

ØRECOMM Global Launch Panel

Panel Proposers: Oscar Hemer and Thomas Tufte

Panel Chair: Oscar Hemer

New Challenges in Communication for Development *- rethinking development paradigms, power relations and communication strategies*

The field of communication for development is experiencing dynamic times, both in the theoretical debates but not least in the actual use of communication in development work. However, often times, there is a certain inertia in the theoretical perspectives we see used, and critical reflection upon how we conceive the field is often not formulated. New development challenges are however posing fundamental challenges to the field, and this panel suggested a critical reflection these development challenges as well as of the theoretical perspectives we apply to try to understand and develop the field of communication for development within this context.

This panel wishes to provide critical perspectives on communication for development at three different levels. Firstly, at the level of development theory, where Pieterse uses the 'rise of Asia' to reflect upon globalisation and development thinking. Secondly, at the level of conceiving power relations in communication for development work. Here, Wilkins deconstructs the field to explore how the understanding of power relations remain at the core of understanding communication for development practice. Finally, Obregon and Tufte will review a particular and very used and successful communication strategy within communication for development: entertainment-education. They suggest a broader theoretical framework which reflects the development challenges EE often is used in relation to.

This panel is proposed as part of the global launch of a new bi-national research platform, ØRECOMM, which is being established in Denmark and Sweden, with Roskilde University and Malmø University as the hosting institutions. We hope to have a book launch ready for the panel as well.

21st century globalization and development

By Jan Nederveen Pieterse

What are the implications of the rise of Asia for globalization and for development thinking? This paper explores three propositions.

1. A multipolar, multi-currency world is taking shape.
2. Although the rise of East Asia, China and India is often claimed as a success of liberalization and economic openness it would not have materialized without the contributions of developmental states. It is appropriate to view East Asia's resurgence in light of East Asian historical dynamics.
3. The rise of Asia indicates the return of the developmental state in development thinking.

Articulating Power in Models of Development Communication

By Karin Wilkins

This historical assessment of the development communication articulates underlying assumptions about power implied in models of social change. Although the focus of development communication has changed over time from concerns with modernity, to dependency, cultural imperialism, globalization, participation, and resistance, these shifts have not evolved in a linear fashion. Many underlying concerns with power, whether conceived within political-economic structures or within community contexts, or whether posited as hegemonic or pluralist processes, remain.

For example, participatory goals may be constrained by lack of institutional assistance or resistance from agencies with power. Seeing the contextual conditions of local community efforts means recognizing the importance of resistance to oppressive conditions. Incorporating the work of social movement organizations into the broader study of development allows us to consider social change outside of the development industry. Although there are many types of social movements in the development realm, they have the structural potential to advocate against groups with power, through recognizing the historical conditions privileging certain groups over others. Some community and activist media centers concentrate on the process of production, emphasizing participatory aspects of engagement, whereas others privilege the content produced, toward creating quality texts designed to attract and compel particular responses. Funding structures and resources of these media centers, to the degree they rely on a concentration or multiple donors, commercial or non-profit financing, volunteer or paid support staff, guide and constrain the possibilities for these processes and products. While their primary concern with process or outcome may diverge, these approaches connect in their interest in active participation among community members in the process of articulating problems and enacting solutions, as well as the more resistant possibilities of the strategies engaged.

Entertainment-Education – new theoretical perspectives

By Rafael Obregon and Thomas Tufté

Entertainment-education (EE) is one of the most innovative communication strategies developed and used successfully in communication for development over the past two decades. While entertainment has been historically part of processes of change as a tool for cultural reinforcement, values, etc., the value of EE as a communication strategy comes from the theoretical perspectives added to it and the increasing body of knowledge developed over the years. While the emergence and longest standing tradition of EE originates in behaviour change communication with focus on individual behaviour change, a broad range of new perspectives have emerged in recently years. Limitations of EE have been identified by some authors, emphasizing lack of focus on the educational component, lack of focus on the social determinants in the EE-based health communication, etc. Strong calls have been made for the need to expand the theoretical basis of EE, provide a more participatory perspective to EE, and which speaks to the growing focus on addressing social change. This call for rethinking of EE emerges in part due to the use of EE both in longer term interventions and as a strategy in an increased variety of development challenges. Governance and conflict resolution are two of these new areas.

This paper will part from an overview of the theoretical basis of EE, outlining core debates and critiques set forth. It will furthermore elaborate on some of the theoretical perspectives that remain unexplored or that are explored in a limited fashion within EE but which further can enhance the conceptual basis of EE and its use as a communication strategy not only of behaviour change but also for social and structural change. The theoretical discussion will bring us from Freire's dialogic perspective on communication over Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed, adult education to more contemporary theories and reflection on participation, citizenship and governance.