

**Changing Communication  
for Social Change  
Ørecomm Open Seminar 9/2009  
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**Changing Development Communication**

- Why move away from “development?”
- What does shift to “social change” signify?
- How has this change been manifest in the field?
- What is left of development communication?
- How might we change our approach to “social change?”

## Development Communication

- What does this mean?
  - Communications? Fix or be on tv?
  - Development? Individual? Children? GNP?

## Development Communication

- Communication FOR Development
  - Strategic intervention
    - Build Infrastructure
    - Create messages and processes
- Communication ABOUT Development
  - Critical approach to discourse
  - Deconstruction leading to constructive praxis

## Communicating for Development

- Dominant Focus
- Media-centric approach
  - Radio, tv, film, internet
- Strategies
  - Social marketing: individual behavior
  - Entertainment-education: social norms, individual behavior
  - Media Advocacy: media coverage, policy change

## Why move away from Development Communication?

- Limited theory
  - Linear process of social change
  - Individualist preoccupation
  - Lack of clarity in concepts
- Limited practice
  - Hierarchical process
  - Political-economic hegemony

## Problems with Modernization

- Focus on the individual
- Linear transmission model
- National contexts
- Less emphasis on specific texts, more on exposure more generally

## Dependency Critique

- Critique
  - Global context matters
  - Power structures matter
- Limitations
  - Regional contexts need to be considered in relation to broad global contexts
  - Social capital could be integrated into attention to material dependence
  - May minimize potential individual or collective agency in communities

## Potential of Participatory Approaches

- Development
  - Communities not nations
- Communication
  - Dialogic not linear
- Focus
  - Collective agency of audience
  - Process over outcomes

## Complexities of "Participation"

- Lack of clarity
- Potential cooptation
  - End vs. means
  - Process vs. outcome
  - Ethics vs. efficiency

### Potential of Social Movements

- Opens framework to include community organizations
- Recognizes potential of using communication to mobilize toward resistance
  - Not just diffusion or horizontal flows

### Potential Limitations of Focus on Social Movements

- Focus on Social Movement Organization vs. Underlying Issue
  - Need broader context to understand power relations
- May limit attention to
  - Development industry
  - Global political context
  - Corporate economic context/ Privatization

### Other Shifts in the Field

- Communication ABOUT development
  - Critical approach
  - Focus on development industry
  - Development institutions connected to political-economic structures relevant to global, regional, national, local contexts
  - Post-development

### Another Shift: Geometry of Development

- Dominant approach
  - Nation-states
  - First, second, third worlds
- Emerging approach
  - Transnational concerns and organizations
  - Social, financial... capital
    - Access to resources
    - Apart from geographical positioning

## Central Shift: Development to Social Change

- **PREVIOUS FOCUS**
- Development Industry
- Top Down
- Media Effects
- Communication FOR development
- **NOW INCLUDES**
- Social Movements
- Participatory, Activist
- Texts, Structure of Production; Power
- Communication ABOUT development

## How has this change been manifest in the field?

- Academic Organizations
  - ICA Division: Intercultural & Development --> Global Communication & Social Change
- Seminars
- Literature



## Cursory Review of Literature

- Review of English Language Literature since 63 in data bases
- Review of own pre-63 literature
- Searched Communication/ Communicating AND development; Communication/ Communicating AND social change
- Communication in the development of cowbirds?

## Development Communication

- Focus changing from political development to include other issues
  - social and cultural
  - still less focus on broader economic issues given individual model of social change
- Still focus on communication for development

## Overview of Historical Shifts

- Continuity
  - How some themes have persisted
- Change
  - Others have changed
- Cooptation
  - And some of these that have changed have been coopted over time

## Continuity

- Development as a term still quite present in other disciplines and journals
- Still prevalent in media development and in considerations of ICTs
- Dominant ideological approaches to development still prevail within larger bilateral institutions

## Social Change

- Present in other fields
- Emerging presence in Communication Research
  - Almost 10 titles in last 10 years include social change and communication
  - compared to more than 20 titles with both communication and development
  - Many titles now include both “development” and “social change”

## Role of Critique in Historical Literature

- Historical Context
  - Mid-70s
  - 72 Public Opinion Quarterly (BEFORE 1976)
- Participatory Approaches
- Concerns with Structure and Power

## Illustration of Continuity and Change: US Foreign Aid Approach to the Middle East

- “What America is... the modernizing Middle East seeks to become” (Lerner, 1958, p. 79)
- To what extent is Lerner’s vision of modernity still present in US development discourse?

## Research

- Current USAID publications on US foreign aid to Middle East
- Need to consider intersection of military intervention with development
  - US “rebuilding of Iraq” as the “largest reconstruction effort since the Marshall plan”

### What persists from Lerner's approach to modernization?

- Parable of Grocer and Chief
- Traditional Society
  - Local Focus
  - Socialization through elder authorities
  - Reliance on religious beliefs

### Lerner's World

- Modern Society
  - innovative and flexible
  - individuals relying more on media than family for information, more on scientific explanations than religious interpretations
  - more interest in national than local issues

## Lerner's World

- Transition
  - preoccupation with individual behavior changes
  - role of empathy in moving individuals from a projected traditional focus on local to a modern concentration on national events
  - Media promote national identity through empathy

## Said's Orientalism

- Critique: Lerner's Middle East needs and wants to be like the US
- Vision of modernity
  - Grounded in White, Middle Class, Male America
  - Essentializes Arab, Muslim community
  - Power to construct knowledge and allocate resources

## USAID's Approach to the Middle East

- The goal of USAID programs in the Middle East is to support “ a prosperous, stable, and democratic Middle East . . . that actively participates in the free exchange of ideas.”

## Central Themes

- Economic Development
  - Most important
  - the central value of the region is in its “enormous potential for economic growth and development”
- Political Development
  - A goal and a challenge
- Social Development
  - Needed for economic growth and democratic potential

## Economic Growth

- Goal: “Economic growth is a key U.S. foreign policy goal for the region.”
- Programs:
  - Trade, technology, agriculture
  - Focus on private business and fiscal policies and laws in support of business
  - Morocco and Jordan: free trade agreements with US and compliance with WTO
  - Egypt: “establishing legal and regulatory framework for efficient ICT”
  - Morocco: funds for small businesses

## Economic Modernization

- Lerner
  - private economic growth within the nation-state
- Orientalist Critique
  - Nation-state trading “freely” with US and US institutions
  - Global context visible and hierarchical



## Democratic Governance

“Countries in the Middle East and North Africa range from those in the early stages of nation building to formal democracies. ... USAID programming in democracy and governance bolsters democratic institutions, mitigates the appeal of extremism, helps combat corruption and contributes to long-term development.”

## Political Modernization

- Lerner
  - Focus on national formal participation in elections
  - Connection between democratic participation and economic potential (Iraq, West Bank/ Gaza)
- Orientalist Critique
  - meant to emulate US democracies
  - concern with terrorism and extremism

## Education

- Problems: access to schools, illiterate and out of school youth, inadequately trained teachers and administrators, irrelevant curricula, low community involvement, poor management of schools.
- Solutions: increase equitable access to quality, relevant, educational opportunities.

- Highlights:
  - Egypt: Access to computers.
  - Morocco: training teachers and children in information technology and entrepreneurship.
  - Regions: scholarships for students at American universities. “highlights importance of US trained scholars and their roles as development leaders upon returning home”

## Population, Health, Nutrition

- Infant mortality
- Maternal health
- Family planning
- Jordan: community outreach. Counseling on family planning, encourage use of “modern methods”

## Gender

- Programs:
  - Expand access to credit
    - “Small and medium size businesses can have a transformative impact on communities. When women own and operate these businesses, the benefits often spread throughout the society”
  - Promote political and social participation
  - Enhance business opportunities

## Social Modernization

- Lerner
  - Education a tool for individual mobility
  - Women had been largely absent from Lerner's world, but become visible through their roles as social entrepreneurs and as mothers

- Feminist critique
  - Female entrepreneurs
    - Feminized industries, such as food and hygiene
    - Expected to contribute to society; not noted in general section on economic growth
- Orientalist critique
  - Focus on US training and education
  - Approaches to medical care and services

## Continuity: Lerner Lives

- Economic Focus
  - Private Business
- Political Participation
  - Nation-state
  - Individual Acts
- Social Obstacles

## Emerging Differences

Global Context  
Security & Conflict  
Environment: Water Resources

## Cooptation

- Sustainable Development
  - Changes:
    - environment
    - long-term not short-term goals
    - Importance of trans-national contexts
  - Cooptation
    - Relationship with corporate practices in the environment from adversarial to integrated partnership

## Cooptation

- New Communication Technologies
  - Change
    - Potential for more decentralized patterns of communication
    - Potential for more producers of knowledge and content
  - Cooptation
    - In practice, most projects about using ICTs to view existing content rather than create content
    - If about producing content, more likely to be about “participation” in a global marketplace

## Cooptation

- Gender
  - Change
    - WID to GAD
  - Cooptation
    - Mainstreaming

## Analysis of Selected Sample

- USAID HEART Campaign 2000-
- Zambia
- Focus on Adolescents
- *Changing or reinforcing power dynamics?*

## Maximum: Use it.

QuickTime™ and a  
YUV420 codec decompressor  
are needed to see this picture.

## Say No to Sex: Virgin Power, Virgin Pride

QuickTime™ and a  
YUV420 codec decompressor  
are needed to see this picture.



## Selected Comparison

- Maximum: Use It
  - Use Condom
  - Music and Setting Active
  - Men's Roles Active
  - Women Respond
  - Initiate Sex
- Virgin Power
  - Abstain
  - Music and Setting Relaxed
  - Male voice seducing
  - Female voices explaining, asserting
  - Respond to Sexual advances; do not initiate

## Shift from Development to Social Change

- Many approaches persist
  - Reinforcing power dynamics of gender
  - Justifying Orientalist approach to Middle East
  - Supporting communications technologies in service of existing structures (government) and content
- Change NOT linear, as suggested in models of societal transition from so-called "tradition" to "modernity,"
- but rather dialogic process of negotiation in relation to the agendas and practices of communities and institutions

## Changing Social Change

- Important shift from development communication
- But what gets excluded from current conceptualizations?

## What does Social Change Mean?

- Change
  - Observable transition in conditions over time
  - Strategic intervention
- Social
  - Benefit public good
  - Within realm of human collective

## What might get excluded?

- Political
  - Media Development
  - Governance, freedom of speech
  - Activist movements
- Economic
  - Inequity, poverty
  - Material conditions
- Cultural
  - Cultural production
  - Identity

- Non-human communication/ Communication with non-humans
  - animals, robots, etc.
- Contexts (Geometries of Development)
  - Global, Regional, National, Local
  - Access to resources
  - Privatized programs for public good\*

## What can we do with concept of social change?

- Need to move past post- and re-
  - NOT about modernity or development
- Broader term to incorporate political, economic, cultural themes
- Consider ways to mark importance of historical and geographic context

## Focus on Social Justice

- Framework
  - Not just responses to communication
  - But also access to resources, and
  - control over production of communications about self and society
- Mark integration of activism with scholarship
- Value of Critical Approach
  - Ability to pursue critical questions
  - Ability to address long-term, systemic issues

- *How should we envision communication for....*
  - *Development?*
  - *Social Change?*
  - *Social Justice?*
  - *What else?*
- *How could we promote this vision?*