problems in structural terms. But the onset of satellite communication is doing to communication thinking what the eruption of radio and TV did to communication theory in the 50s. Apparently the hope is that this marvelous new tool will make it unnecessary to undertake the structural changes that the Third World has been agitating for.

Arguing that satellites will bind the periphery countries to the center ones, "dependency will be aggravated and domination strengthened," Jayaweera (1985) made clear that he was not arguing against all technology, but instead, the fallacious assumptions that lie behind its implementation.

Along the same lines, this author (Lent, 1986) has questioned a number of myths that are perpetuated for the continued and increased use of new information technology. These are that new information technology will lead to the development of a global village; to international understanding, peace and brotherhood; to increased independence and promotion of democratic ideals and to the salvation of Third World masses. Other myths are that more information made available through bigger communication systems is a goal to be sought; that information technology is neutral, and that because it worked in the industrialized

lent/16

world (a still unproven statement), it will work in the Third World.

Striking down the global village myth, Eurich said those who discussed the "electronic neighbourhood" had lost awareness of "true neighbourhood, of the feeling of familiarity--even of feeling itself" (Eurich, 1985, p. 75); they also assumed that availability and affordability of new information technology are, or can be, universal. It is equally difficult to imagine the new information technology serving international understanding and peace, since so much of it is used to enhance thermonuclear arsenals, spy on other countries and exploit poorer nations' resources. What about the claim that new information technology leads to increased independence and democratic ideals? Hardly. It is more likely the have nots will become more dependent upon the few that have and that the use of telematics by governments will centralize and increase their powers over peoples. Shipley et al (1985, p. 455) showed that the tendency is for transnational companies to increase their control of developing country markets, resulting in centralized decision making, loss of cultural autonomy and national sovereignty and the inability of such nations to compete with the transnational companies through indigenous growth of their informatics industries. Roszak (1986) also could not see telematics serving democratic ideals because of its uses as machinery of surveillance, war, polling, governance and psychoses. Furthermore, it is unrealistic to believe that humanitarian, not commercial, interests motivate those dispensing new information technology to Third World masses, or that more information, rather than its quality, leads to better communication and development.

Jayaweera (1986, p. 7), explaining his "holistic" view of technology and social relations, summarized some of the criticisms of the new technology-oriented model. He said that technology and social relations are in a circular, symbiotic relationship; that technology is not value neutral and at some point, comes into contradiction with social relations; that as acceleration of technology

lent/17

began in the West, "the social relations they beget tend towards a progressive integration of the whole world into a single dominant economy, a single polity and a single culture"; that this process of integration inevitably sharpens the contradictions inherent in the system, causing its own disintegration, and that the dominant productive forces are nowhere near reaching their fullest potential for development.

I think a quote by Kleinjans (1976) is a fitting ending to this section on the criticisms of new technology. He said:

Science and technology can be borrowed, imported and adapted from abroad. But ultimately creativity from within is the only answer. For development, essentially, is not a matter of technology or GNP, but the growth of a new consciousness, the movement of the human mind, the uplifting of the human spirit, the infusion of human confidence.

A United States  
~~North American~~ Perspective

One does not get a strong impression that in the United States, much is happening academically in the field, leading to some of us agreeing with Okigbo's earlier-mentioned doomsday prophesy. Emile McAnany, who has conducted research on Latin America, for example, said that there is much less interest in development and communication on the part of academics and much more on the part of the United Nations and United States government agencies such as AID. He attributed the drop-off in emphasis by scholars to the criticism the field received by academics in the late 1970s and early 1980s, to more awareness of this criticism in the Third World and to the shortage of funds allocated for such research. McAnany believed that even less money will be forthcoming. Thus, he said the United States scholarly perspective is one based on ignorance and disrepute, probably because academics do not understand the uses, nor the criticisms, of development and communication.<sup>5</sup>

Jim Richstad, a scholar of the Pacific Islands, said he does not see anything

lent/18

happening in development and communication among United States scholars, and that most of the detailed studies are from a Third World perspective. Discussing the past contributions of United States researchers, Richstad singled out research methodology has shown how to conduct studies, but has failed to ask the right questions. He also said the research still maintains a them-us approach-how development and communication works for Third World countries, rather than its applicability also to the United States. Richstad added that development and communication is still a distinct field that has not been blended with other disciplines, nor with the New World and International Communication Order.<sup>6</sup>

Herbert Schiller, a frequent critic of the old paradigm, said development and communication studies in the past seven years are lending respectability to a type of development Schramm talked about. According to Schiller, only the process has changed to what is called high technology. "It is a return to much of the old thinking. It's the same old material just dressed up in high technology form," he added. Schiller expected to see increasing amounts of material in journals on high technology for development, but predicted that, just as the old paradigm lost favor, so will that of high technology.<sup>7</sup>

Perhaps governmental agencies in the United States have always been more interested in development communication than academicians have been. Certainly a good chunk of the old paradigm research work received its funding through government channels. McAnany believed that US government agencies today are more open to the field because they have better evidence of the uses of communications in development than they had ten to 15 years ago. Claiming the field is "very much alive and growing in the pragmatic sense," he attributed this to AID research that has "shifted away from academics to pragmatic practitioners who have no theoretical problems."<sup>8</sup>

However, there are dangers-- as there always have been in the United States, as well as in the Third World--with governmental agencies monopolizing development and communication projects and research. Quebral's

lent/19

Third World perspective is applicable to the United States situation. She wrote:

As we gain in development experience, the possible harm in leaving to state authorities all decisions that affect people's and their children's lives grows more apparent. The state has a congenital bias for aggregates, for national statistics, for concentrated power that goes against the very grain of decentralised development. If only for this, governments cannot have a monopoly on development work, as they were not meant to have (Quebral, 1985, p. 27).

What is interesting is that the United States critics who accuse Third World governments of manipulating development communication for propagandistic purposes have not seriously looked at the same problem in relationship to their own government.

#### Survey of Periodicals, 1978-85.

In an attempt to assess how much emphasis development and communication has had in the past decade, this author surveyed the periodical literature from 1977 through 1985.<sup>9</sup> All articles in Communication Abstracts dealing with "Third World," "Third World countries," "national development," "developing countries" and "diffusion of innovations" were analyzed. ~~The editor, Robert, who conducts all of the abstracting, and~~ All contents of about ten periodicals considered "journals of record" have been included in Communication Abstracts, as well as the partial contents of scores of other journals. Considered "journals of record" are Journal of Communication, Journalism Quarterly, Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media, Journalism Monographs, Communication Research and Mass Comm Review, all published in the United States, and Gazette, Intermedia, Media Asia and Communications and Development Review (now defunct) from abroad. <sup>10</sup> ~~which journal should~~

~~published by the publisher and~~

lent/20

checking occasionally, ~~the number of journals in the field of social sciences~~

For the purposes of this tentative study, the findings will be analyzed by "journals of record," both from the United States and abroad, and all other periodicals. Emphasis will be placed on the "journals of record" because they have been abstracted more fully.

The periodical literature was surveyed according to four categories that relate to different paradigms and one miscellaneous category. The categories were: development and communications, broken into uses and theories subcategories; alternative media and development; high technology, and dependency. The first three relate to the foregoing paradigms in this paper.

The six United States "journals of record" published a total of 56 articles on these five categories, compared to 105 in four non-US "journals of record." Of the US journals, Journal of Communication carried the most articles, 34; followed by Journalism Quarterly with 13; Communication Research, five; Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media, two, and the other two journals, one each. Of the non-US "journals of record," Media Asia had 57 articles; Gazette, 32; Intermedia, 11, and Communications and Development Review, five.

United States "journals of record" gave over half of their Third World articles to dependency (22) and high technology (seven). Development and communication subcategories were almost equally represented, 11 on uses and ten on theories. Alternative media and miscellaneous each had three articles. In the non-US "journals of record," development and communication led with 51 articles (28 on theories and 23 on uses), followed by dependency with 29; high technology, ten; miscellaneous, nine and alternative media, six.

Another 131 articles dealing with the Third World, that appeared in 65 other journals (46 US; 19 non-US), were abstracted in Communication Abstracts

lent/21

over these eight years. High technology was the favorite topic with 48 articles, followed by development and communication with 40 (25 on theories and 15 on uses); dependency, 29; alternative media, eight, and miscellaneous, six. The non- "journals of record" with the most articles on these categories were Telecommunications Policy, 11; Media, Culture and Society and Educational Media International, with six each; Communications, five; and Telematics and Informatics, Political Communication and Persuasion and Media Information Australia, four each. But, as indicated earlier, these journals were only partially abstracted over the years.

In United States "journals of record," 18 of the 21 development and communication articles appeared before 1982, and six of the seven high technology articles before 1981. On the other hand, 16 of 22 dependency articles appeared between 1982-85. The non-US "journals of record" had a much more even distribution of articles over the eight years.

Articles that identified a region or country of analysis included 51 for Asia and the Middle East, 27 for Africa, 26 for Latin America, eight each for the Caribbean and Pacific areas, and seven for Canada. Countries that were most frequently the subject of study were the Philippines and Nigeria, nine articles each; India, six; China, Brazil and Pacific Islands, five each and Peru and Iran, four each.

From this study, the following tentative conclusions might be made concerning a ~~United States~~ United States perspective on development and communications:

1. The topic is not of much importance to the editors of the main "journals of record," which average about one article per year. Taking the Journal of Communication out of the sample, three other top "journals of record" (Journalism Quarterly, Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media and Communication Research) totalled only 20 articles over the eight

lent/22

years. →

2. Dependency and the push to new information technology are the most important topics among United States scholars. This is understandable in that the United States controls a large proportion of this technology and is accused of being the main country on which other communication systems are dependent.

3. Discussion of development and communication theory (the old paradigm) has been minimal, and what has been carried out, occurred mainly before 1982.

These conclusions lend support to statements made by some scholars that the field academically lacks an adequate theoretical base, as well as empirical evidence. For example, McAnany (1978, p. 86) wrote:

There is, however, very little good descriptive evidence of the comprehensive information environment of the rural poor, nor is there even a good description of what the process of growth and change might be in the penetration of the mass media into rural areas. We know, for example, even from national statistics that both radio and even television have had significant growth patterns over the last two decades in all countries. But there is only scattered empirical evidence about exposure to rural audiences, the content of the media messages, and the possible affects [sic] on the quality of users' lives.

Other scholars have tried to come up with ways to rejuvenate the field of *some seek new directions, while others hark back to old methods* communications and development (see Okigbo, 1985, p. 24).<sup>1</sup> Schramm (1979, p. 17) called for simple research studies on local problems, that are conducted quickly and used at once to improve local activity, that follow the process of local development, that are longitudinal, seek specificity and use small groups as units of analysis. These suggestions indicated he was deviating from the old paradigm on communications and development, *on the other hand,* ~~which has not done~~

lent/23

~~Canadian~~ Canadian scholars Duhaime, McTavish and Ross (1985) proposed a social marketing approach to development based on factors they called enabling conditions, precipitating circumstances and societal motivation. Obviously their work is based on Rogers' diffusion of innovations research.

Developmental work itself, separate from communication, is also fraught with frustration, leading to suggestions that boggle the mind. Let me leave you with just one, which should give an indication of how confusing the issues are. This was proposed by Holmar von Ditfurth in Der Spiegel:

Don't we have to sacrifice almost an entire generation today so that the day after tomorrow other generations may have a chance to survive? In the end, no generation will have survival chances if all generations are saved and the funds needed to invest in industrialization can't be raised because of over-population.

lent/24

### Notes

- 1 Bitterman (1985, pp. 38-39) does not support the media imperialism argument which is part of dependency theory. She said the Third World cultures are not defenseless, that they seek and buy foreign media products and that "transmission does not guarantee reception or influence." She further said, "People in any culture have every right, I think, to the menu of change which the larger world affords, and they will not in the end be deterred by paternalism, however well intentioned."
- 2 An example is in the stages of growth models advanced by Rostow and Lerner, which assume a set of before and after circumstances. However, pre-modern society is dynamic, not stagnant waiting to be propelled, as is assumed.
- 3 For research studies on development news usage in various countries, see Lent and Vilanilam, 1979; Ishadi, 1983; Haque, 1986.
- 4 For example, Saunders, Warford and Wellenius' Telecommunications and Economic Development was done for the World Bank. See works of Hudson, 1984; Stover, 1984, and Pool, 1977.
- 5 Telephone interview ~~with Emile McAnany~~ with Emile McAnany, University of Texas, October 29, 1986.
- 6 Telephone interview ~~with Jim Richstad~~ Jim Richstad, University of Oklahoma, October 29, 1986.
7. Interview, Herbert Simler, in Canberra, Australia, Dec. 1, 1986
- 8 McAnany, interview.
- 9 Actually 1978 was the first year of Communication Abstracts, but issues that year also carried abstracts of 1977 articles. ~~the abstracts for months of 1980 were analysed but not reported.~~
- 10 Interview, Robert G. Roberts, associate editor, Communication Abstracts, Philadelphia, Pa., November 3, 1986. *"Journals of record" were chosen by criteria set by the publisher and by the number of references to them in Social Sciences Citation*
- 10 Development and communication-uses category included topics such as educational media, use of all formal media for development and development journalism, while development and communication-theory included devcom theory, communication

lent/25

and change, modernization theory, research designs and problems, diffusion of innovations and critiques of Lerner's work. Alternative media and development included small media, folk media, interpersonal communications and concepts such as self reliance. High technology included telematics, informatics, trans border data flows, satellites and computers, while dependency included news flow, media imperialism, NWICO, MacBride Commission and WARC. The miscellaneous category was almost entirely devoted to surveys of media systems generally or government-media relationships.

lent/26

### References

- Aggarwala, Narinder K. 1979. "What Is Development News?" Journal of Communication, Spring, pp. 180-181.
- Ali, S. M. 1984. "Key Issues of NWICO from an Historical Perspective." Ang Makatao, January-December, pp. 7-12.
- Eitterman, Mary. 1985. "Mass Communication and Social Change." Media Asia, 12:1, pp. 38-43.
- Bullen, Dana. 1981. "UNESCO and the Media." Nieman Reports, Spring, pp. 8-11.
- Casey-Strahmer, Anna. 1985. "Satellites Spreading Skills for Rural Development." Development: Seeds of Change, 1, pp. 61-63.
- Chalkley, Alan. 1975. "Development Journalism Is NOT 'Government Say So' Journalism." Media, May, p. 27.
- Díaz Bordenave, Juan E. 1977. Communication and Rural Development. Paris: UNESCO.
- Dissanayake, Wimal. 1985. "From a Piecemeal Approach to an Integrated Strategy for Development." Media Development, 4, pp. 20-22.
- Duhaime, Carole P., Ronald McTavish and Christopher A. Ross. 1985. "Social Marketing: An Approach to Third-World Development." Journal of Macromarketing. Spring, pp. 3-12.
- Edelstein, Alex. 1984. "Comparative Communication Research: A Response to World Problems." In Brenda Dervin and Melvin Voight, eds. Progress in Communication Sciences. Norwood: Ablex, pp. 43-66.
- Eurich, Claus. 1985. "Communications Polluting Speech." Development: Seeds of Change, 1, p. 75.
- Freire, Paulo. 1972. Pedagogy of the Oppressed. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Fuglesang, Andreas and Dale Chandler. 1986. "The Open-Snuff Box: Communication as Participation." Media Development, 2, pp. 2-4.
- Habermann, Peter and Guy de Fontgalland, eds. 1978. Development Communication-- Rhetoric and Reality. Singapore: AMIC.

lent/27

Haq, Mazharul. 1986. "Is Development News More Salient Than Human Interest Stories in Indian Elite Press?" Gazette, 38, pp. 83-99.

Hofmann, Ruedi. 1981-82. "Communication and Development." Communicatio Socialis Yearbook, pp. 5-12.

Hudson, Heather. 1984. When Telephones Reach the Village: The Role of Telecommunications in Rural Development. Norwood: Ablex.

Ishadi Sutepo Ks. 1983. Development News in Indonesian Dailies. Singapore: AMIC.

Kleinjans, Everett. 1976. "Foreword." In Wilbur Schramm and Daniel Lerner, eds. Communication and Change--The Last Ten Years and the Next. Honolulu: University of Hawaii.

Kunczik, Michael. 1984. Communication and Social Change. Bonn: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.

Krippendorff, Sultana. 1979. "The Communication Approach to Development: A Critical Review." In John A. Lent, ed. Third World Mass Media: Issues, Theory and Research. Williamsburg: Studies in Third World Societies, No. 9, pp. 71-82.

Jayaweera, Neville. 1985. "Assessing Communication Satellites." Development: Seeds of Change, 1, pp. 52-58. (Originally in Media Development, XXI:4, 1983, pp. 13-18.)

Jayaweera, Neville. 1986. The Political Economy of the Communication Revolution and the Third World--A Theoretical Analysis. Singapore: AMIC.

Jussawalla, Meheroo. 1985. "International Telecommunication Policies." Development: Seeds of Change, 1, pp. 64-66.

Lent, John A. 1977. "The Guiding Light." Index on Censorship, September-October, pp. 17-26.

Lent, John A. 1978. "Mass Media, Folk Media and Rural Masses in the Third World." Presented at International Studies Association, Washington, D. C., February 24.

Lent/28

- Lent, John A. 1985. "Cuban Mass Media After 25 Years of Revolution." Journalism Quarterly, Autumn, pp. 609-615, 704.
- Lent, John A. 1986. "New Information Technology: Myths, Questions, Alternatives Presented at International Association for Mass Communication Research, New Delhi, India, August 26.
- Lent, John A. and John V. Vilanilam, eds. 1979. The Use of Development News: Case Studies of India, Malaysia, Ghana and Thailand. Singapore: AMIC.
- Lerner, Daniel. 1958. The Passing of Traditional Society. New York: Free Press.
- Lerner, Daniel and Wilbur Schramm, eds. 1967. Communication and Change in the Developing Countries. Honolulu: East-West Press.
- Mayo, John K. 1986. "Voyages of Discovery: Reflections on Development Communication Projects." Media Development, 2, pp. 18-20.
- McAnany, Emile. 1978. "Does Information Really Work?" Journal of Communication, Winter, pp. 84-90.
- Memon, Vijay. 1986. "What Hope for the Future of Development Communication?" Media Development, 2, pp. 5-6.
- Missing Link, The. 1984. Geneva: International Telecommunication Union.
- Ogan, Christine. 1982. "Development Journalism/Communication: The Status of the Concept." Gazette, 1/2, pp. 3-13.
- Okigbo, Charles. 1985. "Is Development Communication a Dead Issue?" Media Development, 4, pp. 23-25.
- Pool, Ithiel de Sola. 1977. The Social Impact of the Telephone. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Quebral, Nora. 1975. "Development Communication: Where Does It Stand Today?" Media Asia, 2, 4.
- Quebral, Nora. 1985. "People, Not Media, Communicate: An Asian Update." Media Development, 4, pp. 25-28.

lent/29

- Quebral, Nora and John Middleton. 1983. "Some Thoughts on Development Communication, Past, Present, and Future." Development Communication Report, September, pp. 110-111.
- Rajagopal, Srinivas. 1982. "The Utility of Diffusion Research in the Third World: A Boon or Bane?" Media Asia, 9:1, pp. 26-28.
- Righter, Rosemary. 1978. Whose News? Politics, the Press and the Third World. London: Burnett Books.
- Rogers, Everett. 1962. Diffusion of Innovations. New York: Free Press.
- Rogers, Everett. 1969. Modernization Among Peasants: The Impact of Communication. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Rogers, Everett. 1978. "The Rise and Fall of the Dominant Paradigm." Journal of Communication, Winter, pp. 64-69.
- Roszak, Theodore. 1986. The Cult of Information: The Folklore of Computers and the True Art of Thinking. New York: Pantheon.
- Samarajiwa, R. 1985. "Tainted Origins of Development Communication." Communicator, April-July, pp. 5-9.
- Saunders, Robert J., Jeremy J. Warford and Bjorn Wellenius. 1983. Telecommunications and Economic Development. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press for the World Bank.
- Schiller, Herbert I. 1981. Who Knows: Information in the Age of the Fortune 500. Norwood: Ablex.
- Schramm, Wilbur. 1964. Mass Media and National Development. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Schramm, Wilbur. 1977. Big Media, Little Media. Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Schramm, Wilbur. 1979. "Mass Media and National Development 1979." Paris: UNESCO, International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems.
- Schramm, Wilbur and Daniel Lerner, eds. 1976. Communication and Change--The Last Ten Years and the Next. Honolulu: University of Hawaii.

lent/30

- Schumacher, E. F. 1973. Small Is Beautiful: Economics As If People Mattered. New York: Harper and Row.
- Servaes, Jan. 1985. "Towards an Alternative Concept of Communication and Development." Media Development, 4, pp. 2-5.
- Shipley, Carrie, Dwayne L. Shipley and Rolf T. Wigand. 1985. "Corporate Trans-border Data Flow and National Policy in Developing Countries." In Brent Rubin, ed. Information and Behavior, Vol. 1. New Brunswick: Transaction Books.
- Smythe, Dallas. 1985. "Needs Before Tools--The Illusions of Technology." Media Development, 4, pp. 8-17.
- Stover, William J. 1984. Information Technology in the Third World. Boulder: Westview.
- Sussman, Leonard. 1976. "Developmental Journalism: A Backward Idea Whose Time Has Come." Quadrant, November, pp. 25-31.
- Tehrani, Majid. 1985. "Paradigms Lost: Development as Communication and Learning." Media Development, 4, pp. 5-8.
- Tehrani, Majid. n.d. "Communication and International Development: Some Theoretical Considerations." Paris: UNESCO, International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems.