Elements for a dossier

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Mass media, education and culture

Communication and education

The rapid extension of the various forms of mass communication (especially audio-visual communication, together with the more general use of informatics) seems to bring education a new dimension.

Communication was quick to develop its new vectors (press, radio, television) in most countries at a time when education was emerging as an aspiration of all categories of the population and the ideas of democratization of education, life-long education, equality of opportunity, were becoming widespread. The two phenomena inevitably came into relation with each other: communication is seen as bringing about an 'educational environment', wresting from the school its monopoly of education, getting the school to use modern forms of communication for its own purposes. Finally, communication by becoming a subject of education may very well evolve in the direction of new forms.

The ever increasing volume of information with which the public is swamped and, above all, the extension of the dissemination of information, especially by radio, then television, to new social or geographical categories have given the impression that anyone at all could come into direct contact with the very sources of knowledge, that there would no longer exist either social distances or professional secrets.

The young have been particularly appreciative of this opportunity of direct and effortless access to an adult world previously closed to them. In Europe a 10-year-old spends on the average twenty-four hours a week looking at television, that is, as much time as in school. In the United States today a 16-year-old has spent at least 15,000 hours of his life watching television.

This sudden extension of communication was first of all analysed in terms of 'effects' or 'impact' and the direct influence of the ever increasing stimulation on individuals and groups, and there was talk of the 'educational action of the media' on cognitive development or behaviour, using mechanistic terms of psychology. Today, with a more subtle analysis, the impact of communication is considered only with the most obvious aspect of a wider series of transformations due to gradual changes in the human environment. Research shows that the influences of technology are in fact differentiated in accordance with the psychological, intellectual, social and cultural conditions of the individuals exposed to them. From this point of view, interpretation of the non-formal educational action of the media is undergoing the same

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changes as thinking on education: emphasis is laid on the role of interpersonal relations and the influence of values common to the group, on long-term effects and on the fact that we know little about them as yet. Interest is moving from the transmitter to the receiver. The question is not so much what the message does to the individual or the group as what the individual or the group does with the message.

The all-pervasive character of communication is but the sign of the advent of a new environment. Ideas such as the 'civilization of visual media', the 'alternative school', the 'computerized society', the 'global village', indicate awareness of the fact that the technological environment is creating a permanent means of presenting or proliferating information and gaining access to knowledge. There has been talk of the emergence of a new man whom this new environment could in varying degrees fashion from day to day as regards his emotional context and his habits of reasoning, his critical attitudes and imagination, his technical skills and his behaviour.

Is this new man conscious of being so? It has to be acknowledged that young people are now normally accustomed to handling a whole series of miniature electronic devices that have become a part of everyday life, tape cassette recorders or pocket calculators. We adults have been brought up to make distinctions between functions (television, computer, telephone) and do not readily perceive the connections that electronic developments have now made between these formerly incompatible functions—the television screen becoming a computer terminal, a notice-board, and a video play-deck as well as conveying film images, the pocket calculator becoming a clock and the radio making the morning coffee.

Here ought we not see how the child, caught up in a technological environment imposed on it by the adult world, has now built his own ecological niche? It is no longer in school, which should be the place for reflection and the passing

on of knowledge, that he gets to know about the basic concepts common to our technological universe—*real time*, for instance, which indicates autonomous transmission, or the controlling of a process while it is going on; *memory*, a magnetic trace of data; *program*, which now exists in all domestic automation and which corresponds to an ordered sequence of acts.

Knowledge presented in this way, in abundance, and day by day has a 'mosaic' pattern that no longer fits into the traditional intellectual categories. Emphasis tends to be laid on the heterogeneous and even chaotic nature of the information presented, the priority given to the dissemination of superficial or sensational information of ephemeral interest, increasing the 'noise' to the detriment of the actual message. Emphasis is laid, too, on the fact that it is imposed on the user, who has the feeling of undergoing this environment rather than exploring or controlling it. In so far as the education of the individual is concerned, the incoherence is probably less important than the constraint. Mass communication tends to reinforce common symbolic systems, to enrich, re-express and reinterpret them. In doing so, it flattens out the individuality of groups and builds up stereotypes. It seems to bring about a kind of intellectual standardization. There is nothing, however, to justify us in thinking that this tendency towards standardization, which is a feature of most communication industries today, is inexorable. Communication refers us back to education: how can the consumers of information (and also the communicators) gradually be educated to use in a positive and imaginative way these immense new resources put every day at their disposal? Will education be equal to the task of preparing people to take on communication, while still preserving their own personalities and creative abilities?

The question is one of urgency, since in nearly all societies the school must share its monopoly of education with the institutions responsible for communication. This shared

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responsibility is often claimed by the communicators themselves. It is sometimes established by statute—for example, in the triad 'inform, educate, entertain' frequently invoked by broadcasting organizations. This situation, and the growing presence of communication in most societies, raise the question of the reappraisal of the functions of the school and perhaps even, to some extent, those of the family. Up until the beginning of this century, even in industrial societies, the school was the first source of knowledge and the educator was its patented distributor through the spoken and printed word. Knowledge of the world and mastery of the skills enabling one to be integrated into it were obtainable from the school alone. The role of the family being to strengthen and supplement this function, gradually new sources of information, cinema and radio, television and soon telematics* have come to upset, contradict and sometimes replace the traditional information sources of the school and the family environment.

Today, in most societies, either covertly or openly, the two systems are competing with one another, not without creating contradictions and even major difficulties for individual consciences, unconsciously subjected to this competition, particularly in the case of the very young.

To the educational institution, based on values of order and method, curriculum, effort and personal concentration, competition, there is now opposed a system of mass communication, geared to the topical, to the surprise element exalting world disorder, to facility and hedonistic values. Is there any way to reduce this competition, implicit or explicit, the wastage of resources and talent that it has entailed for thirty or forty years in the rich countries? Can it be spared the countries that have only limited resources?

To find solutions is not easy: the sharing of responsibility between education and communication can take very different forms. Some pragmatists hold that the communication media should purvey contemporary knowledge, while education should be responsible for passing on the heritage accumulated by tradition. For the technocrats, the school should concern itself with the most effective social knowledge, the promotion and dignity of the individual, the economic efficiency of nations, while communication should serve for recreation and entertainment, but also for exchanges and international understanding. For many concerned to preserve traditional values, the school should provide a protective haven of silence, meditation, intellectual exercise and personal integration, in contrast to the proliferation and hubbub of communication. Yet many educationists would consider that the prime function of the educational institutions, henceforth, should be to put in order the 'knowledge' disseminated at random by the communication networks; the education systems would put forward systems of values and methods enabling the essentials to be picked out, helping to identify the positive aspects, to relate the main facts concerning material already acquired elsewhere, in short, teaching how to understand and how to learn.

So far, there does not seem to have been any systematic thinking on policy with regard to such a redistribution of functions between education and communication, the two systems still tending in most countries to ignore one another; any negotiation has been on minor questions or in marginal fields that do not call the prerogatives into question (school television, children's cinema). This has been called 'the sharing out of the cheap cuts' (Pierre Schaeffer).

It is obvious that any genuine effort of integration would necessitate both a reconversion of all teaching staff to new tasks, and a real

* From the French neologism, *télématique*, meaning transmission of data over a distance.—Ed.

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awareness on the part of communicators of the problems involved in education.

The need for this basic change should not lead us to underestimate the attempts already made to enlist communication in the service of education. Since the school is a 'communication society', it is tending gradually in a selective, deliberate way to submit most of the modern forms of communication to its own purposes: either using communication systems as they stand, in order to provide the usual audiences of these systems with information of educational value (family education programmes, functional literacy teaching, health and hygiene etc.), or utilizing the same communication systems to introduce new components into formal educational activities (radio, television, school films), or relaying the functions of a traditional system by transferring the educational tasks to a communication system (in particular teaching of remote or handicapped pupils by radio and television), or even on occasion, reorganizing the structure, methods and processes of education (as, for instance, in self-teaching ventures and teaching laboratories based particularly on the use of informatics).

Owing to the number of different media (films, records, audio-visual montages, radio, television, video tapes, video records, portable television sets, computers, microprocessors), owing to the number of types and levels of education involved (literacy teaching, adult education, rural development, pre-primary, primary and secondary education, technical and vocational education, higher and post-graduate education), owing to the differences in the extent to which the media are used (continuously, regularly, partially, occasionally) and owing to the situations in which they are used (in a group, with or without a teacher, for home study), there are several thousand combinations in the use of communication technologies that have been developed with varying success.

Experience today shows that the major educational campaigns by the media have often been too optimistic, the educators having underestimated the difficulties, the complications and the unwieldiness of production and facilities. Where the information environment was poorest, it has taken more readily to educational communication—e.g. radio in rural areas. Today renewed interest is to be noted on the part of educators in the use of less cumbersome technical means of stocking and distributing—local radio transmitter, video cassettes, lightweight or portable video tape recorders—which can be handled more easily and better adapted to local needs. However, the absence of any coherent cultural policy and the rigidity of educational strategies in most countries reduce the possibilities of massive, systematic applications of the media to major educational tasks.

What does seem possible, on the other hand, and is desired by most societies, in view of the increasing importance of communication, is the new responsibility of teaching everyone the proper use of communication, the more so since the family, in the majority of cases, has shown itself to be ill prepared to face up to its irruption. What is required here is a more critical education that can point to the dangers of pseudo-knowledge from audio-visual sources and the illusion of the power of information. It is a question of freeing the individual from the fascination exercised by technology, making him less receptive and more exacting, more aware. It now seems to be recognized that any improvement in the standards of the press and of radio and television programmes is dependent on this training of individual and collective discernment.

There are already many forms of education for the appropriate consumption of communication. Some are essentially concerned with the individual consumption of information as a product, others with the encouragement of the creative use of communication seen mainly as a social process. In the context of better consumption of the product, the last few years have brought about a development in the use of newspapers in schools as texts for study, the

teaching of the rudiments of visual communication and the screen arts, showing how to appreciate and judge messages, to read the author's intentions, to distinguish the real and the imaginary, to organize and select. In some cases it is the content of the audio-visual culture itself (films, television), that is used as a reference for teaching purposes. Sometimes, even, communication provides the basis for a school exercise: production of filmed synopsis or cartoon montages. This amounts to an introduction to communication as a process.

Communication is no longer the monopoly of communicators. Inaugurated in earlier times with the school newspaper and printing shop, this 'participatory' approach is now leading many schools, clubs or youth movements to have pupils handle portable television or 8-mm movie cameras and even to dialogue with minicomputers.

In this way, educators are taking their place at the heart of the popular Utopia of a convivial society in which everyone can be at the same time a producer and a consumer of information, as part of a group.

This proliferation of initiatives has not yet found its way into coherent educational strategies, and much remains to be done in this field. Some maintain that communication technologies and their use should be a new subject of study, even if this means increasing compartmentalization. Others maintain that it is within each subject in general education as it now exists that the pupil must gradually learn to master the media, despite the possible danger of forcing into the school a culture that it may be unable to assimilate. But for the time being, neither the audio-visual media nor data processing are sufficiently well established within educational institutions to become an everyday concern there. This makes it clear that the time has come for a more systematic exchange of information, experiences and ideas, within the international community, in a field where the causes are as difficult to control as the effects are decisive. It has become obvious that neither policies nor methods of education, initial or in-service training of teachers nor educational research, can henceforth ignore the new set of problems arising from the confrontation between education and communication. And the poorer countries even less than the others, inasmuch as their very poverty leaves them directly exposed to the corrosive effects of this information explosion that is going to shake the end of the century.

The two worlds of today's learners

One of the major anthropological discoveries of the last decade was the Tasaday tribe in the hills of Mindanao in the Philippines. The interest generated by that discovery was based on the isolation of the tribe from society. To find a group of people who had lived in isolation for an estimated 2,000 years was so unusual that care was taken to preserve the separation of the tribe from the remainder of society lest some contamination destroy the uniqueness of their situation.

Isolation is an ever-decreasing phenomenon in our world. The pervasiveness of communication and transportation technologies virtually ensures movement of people and ideas. It is rare that a person is immune from daily messages by radio and, to a lesser extent, newspapers and television. Where the more glamorous medium of television is not available, pressures by the public and visions of modernity by their leaders hasten to bring electronic images to the people. The demand for television is often great enough to give it political priority over running water and sewage disposal systems.

The Tasadays are unique because they were removed from the mainstream of society. This example highlights the contrast between a group of about 100 people and the rest of the world, which is totally immersed in the technological age. Global communication systems provide information and entertainment to national and international audiences. Today, even rural people in remote areas press the transistor radio to their ear and become part of a world beyond their own village.

The pervasive influence of mass media

The ubiquitous nature of communication media in nearly every nation has brought about a significant increase in the amount of information available and a significant decrease in the time for a message to move from a source to thousands of receivers. Add to the usual broadcast media those in print, film and recordings and we begin to sense the extent to which every person in every part of the world has access to audio and visual stimuli.

It is with thoughts of a media-saturated society that McLuhan comments on the way in which media are reshaping and restructuring patterns of social interdependence in almost every aspect of life except education:

There is a world of difference between the modern home environment of integrated electric information and the classroom. Today's television child is attuned

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to up-to-the-minute 'adult' news—inflation, rioting, war, taxes, crime, bathing beauties—and is bewildered when he enters the nineteenth-century environment that still characterizes the educational establishment where information is scarce but ordered and structured by fragmented, classified patterns, subjects and schedules.[1]

The separation of schools from society

The paradox is that in the midst of a global communications revolution, schools can remain aloof, rigid and unchanging. In societies that have embraced new communication technologies, the tendency is for those technologies to permeate every sector of that society. However, schools have remained walled off from the society of which they are an integral part. This separateness can be observed not only in advanced technical societies but also in developing nations, which have 'succeeded in multiplying indefinitely existing monopolistic forms of conventional education, based on the historic, rigid models of the West, thus heading rapidly toward economic disaster and social bankruptcy'.[2]

Schools will increase their irrelevance as long as they remain separate from the society from which they derive support. Adults who missed earlier opportunities for advanced schooling or who want to gain new competencies are seeking alternative means to achieve their educational goals. Many of the new approaches of open learning[3] and distance education use communication technologies as major elements of instruction. Younger learners, however, do not have choices when they pursue their education.

Dieuzeide states the basic problem when he says that 'education remains the only major human activity in which technology may not increase man's potential. Voices rise to denounce the strange and pernicious paradox whereby the educational institution is required to change the world without any concession that it must itself be transformed'.[4]

For the past fifty years visionary educators have attempted to bring the schools into the mainstream of society by introducing a variety of media into the classroom. As each new medium was introduced and tried by brave innovators, it was usually treated as an experiment whereby the medium substituted for other stimuli. It was usually additive; that is, almost no changes in the basic instructional process were made nor was the role of teacher substantially changed. Those new media that were adopted, such as the overhead projector and audiotape recorders, did not bring about any major changes in classroom procedures. Enthusiasm about new teaching methods among school administrators or among the learners themselves has had very little effect on the ultimate users—the teachers.

The classroom ritual

Historically, classroom teaching has been highly ritualized, and any major change is perceived as an invasion of sacred territory. Hoban points out that 'Ritualization in teaching is flexible enough to permit idiosyncrasies of personal style, arrangement of the daily schedule, police methods, pacing, etc., but major characteristics of ritual tend to be invariant'.[5] Two invariants to which Hoban refers are teacher control of the teaching-testing-grading-reward-punishment processes and face-to-face interaction with students. Any substantial reduction of the teacher's dominant status or major change in the interpersonal teacher-learner communication is likely to elicit some teacher hostility and resistance. Such resistance is likely to continue as long as the teacher perceives any medium as a replacement of teacher performance or as requiring a change from accepted norms of teacher behaviour.

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A problem of change

Most theories of innovation hold that individuals who will be responsible for installing and maintaining any innovation must be a part of the trial and adoption process. An innovation that originates outside the system or proceeds from the top down in a hierarchical structure is unlikely to succeed. The problem, therefore, is not one of how to bring media into education settings but how to bring about educational change. An innovation, such as the use of communication technology in education, should be as compatible as possible with the cultural values of teachers who use it. Innovation should not be presented so as to threaten the teacher's self-esteem or to jeopardize a teacher's position in relation to professional peers.[6] Faure *et al.* point to the key role of teachers:

The essential problem for such countries is to combat routine, arouse public interest and, above all, to have their teachers co-operate in their undertaking. This latter condition is indispensable, not only in order to tranquillize susceptibilities among certain sections of the population, but in particular because the use of new technologies in education requires them to be integrated into the educational system.[7]

The acceptance and use of communication media in teaching are probably easy innovations when compared to more fundamental changes that must be brought about if we are to harness the ever increasing influence of media on children when they are outside the schools.

The influence of television

The most dramatic influence on children is brought about by exposure to television. Authorities in the field of television research[8] regard television as an agent of socialization and acculturation equal to family and peer influence. Forbes points out that

in times past the elders of each society communicated to the next generation through legends and myths their picture of how the world functions—who holds power, who are the aggressors, who are the victims, what are the appropriate patterns of social interaction, where one might expect danger, and where one might be able to trust and feel secure. Now TV brings to all children its own myths and legends, its own picture of how the world functions.[9]

In areas where television is inaccessible, radio performs many of the same influential functions. Advertising in many formats and local cinemas introduce people, ideas, products and actions that would otherwise never be known by young people. These experiences are brought to schools, where they are usually considered to be irrelevant, and teachers generally continue to do what they have done in the past. Postman describes the irony of the new student facing the traditional educational system. He says that schools are dealing with a different type of student now, one molded by 'the electronic media, with the emphasis on visual imagery, immediacy, non-linearity, and fragmentation'.[10] Today's learners do not fit into the traditional classroom with its emphasis on 'sequence, social order, hierarchy, continuity, and deferred pleasure'. It is this type of young person with new ideas and attitudes who helps to bring about the failure of some of the most intelligent and dedicated teachers.

New roles for teachers

If some headway is to be made in creating a rapprochement between experiences gained outside the classroom and learning within the school environment, teachers will have to learn how to use the media to enrich learning and to ease the transition from school to contemporary society. The introduction of communication media into the teaching-learning process is not necessarily the key to bringing the media into the mainstream of education. It is in teacher recognition of the influence that radio, television, recordings, cinema, billboards and

advertising media have on the students who come to their classrooms. It is in teacher understanding of the media content and context. It is in day-to-day teaching efforts and long-range curriculum planning that teachers can incorporate ideas, examples and personalities from outside the classroom into concerns inside the learning environment. Media should become an integral part of the instructional plan. They should be used as motivational tools that arouse and sustain interest but do not compromise substantive efforts.

The suggestion of bringing the classroom and the world closer together is not new. Comenius, Pestalozzi, Froebel and Dewey were advocates of such an approach. Contemporary interpretations of their philosophies would undoubtedly call for a closer relationship between media influences and classroom learning. While teachers may endorse such an approach in principle, it is difficult to implement, and for some, the very idea appears to be a compromise because popular entertainment media are being introduced in an academic atmosphere. Some teachers may feel that essential knowledge and skills are not being learned if communications media enter the classroom.

A new literacy for a new time

In addressing this concern, one must remember that the issue is not to adopt one approach and completely eliminate the other; it is how to define a literate person in today's world. The nature and level of literacy may differ from village to village and from rural to urban areas. Literacy, as it is used here, goes beyond the normal interpretation—the ability to read and write. A literate person today is one who is able to understand, interpret and use myriad stimuli that are present in a given environment. Written and spoken language, music, sounds, still and moving pictures, natural objects and actions are some of the stimuli that affect

people and hence need to be understood, interpreted and used. Schools often limit teaching to the traditional skills of reading and writing with some time spent in observation. Such a limited approach is not sufficient for students who live in a much more sophisticated world that requires a type of literacy beyond basic primary school knowledge and skills.

The visual literacy movement

Since the early 1970s there has been a growing interest in visual literacy among some educators in North America. Whether visual literacy, media literacy, or visual communication is the best label, the concept needs to be considered an essential element of today's curriculum everywhere in the world. As educators consider a broader definition of literacy, it should include the study of symbols, message carriers, nonverbal language, communication channels and effects on human behaviour. The National Conference on Visual Literacy,[11] an organization in North America, suggests the essence of a definition:

When a person has developed a set of visual abilities through seeing and sensory experiences, and when they are able to discriminate and interpret visual actions, objects, patterns and symbols in the environment, then they are becoming visually literate. It is through the creative use of these abilities that a visually literate person is able to comprehend and communicate. An appreciation of the visual skills of others will lead to greater enjoyment of visual communication.[12]

Programs in visual literacy have been established in many primary and secondary schools in North America.[13] Australian educators are planning and experimenting with 'mental imagery'[14] and 'media studies':

'Media studies' refers to mass media communication, e.g. film, television, newspapers and radio, and the way they affect us. It is the exploration of communication through our senses and the development of

our perceptions and skills in communicating by util-
ising media tools. The primary concern of media
studies is with concepts, not media tools.[15]

A major training programme for adults in North
America is Television Awareness Training. The
goal for individuals who follow this approxi-
mately twenty-hour course is 'to become more
aware of how we use TV, what the teaching
messages are and how we can make changes that
seem appropriate'.[16] The curriculum approaches
the study of television from the viewpoint of
human values. Another example is the five-
session inservice course for teachers, 'Visual
Learning', which has been prepared by the
New York State Education Department.[17]

Interest in visual symbols is not new. Adelbert
Ames, Rudolf Arnheim, Ernst Cassirer, Charles
Morris and others have explored the relation-
ships of signs and symbols to human communi-
cation. Those efforts continue today in the work
of Marshall McLuhan, M. D. Vernon, and
Jerome Bruner. Recently visual communicators
from India, Iran, Japan and the United States
worked as a team at the East-West Center to
develop a new visual language to convey com-
plex concepts about interdependence of nations
and peoples, with emphasis on the energy
crisis.[18] They reviewed existing international
symbols and visual languages, revising and
refining 70 of more than 700 images.

Entertainment versus education

Historically, visual communication has been
primarily identified with entertainment and
teachers have been reluctant to use examples
from entertainment in the classroom. Education
and entertainment are actually poles apart. A
test of entertainment is immediate pleasure.
What is seen or heard may not be remembered.
A person usually recognizes entertainment im-
mediately, while the test of education may come
soon or many years in the future. Education is
memorable; entertainment is written in the
sand.[19] Pleasure usually comes from entertain-
ment but education may be pleasurable, painful
or painless. Teachers should strive to make
learning pleasurable but need not avoid the pain
that often comes from disciplined thinking.
The most important questions are not 'Is it
difficult?' or 'Is it easy?' but 'Is it clear?' and
'Is it relevant?'. 'The enjoyment of an edu-
cational experience comes mostly from its clar-
ity and design in exposition and the relevancy of
the ideas expressed to the life of the reader,
viewer, or listener.'[20] It is not necessary to make
learning fun, but it is important to make the
teaching-learning process real, lively and chal-
lenging. Like life itself, education can be both
sweet and sour.

Developing the relationship

Educators need to look anew at the experiences
which today's child brings to school. In com-
parison with learners of a decade ago, today's
student is certainly more visually oriented and
more aware of the world beyond the home.
There is probably a higher level of expectation
that the school will build on the experiences and
skills already gained prior to formal schooling.
Teachers need to be ready to meet that ex-
pectation.

Teachers first need to understand the multi-
media, electronic world that is so strongly
influencing children outside the classroom. That
means looking at, listening to and experiencing
some of the same events as young people are
using. They need to try to understand what is
attractive about these sensory stimuli and
perhaps determine how to use them to further
school objectives.

Teachers need to know what sights and
sounds students prefer, what programmes they
seek out, what films they see, what activities
have a high priority in their lives. Seels has
developed a 'Visual Preference Survey' to be
used in association with other questioning tech-

niques to determine what learners prefer to see and do outside the school.[21]

Once teachers understand the dynamics of our multimedia world and possess information about the media sophistication of their students, the central problem of transfer must be addressed. How can a teacher transfer the knowledge and attitudes gained outside the classroom to the school setting? Then, in turn, how can the learner transfer newly acquired skills back into the world? The problem of transfer in this case is not a problem of learning but one of motivation.

Motivation

Keller describes several types of motivational problems in classroom settings:

In order to have motivated students, their curiosity must be aroused and sustained; the instruction must be perceived to be relevant to personal values or instrumental to accomplishing desired goals; they must have personal conviction that they will be able to succeed; and the consequence of the learning experience must be consistent with the personal incentives of the learner.[22]

Attempting to relate out-of-school learning to in-school goals must go beyond entertainment and show. Teaching does not have to be dull and uninspired, however. Teachers should learn how to relate the knowledge, skills and attitudes gained in the multimedia world to problems and issues considered in the classroom. Content and quality of learning need not be compromised but, rather, enhanced as learners perceive the relationships between the two worlds they inhabit.

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Mass communication education: from conflict to co-operation

Mass communication: a challenge

Twentieth-century educators have been challenged by a fierce and irresistible competition: their pupils are overwhelmed by the information transmitted by mass media. When compared to television programmes, films, comics, coloured pictures in magazines and science-fiction pocket books, the lessons or the math and grammar exercises seem dull and constraining.

Nowadays, parents and teachers are trying hard to break the magic of images and sounds and to send their children back to homework.

There are families who avoid buying a television set in order to maintain their 'cultural purity'. The selective attitude that operates in relation to printed matter is readily abandoned as soon as the television programme is involved.

The power of mass communication and the fact that it may play either a positive or a negative role in individual and social development have caused many people to view its new dimensions with both mistrust and apprehension.

The obsolescence of the printed word was announced, regretfully, with the outset of the

video culture; however, world book production has almost doubled in the past ten years.

On the other hand, specialists in information have established that a twenty-minute television news programme corresponds roughly to three columns of newspaper text. Going even further in the demonstration of audio-visual inefficiency, it may be added that the television programme was in fact based on printed texts such as agency news, notes, summaries, written syntheses. However, any such discussion overlooks the astonishing properties of the moving images, the impact that images from far-off, unknown places may have.

The mass-communication phenomenon is here, developing in all its complexity and variety of forms, and future forecasts indicate an even greater expansion, largely due to new technological advances.

In the 1990s the specialists are expecting a large-scale expansion of video-cassette systems, which are going to invade the world market as the record player did some time ago.

Cable and interregional television and communication satellites are also booming. At present over eighty communication satellites are in orbit; they ensure the retransmission both of phone calls and of television programmes, thus making it possible for a large part of the world population to be directly involved in major events at the very moment of their occurrence. A typical satellite programme may be beamed

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around the globe in nine-tenths of a second.

The developed countries are said to be undergoing a transition towards the post-industrial phase of development, towards the informational society and the informational economy, based on an infinitely renewable resource: information.

In this type of society, according to Lars Ingelstam, the citizen must be able to deal with information in order to survive.[1]

On the other hand, many developing countries are simultaneously developing their industry and their information and communication capabilities, in an attempt to have an equal share in the information process of the modern world.[2]

Disparities are striking between rural and urban areas: the rural population is submitted to urban-oriented communications and information.

The problem is therefore related not only to the actual channels and effective methods of communication, but also to the content of the material to be communicated and to the irrelevance of the latter for the masses receiving it. The misuse of mass media for commercial purposes, for obtaining large profits by broadcasting advertisements, is unfortunately characteristic of a large part of the information network.

Finally, disparities are further increased by such problems as accessibility and the possibility to interpret, understand and utilize the information received. Among the factors hampering the development of the press as an effective mode of communication in the developing countries, U. Ahamed enumerates 'the high rate of illiteracy, the number of languages spoken, the lack of printing presses, the high cost of imported newsprint, the poor telecommunications facilities for transmission of news and the slow and poor rural communication between the few cities and towns and the larger rural areas.[3]

The social, cultural and economic development of a country depends to a great extent upon its way of responding to and utilizing mass communication.

Soedjatmoko defines the learning capacity of a nation as the 'collective capacity to generate, to ingest, to reach out for and to utilize a vast amount of new and relevant information'.[4]

Information and knowledge

Education is one of the fields that could fully make use of the increased possibilities of information and knowledge.

The conflicts between the education system and mass communication are often dealt with; their complementarity and co-operation possibilities are mentioned far less often. And this is a time when television has been called, with reason, the children's 'early window' to the world.[5]

Promising attempts exist: an interesting programme called 'Success in Reading', which has been tried in some schools, consists in a system of teaching reading and writing by using newspapers and magazines instead of the classical first-grade handbook.[6] Children attracted by the use of interesting things they will deal with the rest of their lives are prompted to obtain better results in learning.

The general picture seems, however, to reflect antagonistic relations and interests rather than co-operative tendencies.

The contrast has been theorized about by educators, and thus the mass media have emerged in an unfavourable light. On the one hand, in organized, formalized school education, knowledge forming a coherent, ordered system is to be found. On the other there is mass communication, transmitting simple, disconnected, scattered information. At one extreme is the utmost economy, optimization in the sense of the minimum of signs used for a maximum of message; at the other extreme is redundancy, superposition, wastage. At one end is science with its paraphernalia; at the other, amateurism and superficiality.

Nevertheless, if we were to analyse the sources

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of the knowledge used by our children, the balance would be strongly unfavourable to the school.

The quantity of information

It is a well known fact that the information that incessantly surrounds us also acts upon us.

Scientists such as H. von Foerster insist upon the enriching character of the 'noise' when it is introduced in self-organizing systems characterized by a sufficiently high degree of redundancy and reliability.[7]

But our main interest in the education process is knowledge. The essential difference between information and knowledge is the fact that the latter is endowed with meaning. The fact that either 'it is raining' or 'the weather is fine' provides information. It may eventually be measured. In this case, if the two situations are equally probable, we have what specialists call a 'bit' of information.

Specialists in information theory are especially interested in the quantitative aspect of information. Starting from the idea that the essence of information is to make a choice, the measure chosen for the quantity of information is conceived so that the more the possibilities of choice, the larger the quantity of information provided. If n possibilities exist the quantity of information, I, should be an increasing function of n. The chosen function, owing to reasons connected with its properties, was the logarithm: $I = \log n$.

A more refined measure allows for analysis of the cases in which the possibilities are not equally probable. In this case, the lower the probability of an event, the more surprised we are when it actually occurs.

Learning processes may seem at first sight to be governed by a decrease of entropy. In the case of a question permitting more than one possible answer, the entropy is initially maximum (the answers being equally probable). In the process of learning, the incorrect answers are eliminated, while the probability of the correct ones is increased and consequently the entropy decreases.

The dialectics seem to be more intricate, including both stages of increase and decrease of entropy. Unlearning implies an increase of entropy, and any anti-entropic evolution in a system implies an entropic evolution in the frame of a larger system.

However, the information transmitted by mass media is neither pure, isolated from a certain context, nor value-free, as considered in quantitative studies. And educators are interested exactly in the meaning and value of the information.

Let us remember the childhood game in which a chain of children whisper the same word from ear to ear; to the players' delight, the final version is often completely different from what had been initially transmitted. The problem is that very often things distinctly and plainly expressed at emission are wrongly understood at reception.

The measure of the quantity of information is of no help in such situations.

Context

Influenced by the dominant logical positivist school, we are used to defining sense (and therefore meaning) by making reference to a system of rules defining correctness. The knowledge provided by the education system is stored in the logical blocks of theories and disciplines; it has a meaning determined by its place in the system of inferences (deductive in the ideal case of the theoretical sciences or inductive in the empirical sciences). But the logical criterion, which is so exclusivist and an enemy of any exogenous considerations and which also overlooks the contributions of psychology and sociology, is strongly challenged nowadays.

We are in a period of ample reconsideration

of the psycho-social component of knowledge.

The sense (the meaning) is given by the context, and the context also helps the process of strengthening accumulated knowledge and memory recall.

This is also one of the theses of the learning report to the Club of Rome.[8]

In an attempt at designing a hierarchy, G. Bateson enumerates:

The stimulus is an elementary signal, either internal or external.

The context of the stimulus is a metamessage classifying the elementary stimulus.

The context of the stimulus context is a metamessage, classifying the metamessage a.s.o.[9]

The context may be considered 'a collective term for all those events which tell the organism among what set of alternatives he must make his next choice'.

In this respect, mass media are a fantastic source of a large variety of contexts, which logical and systematic learning sweeps aside as impurities.

Formal education transmits schematized, arranged, ordered knowledge, while the large mass media sources provide knowledge as it is elaborated, taken out from the production process even before the latter is completed.

Knowledge is provided within the framework of real problems, not in the narrow one of disciplines.

It is true that the systematic presentation mode in school has the advantage of being economical. However, this should be viewed cautiously, and a margin should be left for the diffused communication provided by mass media.

Values

On the other hand, the information transmitted by the mass media is not value-free; it emerges filtered and interpreted through value systems, offering a specific image of reality. In fact, the transmission of information implies a selective judgement reflecting a specific scale of values. This is also true for all distortions reflected by over- or underemphasizing news, the presentation of isolated or incomplete statements, omissions, creating unfounded fears, etc.

The fact that in a children's magazine there is an image alongside the following problem: 'how many possibilities are there for a little girl and two boys to sit together in a car, given that only the boys can drive?' is certainly the reflection of a specific value system.

Learning may proceed within the framework of a value system, by a process of detection of error and correction leading to the improvement of answers. This is single-loop learning; in its framework the values and the norms that lay at the core of the whole process are not questioned.

In double-loop learning,[10] the value system itself is challenged. Within its framework weights are modified, new priorities or even entirely new values emerge.

Value-laden and contextual information transmitted by mass media continually offers the potential for both types of learning.

Restructuring

The activation of this potential requires an active attitude from the learner. Some authors consider that information is not received, but constituted.[11]

Everyone is familiar with a situation in which a radio is on, but we fail to hear what is transmitted, since our attention is concentrated on some other activity. Moreover, the messages transmitted are not always clear and specific, but vague and ambiguous. An active attitude of inquiry and reflexive inquiry aimed at attaining the specification and the clarification of information as well as its completion and simplification is necessary.

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Knowledge does not accumulate in a desert; it is inserted in mental schemata belonging to a general thinking framework created in time on the basis of the contextual structure and of past experience.

Specialists in artificial intelligence lately have been paying particular attention to these knowledge structures. M. Minsky calls them frames:

a structure of data used for representing a stereotype situation, for instance a type of room or a child's birthday party. To each frame, indications of various nature are attached: some of them regarding the way of utilizing the frame, others on what we could expect further, others on what should be done in case the previsions are not confirmed.[12]

On the philosophical plane these structures represent a *Weltanschauung*, the images we may have about reality.

K. Boulding makes distinctions among three possible situations on confrontation with a message: (a) ignoring the message (unaffected images); (b) modification of images by a routine procedure; and (c) revolutionary change of the images (the message reaches the support structure).[13]

Similarly, in learning, information may produce simple modifications of the probabilities to choose the answers from a given set of answers and/or it may have a more complex effect, generating restructuring at the level of the general thinking framework, translated by modifications of the set of answers itself (for instance by the creative addition of new possible answers). The restructuring capacity is specific to living organisms, the autopoietic systems that in a given physical space do not lose their physical identity (and do not, therefore, modify their organization) as a consequence of the permanent renewal of matter and of the restructurings that occur through learning and development.

As against these systems, in another type of dynamic system, the allopoietic ones, the organizations are maintained the same as long as the product of their functioning, differing from themselves, does not change.[14]

In this process, a central place is undoubtedly played by motivation, but the role played by learning to learn may also be added.

This presupposes learning about the previous contexts of learning, learning to restructure, learning how and when to apply single-loop or double-loop learning.

Learning to learn implies reflecting on previous contexts of learning in which you learned or failed to learn, trying to identify the situations and the modalities favourable to learning.

This second-order learning, or deutero-learning as Bateson calls it,[15] leads to saving the time and effort implied by the usual first-order learning.

Learning processes
between school and mass media

The two criteria for achieving learning advocated by the learning report to the Club of Rome are participation and anticipation. Let us see how they are satisfied by formal education (school) and the mass media.

Mass communication is generally blamed for the creation of a passive attitude of reception and simple additive accumulation of knowledge. Unfortunately, many of the classical pedagogical forms are also non-participative (without roles, based on reception, absence from choice and decisions).

As regards the roles, the mass media are a real guide, a permanent introduction, to the world of adult actors, generating models, aspirations and endeavours.

The unidirectional relationship of the unique transmitter and listener audiences, tends to be changed, owing to innovations in tele-data-processing that offer the possibility of dialogue and interaction.

Cable television allows for direct and immediate capturing of the audience response.

The communication satellites enable the organization of meetings such as teleconferences in which famous scientists at great distances may be interviewed or involved in discussions.

As regards anticipation, it is obvious that the mass media are more imaginative, capable of future prospections, based on scenarios that capture the interest of children and youth. They may present the latest discoveries and suppositions, while the curriculum and the schoolbooks are strikingly poor, as far as anticipation is concerned.

School education may, however, contribute to a better understanding of the information transmitted by the mass media and to the formation of the capacity for critical judgement by continuous debates and discussions.

Educational television and radio programmes and scientific programmes, are among the first that may be coupled into the educational process. It is recommended that pupils read certain books in addition to classwork—why not also that they watch certain television programmes and films? The latter may represent a bibliography as useful as the books.

In Romania, a successful television programme that has been maintained for many years is a scientific programme: the tele-encyclopaedia. It is watched by pupils, parents and teachers alike. In school, however, there is hardly any reference to the extremely interesting issues presented in this programme.

A very successful serial all over the world was conceived by a scientist, J. Bronowski. Science presented in a personal, captivating vision aroused prolonged and controversial debates but generally not in school. Discussions in class of articles, programmes or films may contribute to establishing connections, interpreting the things that were read or seen, getting full awareness of the value system and of the proposed vision of the world. At the same time, the teacher could stimulate interest for the programmes and journals in an educative context.

The interest in watching the scientific-educative programmes is enhanced if they are presented under the form of competitions in front of audiences. These should not be competitions of memorization but rather of deduction, imagination, creative thinking. The simple questions must be completed with the commentaries of specialists and experts in different fields.

Another modality is a television programme such as the one called 'Do You Have Another Question?' in which a group of specialists answers questions regarding a specific problem; the questions are put directly through on the phone, which is placed in the studio from which the programme is broadcast.

Another scientific television serial, 'Connections', conceived in a very lively manner by the British journalist James Burke, is watched with great interest not so much for the information displayed as for the fact that it helps establish connections and understand the way in which science and society have advanced in close correlation over the years. This is a good example of a modern, well-achieved programme making people think, involving them and thus breaking the pattern of passive reception.

Under the conditions of the information revolution, the young should become 'media literate', learning to learn useful things.[16]

A process of learning to utilize communication is contrasted with the tendency to be used.

Flexible curricula are already including communication courses. In the first grade of a school there are already three types of courses: sciences (mathematics, languages), arts (music, drawing, manual work) and library. Thus quite small children become familiar with the great variety of information and knowledge they may derive from books and journals other than schoolbooks. The obvious attraction of the illustrated storybook facilitates and hastens the pupils' contact with the new environment, creating from the beginning the aptitude to

work and become informed in an independent way.

Education in watching, in reading (including fast reading) may be achieved by utilizing both formal and non-formal means. The training of children in utilizing mass media communication has proved to be particularly efficient when the pupils are effectively involved in the process of editing a magazine, producing a radio or television programme or shooting a documentary film. Ample evidence in this respect has been provided by the results obtained by school cineclubs or the audiences drawn by youth programmes edited and presented by pupils.

Two conclusions may be formulated: in the first place, all authors, script-writers, cartoonists, producers of advertisements and editors should assume the responsibility of being educators. Awareness of participation in the learning processes of society should determine the exigency towards the released information and the modalities used, ensuring also an efficient feedback from the public.

A way (which does not fall into the category of technical performance) to enhance the role of public opinion in the control of mass communication and of the information process is to ensure its presence in the management of the institutions involved in this process. In Romania public opinion is represented in the collective management bodies of news agencies, papers, journals, television and radio, publishing houses and networks of film presentation.

Secondly, all teachers and the other persons involved in the educative system should cultivate the high standards of those who receive the information transmitted by mass media. They should feel like real authors and script-writers for the pupils and the adults, directors in permanent education.

As H. de Jouvenel remarks, 'the develop-

ment of everybody's capacity to think, understand, criticize, undertake is more important than the transmission of information and knowledge'.[17]

Notes

1. Lars Ingelstam, *Feudalism or Democracy? Communications at the Crossroads*, paper presented at the World Future Studies Federation (WFSF) meeting in Cairo, 16–19 September 1978.
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9. Gregory Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, New York, Ballantine Books, 1972.
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13. K. Boulding, *The Image*, Ann Arbor, Mich., University of Michigan Press, 1956.
14. H. Maturana, 'Strategies cognitives', in *L'unité de l'homme*, Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1974.
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16. Jim Dator, *Identity, Culture and Communication Future*, paper presented at the WFSF conference, Cairo, September 1978.
17. H. de Jouvenel, *Quelle question pour demain?*, paper presented at the Unesco seminar on the perspectives of educational development, Paris, 1978.

Mass media, education and the transmission of values

The rise in the number of radio and television stations in the Third World has been staggering in the past two decades. Many of the television programmes shown by these new broadcasting systems are foreign. Therefore, one principal question might begin: What is the power of the media in the transmission of foreign values to school-age children? And our second question: Are these values in conflict with those that are fostered in the systems of education? The questions are simple, but the answers are necessarily complex.

Through the transfer of media systems and world-wide sale of programmes are we really becoming a Global Village, as Marshall McLuhan suggested some years ago? Or, in consideration of the importance of the power of commercialism in television, are we becoming a Corporate Village, as some writers on the media would have it? Looking at the transnational ownership structures of the media and considering the absorptive capacity of newly established media systems for foreign material, a simple

answer might be affirmative and raise the concern of educators and parents throughout the world.

Programmes, values and impact

We have a basic problem trying to get underneath some of the ephemeral tendencies of the global media. While it may be startling to turn on *Kojak* in places as culturally diverse as India, Jordan or Brazil, we really have no comparative studies to guide us as to the effects of such programmes and the values they contain on people of diverse cultures and social backgrounds within those cultures. And without such studies we cannot judge the transfer of values to any group in the population. We don't know, for example, what is the potential conflict of values contained in programmes of foreign origin compared with those of local origin. In television particularly it is tempting to argue that the conflict is not so great because of the imitative nature of many programmes made in the Third World, which follow the skilful technical formats in terms of sequence, timing and characterization that were developed particularly in American media. Sometimes programmes on national cultural history are even directly derivative of the formula of the American Western, a formula that is popular and will be understood and appreciated by audiences.

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Directors know that and proceed accordingly.

Whenever one tries to argue that television reaches a very small minority of the largely urban affluent population in developing countries, the image of television serials in the shanty towns of Latin America (and elsewhere) returns to trouble one's knowledge of the real statistics. Broadly speaking, however, the impact of the values of television programmes on middle-class children who have an opportunity also to read comic books and magazines and buy records from similar foreign sources would only serve to reinforce a set of influences with which those of television would not seriously conflict.

The impact of television and therefore its capacity to change the values of impressionable young people could, in the absence of surveys in different cultures and different groups, be partially enlightened by the results of surveys in Western countries. Early work focused on the impact of violence on television on the attitudes of children.[1] More recently, surveys on the adult population seek to examine its important impact in social and political terms.[2] We have derived two important lessons from this work. First, the direct impact of television is minimal unless the values it contains are reinforced by other forms of learning in the society—socialization in the family, the peer group and at school. It can be safely assumed that if the values implicit in television programmes are seriously at odds with other cultural and social influences, it may first be regarded as an unusual spectacle. Take, for example, the different impact of American serials on Latin America's urban youth, who are influenced by the dominant culture of North America in so many other ways, and compare it with the impact of *Mission Impossible* on a Sudanese audience, for which this imported cultural artefact must be much more exotic. In the programme context itself, Latin American television contains a high proportion of American material and locally made programmes that fit into a similar cultural mode. In the Sudan, by contrast, the rapid pace

of an American serial might be followed by a long programme of Arabic poetry with the performer sitting in front of the camera. The impact of each must be different. Thus, while it it possible to dissect the values implicit and explicit in such programmes, their effective transfer will be different in cultural terms, and also according to the age, education and life-style of the viewer, as well as the regular television diet.

Second, television as an influential medium is directly related to the frequency of viewing. In high-density television cultures in North America and Western Europe, we do have studies that indicate that some children (usually of low-income groups) spend more hours watching television than going to school and that school performance is low.[3] Apart from Latin America, where there is a greater number of broadcast hours on television than anywhere else in the Third World, this kind of high-density viewing would not be possible. Most television stations in developing countries broadcast only a few hours in the evening, which cannot begin to replicate the potential effects of continued viewing among children in rich countries. This, combined with cultural differences, must necessarily minimize its effectiveness. We cannot ignore, however, the impact on material values fostered by commercialism in the media and its potential effects on life-style and buying patterns. This particular feature may be considered under the rubric of taste transfer. There are two forms of influence: the first is the commercial itself, which is selling a given product, the second is the influence of clothing, material objects, and the general lifestyle in the programmes themselves. Most American programmes reflect a very high standard of living largely beyond the capacity of the potential viewing audiences, especially in the Third World. One must carefully differentiate between this form of materialism, however, and its effect on a more coherent, deeply held value system. The danger is obvious: it encourages people to emulate standards that may be

beyond their capacity to fulfil, thus generating personal frustration. But in social terms the revolution of rising expectations may only partially be attributed to material values derived from television or radio. Many other forms of influence contribute to it.

Structures and global television flows

We have dealt thus far with personal impact. It is perhaps important to underline some of the structural factors that have contributed to foreign media influence in the Third World. The largest international market for worldwide sale of television programmes was developed by United States exporters.[4] On domestic network programming and content advertising agencies are pre-eminent. Sufficient profits are made on the domestic market so that programmes are sold internationally at 'what the market will bear'. Based on the number of receivers in each country, programmes are sold very cheaply to developing countries at a fraction of the cost of making local equivalents. In the early years of the establishment of television stations in many Third World countries, in the 1960s, few of them had a sufficient stock of programmes to fill even the few hours of broadcast time they had. The problem was resolved by importing programmes of any kind. This situation was further exacerbated by the demand for more and more hours of programme time from those who had television receivers (the more affluent and articulate members of the urban population). Thus, further imports were the obvious answer.

In the early 1970s, several countries in Africa and the Middle East adopted policies of reducing foreign imports by establishing a percentage ceiling, largely owing to a consciousness of cultural imperialism. The Arab States, in particular, objected to sex and violence, which they felt were at odds with the values of Muslim society. Pressed to produce programmes as rapidly as possible, overworked production staffs tried with great difficulty to comply with quantitative norms established often for political reasons. One means of defraying the cost of local productions was to invite advertising even in many state-run broadcasting systems, the executives being only too happy to see a sufficient rise in the number of receivers in order to attract advertising agencies.

Television is a complicated, costly and somewhat brittle medium for adaptation to different forms of cultural expression. The growing rise in cost was further complicated in the early 1970s by the move to colour equipment and the phasing out of black-and-white production and transmission equipment by the larger transnational firms. The promise of many broadcasting stations was high: their charters raised many high-minded aims about national, developmental and cultural goals. Performance has been much more disappointing.[5] One is tempted to ask, with all the will to the contrary, will television in the Third World become just like television elsewhere?

Whither radio?

Radio remains a much more powerful mass instrument of information, entertainment, education. It is much less influenced by foreign material, apart from music, than is television. The reason is simple: radio programmes are much easier and cheaper to make. They have for a long time been well within the professional capacity of local staff, and many programmes in the Third World are in vernacular languages. This, combined with the ubiquity of the cheap transistor receiver, means that it reaches a much larger audience and, above all, those of limited income and far from major cities. So obvious, yet in statistical terms the estimation of its importance per capita of the population eludes even the most assiduous quantifiers at national and international level.

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Radio has been used very effectively for educational campaigns.[6] Radio may be used to explain rather than promote debate on the parameters of national development policy. Radio is an effective way of reaching illiterate groups in the population. It has been used successfully for school broadcasting in different contexts. Yet two cardinal problems arise: the relationship between radio programming and school curriculum has often been very formalistic. First of all, while great strides have been made and exceptional examples may be cited,[7] there remains much to be done by both educators and broadcasters to share the experiences of other developing countries in formal and non-formal educational programming and to rely less on the traditional models of school broadcasting developed in rich countries. I sometimes wonder if knowledge and evaluation of these systems is not more effectively shared on the international circuit of specialists rather than getting to those on the spot who must develop and enlarge this important area.[8] Secondly, although radio is so important, it has in recent years been starved for professional and financial reasons by television. For young professionals it has had a less exciting and glamorous image in comparison to jobs in television, and despite its renewed vocation and importance in the rich countries, the reverse is true in much of the Third World. Partly for reasons of prestige and partly because of the sheer cost involved in making programmes for new television stations, radio is constrained by its more attractive sister medium. This particular problem is one for planners and professionals, who might consider more seriously the lesser opportunity cost of increased investment in radio: in practical terms it is sometimes necessary to resist political pressures for the expansion of television for prestige reasons, perhaps most evident in the least developed countries, which need most to try to marshall all available resources for education.

Professionalism under scrutiny

Optimism about the contribution of the media to education and development, which was pervasive in the 1960s, has now given way to consideration of the inequality of access to information and communication, which reinforces other growing inequalities in developing countries.[9] Optimism has also been tempered by the transfer of values herein discussed. The process of re-evaluation is based on a consideration of the effects of transnational ownership in the media and programme flows and on the transfers of models of professionalism in broadcasting. Each of these trends has created a hiatus between national broadcasting and the experimental use of the media in formal and non-formal education, literacy or development campaigns and 'narrowcast' systems and appropriate technology. Thus, while 'small is beautiful' perhaps and is relevant to appropriate circumstances, big media became dominant in institutional terms, using considerable resources yet raising questions about its cultural or developmental relevance.

All questions of this kind are based on an underlying, perhaps prejudicial assumption that the maintenance of cultural identity (or identities) in developing countries is a means of containing transnational influence and of promoting economic and social policies more relevant to the needs of those countries. The transnational influences carried through the mass media operate at two distinct levels: first, the direct influence on consumption patterns and life-styles of foreign programmes and advertising: second, the influence on standards and norms of training, professionalism, models of organization and media production, which causes various occupations to identify with their metropolitan counterparts, and ultimately draws the media away from the cultural base and resources of a poor country.

For an electrical engineer trained in a metropolitan university and with close professional

contacts with his counterparts throughout the world (through professional meetings, journals and, above all, a positive attitude towards the most sophisticated technology that is most important to his 'transnational community'), the system he would most like to have installed in his country reflects not necessarily local needs but reference to outside standards and norms. Engineers in broadcasting are as impressed as other members of the scientific and technical élite in developing countries with the ingenuity and sophistication of very expensive 'gadgets'. In addition, a source of their claim to authority as an occupation or profession may be based precisely on the sophistication of the equipment with which they work, and on which they have become dependent because of certain objectives of training or socialization in the wider sense. Considerations of this kind engender the choice of complex system design and costly equipment while placing a heavy burden on the local service, which may have originally been intended to achieve low-cost national coverage. Such a problem is indicative of the fact that the reorientation of cognitive categories achieved in the process of socialization may be at odds with the realities of local economic capacity.

It is, on the whole, much easier to focus on the external features of dependence and cultural imperialism, about which there has been much discussion in recent years, particularly by politicians and government ministers from the Third World. These pronouncements have served to call attention to some of the apparent characteristics of dependence—television programme imports, dependence on a few Western agencies for the circulation of news and information. More subtle processes that are essentially structural and technological, however, are hardly questioned. Such processes are, of course, less apparent, but no less penetrating. Thus while the percentage of locally produced programmes in proportion to imported television series is improving in many countries, thus satisfying at least the ephemeral characteristics

of the battle against cultural imperialism, the quality and relevance of local production remains heavily constrained by the organization, technology and professional assumptions that go into its production. In many instances the percentage improvement in local production is just a reflection of a form of 'cultural import substitution' or imitating the formula of the imported programme locally. A critical attempt to confront the tendencies of the 'Global Villager' begins at home with a much more serious reconsideration of the aims of broadcasting, its integration with other sectors in planning, management and programming terms, a critical evaluation of finance and new expenditure in this traditionally high-technology sector. The form of sterile materialism contained in the consumer values circulated by television programmes and commercials is a genuine 'culture of poverty' compared to the richness and variety of values contained in local cultures in developing countries.

Schools and screens: texts and alienation

Having made some progress towards answering the first question set out in the introduction about the transmission of values through the media, I now tread somewhat more hesitantly into the professional territory of most of the readers of this journal in trying to relate these tendencies to the educational process. First, in most of the Third World the school will remain for several decades to come a much more powerful instrument of socialization and therefore transmission of values than the media. Although some emphases may conflict, it can be fairly safely assumed that the school environment will remain paramount.

Second, even in the high television viewing cultures that I described, there are and will remain serious limitations on changes in values being promoted solely by the media. Measuring

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its effects in diverse cultures and among different social groups is something we can anticipate in social analysis in the years to come.

In this last section, however, I wish to draw attention to the cultural values contained in a particular textbook published in 1975 and now fairly widely used for teaching French to African school children at the primary level. The authors of the text claim in the note for teachers that they have 'adapted it to African needs'. The analysis of its content is necessarily limited since it is abstracted from the educational context in which the book is used, mediated naturally by the curriculum, teaching methods and teachers' interpretations.[10] Yet the values it contains are very dramatically outlined, making implicit assumptions about the superiority and inferiority of cultures, the promotion of Western values, particularly consumerism, and above all raising concern in the mind of a sceptical observer about the vehicle of language teaching and alienation.

The preface tells the children that they will be presented with the daily life of French people (cooking, school, song, etc.) and urges that they make a comparison of this with what happens in their own countries. They are told: 'Reflect carefully on the differences, which will show that which is characteristic of your culture and those of the French.' Another rubric covered by the text is languages, in which the child is urged to reflect on the use of French and African languages. The next phrase refers to the importance of the use of a dictionary, a clear oversight by authors who must be aware that there was until very recently no transcription for vernacular languages in francophone Africa. It is precisely the primacy given to French in the language policies of these countries that has until now precluded this possibility. Dictionaries of African languages would not be available to school children.

The layout of the book is skilful, while inexpensive, but there is a striking difference in the use of illustrative material. All the grammar lessons are illustrated with block drawings of instances of African life, wherein the boy or girl visibly grows in situational use of French, emphasizing in part the difficulties of studying in Africa. Each section of the book has an excerpt of an African story, including Sembene Ousmane, Camara Laye and other well-known authors. The illustrations for these stories are exceptionally dreary and stylized. Contrasted with each of these stilted representations of 'authenticity', the information about France or French culture is presented through cartoons, well reproduced photographs and attractive line drawings.

The content conveys an even stronger meaning. Articles on the circulation and world translations of *Tintin* and *Asterix* (most well-known French strip cartoons), the competition between them for international popularity encourages a positive identification with French—centered youth culture. A small culturally-specific quote from the very upper middle-class education of Simone de Beauvoir, taken from the first volume of her autobiography, is followed by a few lines of dialogue from *Zazie dans le métro* (Raymond Queneau), a highly sophisticated Parisian play on words. It would be hard to know how most African teachers would put this into context. It is followed by a quote of exceptional misery from *The Black Docker*, by Sembene, entitled 'The Illiterate Woman'. The cultural contrast is so remarkable, the difference in life-styles and use of language so marked that the effect on a child must be very peculiar.

A section on music and instruments is highly culturally specific, with the traditional African drum presented in stark contrast to the range of classical instruments and forms of music in European society. Nowhere is a cora (an African string instrument of considerable sophistication) or a flute apparent. And some space is devoted to a Greek singer of enormous popularity in Europe with reviews of her performances from French dailies. More a reflection of current urban European tastes exported to francophone African cities for those young people who can

afford her records (at £6–8 per album in West Africa) than of traditional French culture.

A section on shops and markets uses an African woman to describe the 'decline' of use of the traditional market, and even of small shopkeepers, in favour of supermarkets: 'Larger surface areas sell products cheaper than elsewhere . . .' While true in Europe, the opposite is the case in Africa, where supermarkets are a luxury of the urban middle class. The traditional market for economic and cultural reasons is still used by the large majority. The section on housing portrays a distinct historical evolution from thatched hut to large apartment block as a natural feature of modern development. The accompanying grammar lesson is presented with a four-sequence line drawing in which a young African builds a cement house and in the last drawing of the sequence closes himself inside by building himself into it (the stupidity of Africans, their incapacity to deal with modern life—despite how desirable?)

The geographical and artistic reality of the provinces of France are contrasted with the romantic 'placelessness' of African locations; travel to Timbuktu, a place that presumably has a school that might even use this book is presented by the historic unreality of a nineteenth-century French explorer (René Caillié). And in the final sequence, the children are told of Tibet by the recent travels of a Parisian writer, whose interpretation of this exotic place is done with typical Western urban sophistication.

Looking at this startling material, its 'adaptation' and its obvious cultivation of values, one is tempted to pose a dramatic suggestion. When African children repeated to the tapping of a ruler in French colonial schools. 'Nos ancêtres, les Gaulois', the clarity and absurdity of that phenomenon must naturally have generated a much more strident reaction of national and cultural pride. The dialectic has become more fuzzy now, and the result a much more penetrating form of cultural alienation. How many other textbooks still contain such material?

By drawing attention to the difficulties of interpreting the transmission of value through the media and outlining some of the structural and professional influences that underline external media influences in the local context in developing countries, suggestions for changes go much further than limiting foreign exports. Measuring its impact in relation to the cultural or social differences found throughout the Third World may serve as a catalyst, by drawing attention to some of the political and planning changes that are necessary. But the manner in which individual young people are able to observe with an open and questioning spirit messages and influences from the media and other cultures depends directly on the integrity of the educational system in promoting genuine motivation and self-fulfilment and a pride in local culture and values.

Notes

1. H. L. Himmelweit *et al.*, *Television and the Child: An Empirical Study of the Effects of Television on the Young*. London, Oxford University Press, 1958.
2. G. Gerbner and L. Gross, 'Living with Television: The Violence Profile', *Journal of Communication*, Vol. 26, No. 2, Spring 1976.
3. P. J. Arenas, *Learning from Non-Educational Television*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Graduate School of Education, 1971.
4. K. Nordenstreng and T. Varis, 'Television Traffic—a One-Way Street?' Unesco Reports and Papers on Mass Communication, No. 70, 1974.
5. E. Katz and G. Wedell (eds.), *Broadcasting in the Third World*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1977.
6. The Tanzania 'Man is Health' campaign and rural educational radio in Senegal stand out.
7. D. T. Jamison and E. McAnany (eds.), *Radio for Education and Development*, 2 Vols., Washington, D.C., The World Bank, 1978.
8. See, for example, the recent report for Unesco, Division of Methods, Materials, Structures, Techniques, R. Postgate *et al.*, *Low-Cost Communication Systems for Education and Development Purposes in Third World Countries*, April, 1979.
9. See several articles in W. Schramm and D. Lerner, *Communication and Change: The Last Ten Years and the Next*, Honolulu, University Press of Hawaii, 1976.
10. I shall not cite the specific text in question, for I do not wish to single it out for criticism but to raise questions contained in it that may appear in other texts of the kind.

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Rafael Roncagliolo
and Noreene Z. Janus

Transnational advertising, the media and education in the developing countries

It has become common practice to look upon the relationship between education and the mass media as being a question that is confined to determining ways and means of using the media to extend the scope of formal education. Discussions on the subject have accordingly centred on the planning and cost-effectiveness problems involved in using the mass media to transmit educational messages. A vast amount of research has been conducted into such variables as audience profiles (age, sex, geographical location, etc.), the media themselves (type, and the range and duration of broadcasts, etc.) and the operational aspects of teaching (use of the medium alone, with teachers, or with written supporting materials, etc.).

Even in instances where such research, and the experiments that usually go with it, may be instrumental in significantly raising standards of education and training, the fact is that re-

lations between mass communication and formal education range over problems of far greater complexity and importance than those involved in the mere use of certain media slots or time for educational purposes.

As Ivan Illich has said, 'the relationship of schooling to education is like that of the church to religion'.[1] Like the church, the school is merely the institution that by general consensus is formally responsible for education. The school can hardly be said to be one of the media capable of being used for educational purposes. Moreover, the school as an institution displays anachronistic features and shortcomings that stem from what Paolo Freire calls 'banking educational'[2], a vertical, passive process whereby teachers deposit knowledge in the student without any give-and-take relationship being established.

The criticisms which Illich and Freire have levelled against the school system—and which also partly apply to the mass media—are widespread in Latin American thinking and can be regarded as one of the starting-points or premisses of this article, although this is not the place to deal with them at length.

The parallel school

The crisis of the school as an institution is certainly not entirely due to the intrinsic limi-

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tations of present-day schools, nor can it be solved by bringing the mass media into the school system. What has happened, in fact, is that the media—which share some of the features of schools but also evolve forms of communication of their own—have come to display a high degree of socializing efficiency and have partly supplanted the functional hegemony of the school. This is due, among other things, to the extent of the penetration by the mass media into private life,[3] to the illusion of freedom they produce (for it is possible to change newspapers or television stations), the variety of programmes they offer, their entertainment rather than pedagogical function, and their permanent character—since their influence extends throughout life instead of being confined to the period of schooling.

In view of these and other factors, there is no doubt that the whole mass of messages delivered by the media represents an effective form of instruction. It is indeed so effective that it is easily capable of undoing the results that may be achieved through a few hours' educational broadcasting on radio or television. It is for that reason that the mass media are now regarded as being literally a 'parallel school',[4] and for the same reason that a factor of greater importance than the educational use of the media is their educational nature—in other words the educational impact achieved by their transmissions every day. It is this aspect which it is absolutely essential to take into consideration in establishing national education systems and policies.[5]

The universal existence of such a parallel school would not be a source of concern to educators if the contents of the two schools, and above all the results obtained, were similar or convergent. However, such concern exists, and it derives from the fact that, in most countries, and particularly in the developing countries, the mass media are introducing a model of education of values, behaviour patterns and personal and collective aspirations

that bears little relation to the goals explicitly laid down for national education systems. As a result, a 'Cain and Abel' relationship[6] grows up between school and the mass media. In the hostility between them, there is always a danger of the mass media emerging as the victor and thus of educational policies being effectively and systematically sabotaged.

Whenever societies and countries are faced with these two 'parallel schools' and the growing antagonism between them, the response they make is fraught with contradiction. On the one hand, no one nowadays questions the need to draw up educational policies, or the right to do so. In mass communication, on the other hand, resistance is still opposed to any attempt to spell out explicit communication policies.

Nevertheless, in practice every country has a national communication policy of some kind, but whereas education policy is formulated by society as a whole and there are authorities and officials who have to report on its application and results, communication policy is a private matter that is decided on and applied exclusively by those who exercise a monopoly over the media, i.e. the ruling classes and transnational forces that have become deeply involved in the communication systems of the developing countries, especially in Latin America.[7]

These privately controlled communication policies are frankly incompatible with educational policies. The declared humanist goals of education are national development and the affirmation of national sovereignty and culture. Privately controlled communication, on the other hand, is interested more in the sale of goods than in human beings. It sets out to boost compulsive consumption, without any regard for the rational needs of development, and it disseminates a transnational culture that threatens and undermines all native cultural traditions. In the name of the 'global village' postulated by McLuhan, present-day commercial communication aims at creating a 'global

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supermarket'. This approach is diametrically opposed to the principles and objectives on which national education systems and policies are founded.

Advertising as the dominant cultural speech-form

The mass media themselves cannot be blamed for this outcome. The media do not function independently of a social context and do not have the freedom of action to decide for themselves what their content will be. In point of fact, the mass media everywhere reflect differences that have always existed and still do to-day. Indeed, the struggle against the existing state of affairs is largely being waged by alternative media—in the form of journalistic ventures which, with surprisingly limited resources and at some sacrifice, sprout up in one place or another and set out to restore the true cultural, educational and consciousness-raising functions of mass communication. The fact that, in the conditions of monopoly capitalism, the mass media have fallen into private hands has caused them to be enlisted in the service of alien causes that run counter to true mass education.

The origins of this phenomenon can be traced back to the middle years of the last century, when the alliance between the press and advertising was established.[8]

From that time onwards, the mass media became increasingly commercially oriented. Actual communication and news itself have now become commodities governed by the laws of supply and demand and by the maximum utility factor, which determines the guidelines for communication policies at the corporate and national levels. Furthermore, the media have been turned into producers of potential audiences and markets that are sold as commodities to advertisers when they conclude publicity contracts. As the media are drawn into this mercenary process and ally themselves with advertising, they become increasingly divorced from the objectives of education.

The subordination of the media to advertising is immediately apparent from the media content. In Latin America, for instance, the leading daily newspapers contain more advertising than news features. The space bought for advertising purposes accounts for between 50 and 70 per cent of the total space.[9]

However, the growing presence of advertising in the mass media plainly cannot be reduced to a problem of apportionment of space, which is only a symptom or indicator. Underlying the problem is the control which the financial power of the advertising agencies and their clients wield over the media. As Alex Schmid points out, since as much as 80 per cent of newspaper income is obtained from advertising rather than from sales, advertising agencies and advertisers are in a position to make or break newspapers. The history of the press in Latin America is rich in examples that go to illustrate pressures and power of this kind. The situation is even more serious in the case of commercial radio and television, since they are totally financed by advertising. As far as advertising is concerned, the media are nothing more than vending machines, which are good when they attract large numbers of readers with sufficient purchasing power and bad when their news content interferes with the status quo in which business and sales expand. The leading private newspapers are therefore as free as the main advertisers and their advertising agencies allow them to be[10] and the universally accepted principle of the freedom of expression eventually becomes, in practice, a mere appendage of the freedom to do business, in other words the freedom to be used exclusively for the purposes of the major economic interests.

The fact that advertising has succeeded in subjugating so powerful an instrument as the

media, and in enlisting the so-called 'Fourth Estate' to work for it, is due to the pull exerted by advertising in the conditions of monopoly capitalism. We are completely immersed in advertising; advertisements invade every sphere of life and are a fundamental part of everyday culture. Advertising has succeeded in penetrating people's lives to such an extent that, even if they do not buy the product advertised or do not pay attention to a particular advertisement, the overall impact cannot be escaped.

Advertising has taken on a dimension of its own that marks it out completely from the commercial publicity of the last century in which its origins lie. Present-day advertisements bear no relation to the standard which Émile de Girardin suggested be set a hundred and thirty-five years ago, when he said: 'Advertisements should be concise, straightforward and frank, should never be of a covert nature, and should not be ashamed of driving home their point.'[11]

Nowadays, there is no semblance of frankness, concision or objectivity in advertising. It has evolved its own language and its own linguistic and iconographic codes. It has no effect unless the messages it generates reflect imaginary psychological values and are incorporated in complex symbologies of the social statuses at which the products are directed, regardless of their actual utilitarian value. Since advertising has become an essential link in the workings of the economy, the problems it generates extend far beyond the ethical criticisms that have quite rightly been levelled against it. Advertising has become so overwhelming a feature of contemporary capitalism that it has been regarded as being the 'dominant cultural speech-form', the economically based cultural effusion superseding manifestations of the past whose sources lay in mysticism, philosophy or science.[12]

Advertising and education

The strength which our system of economic organization has conferred on advertising is so great that the interests it represents and the styles it has developed are succeeding in influencing the actual formal education system to a marked degree. Advertising is even penetrating into schools and, with the support of the mass media, is capable of successfully renovating styles of schooling.

A good example of the penetration of advertising interests into schools is provided by the education programmes on nutrition sponsored by the leading food manufacturers in the United States for classroom use. In 1978, one Congressional subcommittee stated that these programmes were nothing more than 'product promotions', in other words, they consisted of advertising directed at children who, as a result, were turned into captive audiences for such messages. The chairman of the subcommittee gave a warning that 'there is a distinct danger that classrooms will become the new frontier of advertising'.[13]

At the same time, however, advertising has managed to introduce new forms and styles of education, and well-known examples of these are *Sesame Street* and *The Electric Company* in the United States. *Sesame Street* has been translated into several languages and is broadcast in more than seventy countries. Joan Ganz Cooney, the president of the Children's Television Workshop and producer of the programme, has explained that it was designed after the manner of advertising 'spots', with the specific aim of using the attention-holding devices developed by advertisers. According to Kenneth O'Bryan, the child psychologist, these devices are so powerful that they make a thirty-second commercial advertisement the most effective teaching tool ever invented for instilling into children's minds any relatively simple idea, including the idea that a particular product is desirable. It has also been pointed

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out that television advertising is especially ef-
fective among children who are still too young
to understand the sales purpose of advertise-
ments.[14] Other research has confirmed that
children become loyal to specific product brands
from a very early age.[15] All this points to the
existence of an advertising culture in the social-
ization of children alongside school, and some-
times prior to school. Against this background,
programmes like *Sesame Street* condition chil-
dren, among other things, to be receptive to the
hundreds of thousands of commercials to which
they are exposed throughout their lives.[16] We
have reached the stage where, instead of edu-
cational policies and instruments being designed
to help children develop 'cognitive filters' to
protect them from the distortions of adver-
tising, the reverse is the case and the way is
being opened up for the penetration of adver-
tising culture as an acceptable and desirable
form of education.

The situation
in the developing countries

These complex relationships between adver-
tising and education are even more alarming
in the developing countries, in which, as a
result of the low school attendance rates, the
educational role of the media and advertising
is even more overwhelming. Suffice it to say
that for a very large proportion of the popu-
lation of Latin America, radio is virtually the
only medium and at the same time the only
school to which it has access. Not only are
the media in those countries under the control
of advertising, but that advertising is becoming
increasingly transnationalized. This pattern
started to emerge in the 1960s, when the adver-
tising markets in developed countries, and par-
ticularly in the United States, were relatively
saturated and were showing signs of slug-
gishness. The widespread transnationalization
of economies that took place over that period

was accompanied by the incipient mass pen-
etration of transnational advertising agencies
into the countries of the Third World.[17]

As a result of the presence of advertising,
the developed countries have to contend with
problems of national sovereignty and the sur-
vival of national cultures. Transnational adver-
tising[18] has succeeded in gaining control over
national communication systems. In Mexico,
out of the 270 commercials which the popular
XEW radio station broadcast daily in 1971,
84 per cent advertised transnational products.
Furthermore, out of the 647 commercials broad-
cast daily by the five Mexican television chan-
nels, 77 per cent were also for transnational
products.[19]

In regional terms, some thirty transnational
companies, most of them from North America,
control almost two-thirds of the advertising
revenue for the Latin American press.[20] Close
on 60 per cent of the advertising in the women's
magazines circulating in the region is trans-
national,[21] and the same can be said of every
one of the media. All the evidence suggests
that the private control of the mass media in
the developing countries works to the direct
advantage of the transnational corporations,
not only in terms of growth in sales[22] but also
of the penetration of a transnational ideology
which lays claim to being a contemporary
universal culture.

Admittedly, this purported universal culture
is the natural outcome of the market-oriented
style of thinking rather than the product of a
deliberately subversive strategy towards native
cultures. Standardization of production de-
mands standardization of consumption and
cultures. Global marketing techniques are a
reflection of the need to create a universal
consumer community that drinks, eats, smokes
and uses the same products. Global marketing
accordingly creates global advertising, as ex-
pressed in the image of one brand of perfume,
the population of Latin America being pre-
sented with the same picture of a blond

American woman strolling down Fifth Avenue in New York as is used for viewers in the United States. The message is the same in every case: 'Consumption is the key to happiness and the global corporation has the products that make life worth living.'[23] Thus, the image of the perfume in any developing country has the effect of associating it in viewers' minds with its relevance to the universal consumer society already mentioned, even though such relevance is only imaginary and is unattainable, and even though it implies standing aloof from one's own country. The educational impact of the imposition of such a culture on people cannot be underestimated, since it is diametrically opposed to the objectives of any national education policy. Such basic ideas underlying the development of national education systems in the underprivileged countries as the assertion of national culture and sovereignty, the linking of education with the development process, and the affirmation of democratic awareness, are all directly undermined by the values, ideas and behaviour patterns disseminated and inculcated by such transnational advertising.

There is abundant evidence to show how the inroads made by transnational advertising sap people's sense of national identity and esteem for their own culture. Eduardo Santoro, for example, analysed the representative content of programmes and commercials on Venezuelan television and then put a questionnaire on them to a broad sample of schoolchildren, in which he asked them what had taken place, where and for what reason, and who the 'goodies' and 'baddies' were. The following stereotypes repeatedly emerged from the children's replies:

The 'goodies' are from the United States, while the 'baddies' are from other countries, chiefly from Germany and then from China.

The 'goodies' are whites who are rich and are usually policemen, detectives or soldiers.

The 'baddies' are black and poor, and they work chiefly as labourers or peasants, or in offices.

Santoro's conclusion is that 'the hero is a rich, elegant white American, who goes about the world dispensing peace and justice'.[24]

In terms of national development, whatever the political leanings of the regimes in power in the developing countries, there is general agreement as to the need to encourage collective and private savings and to gear production to the social needs of each country. The fact is that transnational advertising runs directly counter to those aims. It need only be observed that the products most widely advertised, in developing and developed countries alike, are perfumes and cosmetics, cereals and processed foods, soap, beer, mineral waters and tobacco.

Similarly, consumer culture, individual rivalry, the unification of the international consumer community at the expense of the eradication of national realities, in short the whole set of values which adversiting promotes, have in practice, an anti-democratic content. Values such as these are the very antithesis of a sense of common purpose, participation, criticism, tolerance and indeed of all the qualities that go to make up the democratic ideal. Furthermore, the brainwashing and psychological compulsion characteristic of advertising motivation techniques are the reflection of an authoritarian outlook which is opposed to the democratization of communication and societies.

Countless other examples could be cited of the contradiction between educational goals and the consequences of surrendering control to transnational advertising. However, the instances already mentioned are sufficient to bear out and illustrate the existence of such contradictions and the need to resolve them if the undermining of education systems and policies in the developing countries is to be avoided.

How can we contend with advertising?

The purpose of this article is not to outline a programme of action for coping with the educational—or rather the anti-educational—impact of the mass media and present-day advertising. However, the seriousness of the problems involved, their proven ability to wreak havoc with educational programmes, and the enormous amounts spent on advertising are all such as to call for urgent action, both nationally and internationally. Individual countries are becoming increasingly conscious of the need to switch existing inexplicit communication policies, in which control of the mass media is in private hands, to explicit policies, in which the views of all sectors of society are elicited and rational and social use can be made of the power of the mass communication. It is with this in mind that a variety of forms of grassroots participation in media management has been tried out in Latin America—particularly in Mexico, Chile and Peru—which could serve as a precedent for embarking on a more systematic effort to democratize mass communication. The authorities responsible for educational and cultural policies in every country would necessarily be expected to play an important part in drawing up such policies and in setting standards aimed at protecting the public from the anti-educational effects of advertising. The state should likewise give financial support to the media in systems that are not under government control—for which there are precedents in a number of European countries—so as to ensure that advertisers do not take them over completely.

At the international level, Unesco's action in setting up two special commissions in recent years has been of the utmost significance. The first of these was the Faure Commission on the problems of education, while the other is the MacBride Commission on communication issues. With the findings of these two commissions, the international community will be well equipped to participate in a special conference, convened under the auspices of Unesco, with a view to analysing the existing conflicts between education and advertising and to seeking an answer to them and to the serious prejudice being caused to national cultures by the growing invasion of transnational advertising. This idea has been put forward on other occasions[25] and appears to be an excellent way of channelling and responding to the concerns that are now so widely felt by educators and parents and by all those who are committed to the task of culture and education*.

Notes

1. Ivan Illich, *Alternativas*, p. 113, Mexico City, Editorial Joaquin Mortiz, 1977.
2. Paolo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, New York, Herder & Herder, 1970.
3. There exists a considerable amount of research demonstrating the considerable time given up to the media. In Europe alone, for instance, more than half the total number of children watch television every day; in the United States, children in the 4- to 8-year age-group watch it on average for two and a half hours a day and those in the 10- to 16-year age-group for four hours a day. See George Comstock, *et al.*, *Television and Human Behaviour*, p. 178, New York, Columbia University Press, 1978.
4. Louis Porcher, *L'école parallèle*, Paris, Librairie Larousse, 1974.
5. This subject of the mass media and the role they play in the field of education is discussed at length in Fernando Reyes Matta, *Communicación masiva: la escuela paralela*, Mexico City, ILET. (In press.)
6. Max Ferrero, 'L'école et la télévision: les sœurs ennemies?', *Éducation 2000* (Paris), No. 7, September 1977.
7. Of the thirty-one in the world with private commercial television networks, sixteen, more than half, are in Latin America. This is the result of imitating and importing the communication system of the United States. See Elihu Katz and George Wedell, *Broadcasting in the Third World*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1977.
8. Bernard Cathelat, *Publicité et société*, p. 33–7, Paris, Petite Bibliothèque Payot, 1976.

* This is, of course, the authors' opinion and does not commit Unesco.—Ed.

9. However, studies in which this type of measurement is included show significant variations. In Costa Rica, four newspapers were analysed and were found to consist, on average, of 42 per cent of advertisements, while the figure for one of them was as high as 66 per cent (José M. Fonseca, *Communication Policies in Costa Rica*, Paris, Unesco, 1976). In Peru, in 1968, 'a morphological analysis of newspapers with the largest circulation figures . . . showed that the seven leading newspapers included no less than 35.5 per cent of advertisements and that the newspaper devoting most space to advertising included as much as 58.4 per cent' (Pontificia Universidad Catolica de Peru, *Investigación de los medios de comunicación colectiva*, Lima, 1961). Even higher figures are quoted in Alex Schmid, *The North American Penetration of the Latin American Knowledge Sector—Some Aspects of Communication and Information Dependence*, a document presented to the Seventh Conference of the International Peace Research Association, Oaxtepec, Mexico, 1978 (mimeo.), p. 13 and 14. On this question, see also Noreene Janus and Rafael Roncagliolo, 'Adversiting, Mass Media and Dependency', *Development Dialogue* (Uppsala, Sweden), No. 1, 1979.

10. Schmid, op. cit.

11. Quoted in Cathelat, op. cit., p. 36.

12. ibid.

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Luis Ramiro Beltrán S.
and Elizabeth Fox de Cardona

Mass media and cultural domination

Nineteen years after his first visit to the New York headquarters of the United Nations, the Prime Minister of Cuba, Fidel Castro, was back at the General Assembly and asked: 'Why should some people go barefooted so that others may ride in expensive cars?' He said it is a moral obligation of the developed countries, which in his view profit from underdevelopment, to help substantially and readily the poor countries, lest there shall be no peace in the world. Thus he proposed to discuss and determine for the next development decade a strategy that should include a contribution of no less than $300 billion in donations and soft-term credits from developed to developing countries.

The old international economic order

Why a request of such magnitude? What had happened to the 'development mystique' of

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the previous twenty years? Had foreign aid to development been useless? The end of the period wishfully labeled by the United Nations as the Second Development Decade is now close on the horizon. And the sad reality is that, just as it was at the end of the First Development Decade, not much development is in sight except in those countries that all the while were already quite developed. The great disparities traditionally prevailing between these countries and those in the Third World have not disappeared, and in several aspects they rather tend to increase. Not unrelatedly, inequalities within each so-called developing country between the élites and the masses have also either remained stationary or become more acute.

The hopes entertained by visionaries such as Lester Pearson and Jan Tinbergen have not materialized so far. The mighty ones show no inclination to yield. Wisdom and generosity are scarce virtues as usual. Thus planet earth, for all the developmental rhetoric that permeates the last quarter of the century, appears as unkind a home as ever for most of its inhabitants.

Some 800 million human beings survive under conditions of extreme poverty that deprive them of decent standards of food, housing, health and schooling, while minorities indulge in irrational overspending. Malnutrition and subemployment affect almost two thirds of the population in many 'developing' countries while industrial nations concur in wasteful use of

resources, environmental degradation and the arms race. A baby born in an industrial country comes to the world with a life expectancy of 72 years while one in a non-industrial country can count only on 44 years (World Bank, 1978). And income comparisons produce, to say the least, astonishment.

The early catastrophic predictions of the Club of Rome may not have become full realities, but neither have several corrective efforts attained encouraging results so far. The 1976 and 1977 Conferences on International Economic Co-operation and the series of UNCTAD meetings failed to produce tangible results that would at least alleviate the consequences of the unfair economic treatment that the industrialized nations give the non-industrialized ones. The North-South dialogue is stagnant, if it ever truly began. Science and technology remain the privilege of the few and mighty.

Neocolonial conditions of exploitation still prevail in international economic relations. The distribution of labour between nations has not been substantially altered by decolonization. The terms of trade exchange between metropolitan and peripheral countries have shown no correction of the characteristic imbalance. Most countries of the Third World are still condemned to the role of primitive providers of raw materials, which they have to sell cheap, and consumers of manufactured goods, for which they have to pay dear. For instance, about 80 per cent of Latin American exports are primary goods whereas about 60 per cent of the imports are manufactured products (Perry, 1977). The resulting deficit fouls up development plans, hits national economies hard and consistently increases the chronic foreign debt of the less developed countries, which often has to be served at high interest rates and short repayment schedules. For instance, in a period intermediate between the two Development Decades (1965 to 1967), Latin America's yearly average loss due to such imbalance was $1,300 million (Unión Panamericana, 1969).

And in a single year, according to the United Nations, the loss was ten times greater than the credits received in the same period from the United States and from international organizations (Castro, 1969).

Increasingly, most developed countries impose high tariffs to protect their markets from imports from the Third World while bringing down their financial aid to them. Some metropolitan centers would seem to be moving from indifference or compassion to reluctance or hostility about the wants and claims of the so called developing world.

As stressed by the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America in its most recent gathering, in April 1979 in Bolivia, the effects of recession and inflation in the United States and other Western industrial countries are affecting the economies of this region to a point making uncertain the immediate future. And likewise, in its 1978 report the World Bank concluded that progress over the past twenty-five years in accelerating growth, modernizing economies and raising the standards of living has not been sufficiently fast and broad-based to significantly reduce poverty.

In summary, external economic dependence still accounts for much of underdevelopment. In 1979 justice appeared no less a mirage than in 1969 or 1959. And, if nothing else, the Third World countries have learned that in struggling to build a better future they can no longer rely upon the development model devised by the industrial powers. Thus 'another development' begins now to be autonomously envisioned.

Towards
a new international economic order

Discontent with the old international economic order so far prevalent can be traced back to the decade of 1950. However, the public and official expression of intent to change it did not occur until 1973. In that year, in their summit at

Algiers, the heads of states of the countries in the non-Aligned movement produced a first formal statement of the need for a New International Economic Order (NIEO). In 1974 they took the notion to the sixth extraordinary session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. There, in spite of reservations from the United States of America and other countries, this United Nations body approved by majority vote a declaration fostering the establishment of a New International Economic Order (Resolution No. 3201) and a program of action addressed to pursuing the attainment of such goal (Resolution No. 3202).

Other similar statements adopted included the Cocoyoc Declaration (Mexico City, 1974) and the 1975 Dakar Declaration and Action Programme of Developing Countries on Raw Materials.

The Third World statements seeking to define the nature of the New International Economic Order included this set of basic concepts:

The sovereignty and equality of states.

The full and effective participation of all states in international decision making.

The right of all states to adopt appropriate economic, political and cultural systems.

The full permanent sovereignty over national resources.

The right to regulate the activities of foreign entities (such as transnational corporations) in concurrence with national goals and priorities.

The right to formulate a model of autonomous development geared toward the basic needs of the population.

The right to pursue progressive social transformation that enables the full participation of the population in the development process.

The statements on the NIEO claim that (a) the prevailing international economic order is incompatible with the Third World ambition of total emancipation and contrary to its interests; (b) the theory that development will trickle down from the industrial to the non industrial nations is neither valid nor fair; and (c) devel-

opment in the Third World countries should not be an imitation of Western models but a product of their sovereign decisions.

Along with sovereignty, interdependence is a basic concept within the NIEO ideal. This is reflected in the following definition of NIEO by Dutch communication researcher Cees Hamelink (1978, p. 9): 'An organization of international economic relations in which states, which develop their economic systems in an autonomous way and with complete sovereign control of resources, fully and effectively participate as independent members of the international community.'

Together with attempts at definition, some concerted actions have taken place to promote the NIEO. For instance, at its Nairobi 1976 meeting, the IV UNCTAD attempted to elaborate conceptually and operationally the basic features of the proposed new order. Among other initiatives, it started the design for an international code of technological transfer. Another example is given by the attempts of countries in the Group of 77 to explain to developed countries that NIEO can be deemed convenient to them as well. A leader in a developed nation with this conviction is Jan Pronk, former Dutch Minister for Development. After clarifying that the New International Economic Order could only be detrimental to the developed countries in terms of short-term economic considerations, Pronk (1978, p. 2) perceptively noted that:

If left to the charity and goodwill of the traditionally powerful industrialized countries, a NIEO will not be brought about. Requests on this basis have traditionally received a negative answer. One may deplore it, but powerful nations will only co-operate in the building of a new order if they view it as being in their interest to do so. To a certain extent this now seems to be the case. The oil crisis, the growing awareness of overall scarcities, the international recession, characterized by inflation, unemployment and monetary instability, the growing unity of the Third World, the unstable political and military situation in various parts of the world (e.g. the Middle

East and southern Africa) and the proliferation of nuclear knowledge together have shifted some of the power of the traditionally rich countries to the Third World. It is therefore in the interest of the rich countries to solve world problems in close harmony with the Third World.

It is to be hoped that such realistic voices will be heard. However, changing the structure of international economic relations in the direction of balance—the aim of the NIEO proposal—may not by itself be sufficient to help emancipate the developing countries from the external domination that keeps them underdeveloped. Thus they must also seek structural changes in other equally important relations with developed countries.

Cultural domination: the other side of underdevelopment

'It is an established fact that the activities of imperialism are not confined solely to the economic and political fields but also cover the cultural and social fields, thus imposing an alien ideological domination over the peoples of the developing world.' This statement signaled the public and formal realization of such relationship by the Heads of States of the Movement of the Non-Aligned Countries at their fourth meeting held in Algiers in 1973. It took them only a short additional step to identify the mass communication media as the chief agents of such cultural domination, since they are 'the legacy of the colonial past and have hampered free, direct and fast communication between them' (*Development Dialogue*, 1976).

The president of the Caribbean Development Bank, William Demas (1975, p. 4), described the situation as follows:

We find that in many Third World countries, particularily in the Caribbean and Latin America, the electronic mass media, especially television, play a role which is destructive of national cultural identity and of autonomous and independent economic and social development. This role arises not only from the advertising of imported goods but also from the actual content of the programs which brainwash the population into accepting and wanting the way of life of the affluent societies.

A Third World cultural leader, Rex Nettleford (1979, p. 126), pointed out the alien origin of such noxious communication influence:

Jamaica and the Caribbean, therefore, are the victims of the effects of cultural domination and dependence fostered by most of the prevailing information patterns said to be 'much more penetrating than those of purely economic domination and dependence'.

These statements are representative of the critical stand taken by all kinds of leaders most everywhere in the Third World. In fact, comparable opinions are abundant all over Latin America, as well as in the underdeveloped countries of Asia and Africa. In many of them, researchers have found evidence clearly supporting such contentions, as has been reported by, among other analysts, the United States scholar Schiller (1971, 1973, 1976b, 1977 and 1979) and the Belgian critic Armand Mattelart (1973a, 1973b, 1976b, 1977 and 1978). (A recent reader on this subject, covering various media and several regions of the world, is that edited by Nordenstreng and Schiller (1979). Beltrán and Cardona (1977) reviewed a large number of pertinent studies documenting the domination of Latin American mass communications by United States transnational interests. American researcher John Lent (1972 and 1979) is a main analyst of alien communication influences on Caribbean media. Other Caribbean studies are those of Cuthbert (1976 and 1978), Hosein (1976), Nascimento (1973), White (1976), and Brown (1976).) A few of those indicators will be reviewed subsequently to illustrate briefly the situation, emphasizing Latin America and broadcasting (radio and television) wherever the available data permit.

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Mass communication as a key tool for cultural domination

The developing countries comprise almost two thirds of the world's population. As a rule, mass media distribution is, however, strongly skewed in favor of the developed countries that constitute the minority portion of this population. One half of the total daily newspapers in the world are published in the developing countries, their circulation being one sixth of that of the developed countries, which use 90 per cent of all newsprint in the world. Whereas in these countries there is one copy of a daily newspaper for every three inhabitants, in the underdeveloped regions of the world there is one copy for every thirty inhabitants.

In the United States and in other developed countries there are more radio receivers available than inhabitants; in Africa, instead, there is one for each eighteen inhabitants.

There is one television receiver for every two persons in North America and one for every four persons in Europe and Russia; by contrast, there is one for forty in Asia and the Arab States. (International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems, Unesco, 1978.)

News, especially as reflected in their use by daily newspapers, is an area in which research has frequently found evidence of another type of imbalance disfavoring the developing countries. To begin with, as was pointed out by the co-ordinator of the Ministers of Information of the Non-Aligned Countries, Tunisia's Moustafa Masmoudi (1978), five agencies produce 80 per cent of all international news that gets printed. They—UPI, AP, Agence France Press, Reuters and Tass—devote less than a third of that total output to the developing world, which, as has been stressed already, accounts for two thirds of mankind.

In Latin America news traffic in all directions—towards the world, from the world and within itself—is controlled at least 60 per cent by UPI and AP. Certain significant events are not reported at all or get little coverage, whereas other, usually trivial, bizarre or scandalous ones, are played up. (A precursor study of these problems was conducted in Venezuela by Díaz Rangel (1967) and an early analysis of main Latin American dailies revealing foreign domination in news was contributed by CIESPAL (1967). In recent years, the Mexico-based Latin American Institute for Transnational Studies (ILET) had developed a dynamic leadership in this area of inquiry. See pertinent writings by Juan Somavía (1976 and 1977), and Fernando Reyes Matta (1974, 1976, and 1977), among other ILET members.)

Deliberate distorsion of news is effected through several procedures and becomes particularly severe and noticeable whenever the transnational news agencies are referring to events expressing a will for social transformation in the region. (Several scholars have documented the negative behavior of their country's international and national mass communication systems about major social revolutionary movements in Latin America such as those of Bolivia, Cuba and Chile. These are some of those writers: Knudson (1973); Hester (1971 and 1977); Kipp (1967); Lewis (1960); Francis (1967); Houghton (1965); Bethel (1966); Barnes (1964); Bernstein and Gordon (1967); Kunzle (1978); Pollock and Pollock (1972); and Fagen (1974).)

'Wire information', noted a Venezuelan newspaperman, 'depends on the United States as our economies depend upon it. AP and UPI have the decisive weight in opinion formation in the average Latin American country about the most important world events.' (Díaz Rangel, 1967, p. 43-4.)

As for American magazines, an American researcher concluded that their coverage of Latin American reality was superficial, negative and stereotyped. (Whitaker, 1969.) Many United States magazines are translated into Spanish and Portuguese and somewhat adapted to Latin America and, along with comic books, flood the

region, stemming mostly from subsidiaries or partners of United States firms in Venezuela and Mexico. Researchers Dorfman and Mattelart (1973) noted that comics such as those of Donald Duck may not be innocuous, inasmuch as they express consistently the ideology of capitalist society. Many Latin American researchers, mostly in Argentina, Brazil and Chile, have expressed similar concerns about all kinds of United States inspired popular magazines circulating in their region. (For instance, Feinsilber and Traversa (1972), Goldmann (1967), Habert (1974), Michele Mattelart (1970), Piccini (1970) and Steimberg (1972).)

Broadcasting:
no exception to imbalance

The influence of the main developed countries on broadcasting is slightly different, but it has no less serious implications for the developing countries, especially those of Latin America, where radio and television are eminently private and commercial.

Television is being increasingly found by research to be a decisive tool for developed countries to exert cultural domination over the developing ones. Nordenstreng and Varis (1974) conducted a study covering many countries of the world through which they found that television was indeed, as suspected before their verification, a 'one-way street' running from a few developed countries to many of the under-developed ones. These researchers demonstrated that national programme structures were dominated in most countries by transnational producers and that the international flow of television programme materials was essentially controlled by huge United States sales, of which one third corresponded to Latin America.

In his book about the impact of United States television in this part of the world, American researcher Allan Wells (1972, p. 194) acknowledged that:

The dominance of North American over other influences on the developing countries is most apparent in the case of television, particularly in Latin America, the internationally recognized sphere of influence of the United States.

This dominance comes to the region through several avenues. Canned materials are more evident than equipment sales, which—as has been noted by Cruise O'Brien (1974) and other analysts—carries, along with training, the ideology of the country of origin. This has a strong multiplier effect by which locally produced materials are often hardly distinguishable from their foreign models.

Some researchers, especially in Venezuela, Brazil and Peru, have studied television content, especially in tems of 'adventure' programmes (soap operas, crime and spy stories and other comparable serials), most of which are imported essentially from the United States. (See Pasquali (1967 and 1972); Colomina de Rivera (1973); Mattelart (1973b); Pérez Barreto (1973); Rincón (1968); Santoro (1975); Tapia Delgado (1973); and, inter alia, Marqués de Melo (1971).) In addition to finding grounds for the familiar preoccupation with violence induction, these researchers were able to identify in such materials the fostering of stereotypes of the set of values of the United States consumer society proposed as the natural and necessary course of mankind. Three main factors were identified in the messages—conservatism, materialism and conformism—while two types of noxious effects on the audience were deemed possible: exciting/energizing and narcotic/analgesic (Beltrán, 1978).

Radio is the most pervasive and ubiquitous of the mass media all over the world, but the basic imbalance of availability favoring the developed nations also is true of this medium.

To start with, the developed countries control 90 per cent of the frequencies in the spectrum. Some 75 per cent of all radio transmitters are concentrated in North America and Europe,

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which also have about 75 per cent of all radio receivers. The United States alone has more radio transmitters than those in all the developing countries. There are now a billion receivers, or—in principle—about one to every four inhabitants of the planet, but their distribution not only strongly favors the developed nations, but the urban élites in the developing countries themselves.

When compared with the rest of the mass media, radio has a wider penetration among the lower strata of the masses and in some rural areas of the Third World countries. However, in spite of their unusual potential for servicing development, 'radio messages still do not reach large portions of mankind in isolated areas and many of these messages when they reach mass audiences convey alien content and false images'. (International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems, Unesco, 1978, p. 34.)

Both terms of this statement apply quite accurately to the Latin American situation. First, even radio fails to reach about one half of the total population of this region, which now clearly exceeds the 300 million figure. Second, the great majority of stations are indeed concentrated in urban areas and do not reach beyond them. Third, although radio demands far more production of local programs than television, much of its content is still dominated by foreign influence, interests and paradigms. United States music is often predominant over national and other through the power of the transnational record industry. Patterned after traditional United States models, soap-opera is a staple of radio fare. Development-oriented materials and cultural-educational programs are scarce, whereas entertainment and sports dominate scheduling in competition only with advertisements.

In 1962, with a 7.5 per cent of the world's population, Latin America was known to have some 1,700 radio stations already, 22 per cent of the world's total, but only 9 per cent of the

total radio kilowatt power of the world. According to Pasquali (1975), the trend has been confirmed. Around the middle of the 1970–80 decade, the region was estimated to have some 4,500 radio stations, with more than 80 per cent of them operating equipment below 5 kilowatts of power. Caracas, a city with about 3 million inhabitants, had eighteen stations, which transmitted a daily average of 8,500 commercial advertisements. Radio services have grown very rapidly. The number of receivers per 1,000 inhabitants increased from 52 in 1950 to 208 in 1975.

Thus, what seems to take place through radio is 'an enormous daily transfer of tastes, ideologies, ways of life, language, behaviour patterns, problems and expectations to peoples of another cultural historical and cultural origin without the knowledge or ability to put up an effective resistance' (Pasquali, 1975, p. 64–5).

Unlike most of the rest of the world—developing and developed—Latin America is a region where radio broadcasting is fundamentally private and commercial: at least in 90 per cent of the cases, according to Kaplun (1973). For instance, Colombia—a country populated by 25 million people—has today some 400 radio stations of which only one is state-owned. As such, their chief source of revenue is advertising, a significant proportion of which comes from transnational firms, whose content preferences influence programming.

Venezuelan researcher Antonio Pasquali (1975, p. 67), assessed the consequences of such a situation in these terms:

Latin America is the supreme living illustration of the fact that the system of handing over broadcasting to private enterprise is, without any doubt, the one that produces the worst results in cultural and social terms. In almost half a century, in fact, privately operated Latin American radio broadcasting has not succeeded in serving all the inhabitants of the countries in which it operates; it has become the overt instrument of compulsive, commonplace transculturation; it produces hackneyed programs of poor

quality because it has small economic resources; it disregards the real issues of public interest to the people it serves.

A pioneer step in Latin America: communication policies

Empirical verification substantiates the grievances of the Third World countries about the international communication situation. It remains only to note that, concomitantly, the situation of mass communication at national levels achieves deplorable characteristics in Latin America. Internal domination in matters of communication is coincident with external domination in this area. Thus the struggle for reforming the international and the national communication structures is not really one between developed countries in general and underdeveloped countries in general. It is a struggle between persons and institutions in each country of either type, who either wish to keep the communication system as is or aim at changing it. And this is not unrelated to the confrontation between those who in the underdeveloped countries favor the status quo and those who wish to change the overall structure of society and attain a democratically balanced state of genuine development.

The Latin Americans were precursors in the struggle for reforming communication and reaching the highest level of official and international sanction: that of an intergovernmental conference on communication policies. In preparation for it, two meetings of experts were held: one on general policies, in Bogotá, Colombia, in 1974 and the other on news exchange in Quito, Ecuador, in 1975. Both gatherings condemned the prevailing circumstances of mass communication operations in the region and recommended the adoption of several changes in it, among them the creation of autonomous regional news services (public, private and mixed) and the formulation of

policies relative to the behavior of private and commercial mass media institutions, native and foreign. This was proposed to be done through national communication policy councils incorporating representatives of all social sectors concerned with the problem. Neither state monopoly of media ownership nor censorship of any kind was advocated.

Nevertheless, the experts' recommendations were readily taken as threats to the 'free flow' of news by media owners and managers grouped in two large organizations: the Inter-American Press Association (IAPA) and the Inter-American Association of Broadcasters. Both attacked as totalitarian the experts consulted by Unesco and their recommendations. They organized a massive transnational campaign to boycott the intergovernmental conference, which was regarded as an undemocratic threat to freedom of information. As reported by Capriles (1977) more than 700 articles were published against the pro-policy movement by dailies in Latin American between February and August of 1976. According to Salinas (1978, p. 22), the campaign was actually successful in several respects: the site of the conference was changed several times, the meeting was held much later than was first decided and the document produced by the experts in Bogotá was prevented from inclusion in the agenda of the conference.

In spite of the enormous pressures so exerted against the conference and the violent attacks conducted against Unesco, the historic meeting took place in the capital of Costa Rica and worked essentially under the leadership of the Venezuelan Minister of Information, Guido Grooscors (see Grooscors, 1978), strongly backed up by President Carlos Andrés Pérez, who shortly before had told a general assembly of IAPA:

In the democratic regime, which accepts and fosters freedom of the press, liberty of information faces dangers, and grave ones, if information is in the service of certain interests. This endangers the very

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freedom that it defends, or that it pretends to defend, breaks the rules of the democratic game and threatens the legitimacy of the institutions on which is founded (Pérez, 1975, p. 7-8).

Overcoming the burning atmosphere created around it by the media, the conference approved a set of thirty resolutions containing initiatives to alleviate or solve the problems of communication determined by internal and external domination. As seen in Unesco's report of it (Unesco, 1976), the conference advocated a balanced circulation of information between nations, recommended the creation of national and regional news agencies, proposed the establishment of national communication policy councils and recommended the establishment of alternative and supplementary communication media, including those of state property addressed at providing mass education for development.

International news coverage of the conference provided in itself a demonstration of how those who claim to defend press freedom and objective journalism can manipulate information to suit their biases and interests. A study by Raquel Salinas (1977) of coverage by the Associated Press shows in detail how information was handled—quantitatively and qualitatively—by this agency to play up the IAPA position and disfavor the proposals of the Latin American governmental representatives, especially those of Venezuela, the leader.

Application of the many recommendations approved has been slow and will remain a difficult task to be fully accomplished. The Costa Rica Conference cannot be taken as a full war won by the democratic progressive forces in Latin America. But it was indeed a successful fundamental battle that gives them hope and encouragement. As such it also constituted inspiration for a similar conference in Asia and a major step towards the construction of a world-wide 'New International Information Order', which was also formally proposed in 1976.

Towards a New International Information Order

'The evident injustice which characterizes the present international structure of communication has forced the need for a new international information order as integral and complementary to the NEIO. One cannot hope to modify the economic order without modifying the information order.' (ILET, 1979.)

What is the NIIO? What is this new order, so integral and complementary to the NEIO?

The non-aligned countries have played a key part in denouncing the failure of the present communication system and in the design of instruments that could begin to lead towards a new international order of communications. What elements, however, might constitute this intended order?

The non-aligned movement has already produced a number of modest but tangible results in the area of communication. In January 1975, the Third World pool of new agencies of the countries was created. The Yugoslav news agency Tanjug and eleven other news agencies from the movement began to transmit news with a view to strengthening the information flow towards the developed world and intensify the news exchange among the members themselves. A similar step was taken in the field of radio and television. At the first Conference of Broadcasting Organizations of Non-Aligned Countries, in Sarajevo, October 1977, an action programme of four lines of activity of the organizations was adopted, including the encouragement of co-operation in the exchange of radio and television programmes.

These activities, and similar actions in Latin America and other areas in the world such as the imminent establishment of a Latin American news feature service, ALASEI, are significant first steps.

However, a New International Information Order is far more complex than improvements

of the imbalance of the flow of information. As defined by a Venezuelan researcher, a New International Information Order is:

The replacement of the principal parameters that have traditionally governed the circulation of information and the content of the mass media by a new structure based on negotiation and directed toward a free and balanced international exchange and circulation of information. (Capriles, 1979, p. 2.)

Martelanc (1978) proposes that some elements of this new order could be these:

The establishment of more equitable two-way or multi-way communication in place of the existing imbalance.

The modification of the present prevailing principles and values that subject the mainstream of information to the laws of a market economy and the imposition of the political values of the stronger countries.

The modification in the international flow of information based on the full sovereignty of states, and a due concern for their realities, needs and aspirations.

The mobilization of the mass media towards national development objectives, and the processes of economic and cultural decolonization and emancipation of all countries.

The strengthening of national communication capacities on the basis of the most appropriate technology.

As yet, no international consensus has been reached on a blueprint for the New International Information Order. In fact, the mandate of the International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems, set up by the Director-General of Unesco, in pursuance of Resolution 100 adopted by the General Conference at its nineteenth session in 1977, was precisely:

To study the current situation in the field of communication and information and to identify problems which called for fresh action at the national level and a concerted overall approach at the international level.

To pay particular attention to problems relating to the free and balanced flow of information in the world, as well as the specific needs of developing countries.

To analyse communication problems, in different aspects, within the prospective of the establishment of a New International Economic Order and of the measures to be taken to foster the institution of a 'New World Information Order'.

The Declaration on Fundamental Principles concerning the Contribution of the Mass Media to Strengthening Peace and International Understanding, to the Promotion of Human Rights and to Countering Racialism, Apartheid and Incitement to War, is certainly another of the most important initiatives adopted, after two years of strife and intense world-wide discussion, by an international forum in the direction of a new international information order. Indeed, in the preamble appears the phrase 'conscious of the aspirations of the developing countries for the establishment of a new, more just and more effective world information and communication order'. (Unesco Declaration, 1978.)

After years of bitter opposition and denunciation, the position of the developed countries towards the possibility of a New International Information Order has been modified from an initial across-the-board rejection of the concept on the basis of the idea that it went against the principles of free flow of information and freedom of expression. The approval by the majority of the developed countries of the Unesco Declaration referred to above, in particular Article IX, which states 'it is for the international community to contribute to the creation of the conditions for a free flow and wider and more balanced dissemination of information', marks this change in position. (Unesco Declaration, 1978.)

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Do mass media reach the masses?
The Indian experience

In any country, education for citizenship, or social education, goes on well beyond the stage of formal schooling. The process continues in a variety of ways: through the mass media, through participation in the political system and through religious, neighborhood and vocational associations.

In a developing country, where social education must have a development orientation, both formal schooling and the reach of the mass media are limited. The modes of social education mentioned above have therefore to be supplemented by organized non-formal education: by wide networks of agricultural, health and other extension services, and by the traditional media that have served for centuries as carriers of a community's cultural values from one generation to the next.

This article attempts a critical survey of the process of formal and non-formal efforts in India to educate citizens in their rights and duties, and to mobilize them for economic development and the attainment of equality of

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opportunity. Some aspects—both positive and negative—of the Indian experience are likely to be of interest to other developing countries, even though they differ from India in size and in their political and social structure.

Limited reach
and role of mass media

Like the economy, which is a mix of private and public ownership, the modern mass media in India are partly in the public and partly in the private domain. Newspapers and feature films are in the private sector; on the other hand, radio and television are operated exclusively by the central government. The Films Division of the Central Government has a virtual monopoly on documentaries and newsreels.

Communication planning is undoubtedly difficult, but is inescapable for rapid progress, in a country of continental dimensions and diversity—religious, linguistic and ethnic—whose population of about 650 million (548 million at the 1971 census) is spread over 575,936 villages and 2,643 urban centres, which include nine cities with a population of more than a million each.

The need for decentralized, two-way communication in support of development—as distinct from mere publicity for the government's achievements and intentions—was recognized

very early. The document on the First Five Year Plan (December 1952) said:

It is only in terms of local programmes that local leadership and enthusiasm can play their part. The Plan has to be carried into every home in the language and symbols of the people and expressed in terms of their common needs and problems with the assistance of creative writers and artists, which has to be specially enlisted. If obstacles are encountered, and things go wrong anywhere, it would be helpful in every sense if information is imparted candidly and the people are acquainted with the steps being taken to set things right.

The 1969 document on the Fourth Plan acknowledged the problem of a serious information imbalance within the country:

In the spread of information facilities, the imbalance in favour of urban concentrations and prosperous areas continues. There is need for a deliberate attempt to inform the people in the rural areas, and in particular those in backward regions, about the specific schemes in agriculture, forestry, road construction, marketing, the supply of credit and other inputs, so that the benefits of these programmes are more widely spread.

Unlike the Minister of Railways, who receives policy advice from a Railway Board consisting of railway officials with long experience of construction, traffic, finance and other aspects of work of the railways, or the Minister of External Affairs, who is advised by permanent officials who are experienced diplomats, the successive Ministers of Information and Broadcasting since independence have followed the system of relying for policy advice on generalist administrators rather than communication professionals. Liable as the generalist officers of the Indian Administrative Service are to frequent transfer from one central ministry to another, or from the centre to the states, their rate of turnover in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has been even higher than that of the ministers, who are subject to the vicissitudes of political fortune.

As for the communication professionals, they tend to ask in each successive Five Year Plan for expansion of the activities and staff of the particular organization they run. There has been, as a result, an indiscriminate and incremental growth of each communication medium, and not a truly planned development based on studies of relative cost-effectiveness of the different media vis à vis different sections of the population.

Hence, to cite two examples of the waste of scarce resources, there is the misplaced emphasis on print material and the persistence of mobile film vans to screen documentaries of little local relevance in rural areas, notwithstanding the escalation of petroleum prices since 1973.

There has been no experimentation with small-gauge, portable, low-cost film and video technology for local production and dissemination of locally relevant and useful messages or to promote participatory in place of one-way, top-down communication.

In the absence of communication planning worthy of the name, the modern mass media have developed mainly as purveyors of information and entertainment for the urban population and the rural well-to-do; their role as vehicles of non-formal education for improving the material conditions and quality of life of the rural masses has been marginal.

This could not perhaps have been avoided in the case of newspapers, since they are published by diverse interest groups in the private sector, ranging from big business houses to the Communist parties. Daily newspapers increased in numbers and circulation from 330 and 2.5 million respectively in 1954 to 875 and 9.3 million in 1976. But the consumption of newspapers has remained overwhelmingly urban, for the reason that literacy and purchasing power are concentrated in the cities and towns.

Newspapers can address themselves only to their largely urban clientele. Radio and television, which are not constrained by the literacy

barrier, are publicly owned and their growth has been funded in the name of social education. However, these media have also developed as providers of information and entertainment primarily to the 20 per cent of the population who live in cities and towns.

It is the urban dwellers who own 80 per cent of the estimated 25 million radio receivers in the country (the last precise figure of licenced receiving sets, as at the end of December 1977, was 20,091,450). The actual access of rural people to radio is far behind radio's technical reach: the signals from All India Radio's eighty-four broadcasting centres now cover 80 per cent of the area and 90 per cent of the population. The spectacle of the farmer carrying a transistor set to his field—what has been called the transistor revolution—is confined to areas like Punjab and Haryana, where there has been a Green Revolution. Elsewhere, radio listening in rural areas is negligible.

There are about 576,000 villages in India and almost as many schools, but rural community listening sets number less than 50,000—more than half of them might be out of commission at a given time—and radio sets in schools numbered 30,766 at the end of 1977. This being the case, the educational and rural broadcasts have made a token rather than substantial contribution to non-formal education. Most of the school sets are located in secondary schools in cities and towns, whereas primary schools in rural areas need help the most. The effort to popularize new high-yielding varieties of seeds through rural broadcasts has had some success, as for example in the well-irrigated Tanjore district of South India, where, in the 1960s, farmers took to what they called 'radio rice'. But the total number of rural listening-cum-discussion groups organized so far is less than 45,000, and only a small percentage of them are active.

Before turning from radio to television, it will be useful to consider the state of the use of short films (documentaries and newsreels) for social education, since it shares some common problems with television.

The 9,000 cinema houses in the country are required, under a law, to show one or two short educational films along with each screening of a feature film. The documentaries and newsreels supplied by the Films Division to this commercial theatrical circuit are made mostly in urban locations. The same short films are used by audio-visual vans of the central and state governments for free-screening in villages, though few of them have relevance in rural areas. A documentary on family planning, for instance, shows a father of six children standing while the kids pester him for school fees and pocket money. When such a film is screened in a village, the audience is likely to regard the father not as the harassed head of an unduly large family but as a rather lucky urbanite, draped in several yards of white clothing, who can afford cigarettes in contrast to the *beedi* or cheroot of the rural poor.

Again, a film made in one part of rural India cannot evoke audience identification in another region. I once met a group of extension workers engaged in fertilizer promotion in the state of Andhra Pradesh. I asked them whether they had audio-visual vans for screening films on fertilizer use to villagers with little or no access to cinema houses. But, they said, the films were made in locations in Maharashtra and therefore did not click with Andhra Pradesh audiences. Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh are not widely separated parts of the Indian Union but are adjacent states.

Problems of language

The language of the commentaries in the documentaries is often not followed by villagers, because the short films are dubbed in the correct literary form of the major languages of India as spoken by the urban educated. Villagers, on the other hand, use the locally preva-

lent dialectal variant of an Indian language. Take for example Hindi, which is the most widely spoken language of India. It is not one language except in its literary usage. Spoken Hindi is many dialects and languages, such as Garhwali, Haryanvi, Rajasthani and Braj Bhasha.

In some areas where qualified personnel are not locally available for recruitment, the language barrier affects also the person-to-person communication of extension workers in the field. On a visit to Rajasthan as member of a study team on family planning communication, I found that a large percentage of the female extension workers (known as Auxiliary Nurse Midwives) were drawn from the far-away Kerala State. These young women knew Hindi but not the distinctive local variant, which is Rajasthani. They could make themselves understood, but could not follow what the local women said. In family planning, as in other spheres of development communication, it is necessary to relax educational standards to the extent necessary to ensure the recruitment of local personnel for work at the grassroots level. The lag in formal education can be made good through intensive functional training. A beginning has been made in strictly local recruitment in the scheme of Community Health Workers, which was launched in 1977.

Television

The higher costs of programme production and receiver sets required that, even more than in the case of radio, television should be organized as a medium of social education for social consumption on a wide scale. This has not been the case.

The first television centre was established in Delhi in 1959. Though the next centre did not come up till 1972, the die had been cast in 1969, when the government entered into an agreement with the National Aeronautics and Space Ad-

ministration of the United States for a Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE). After 1972, terrestrial television centres came up in rapid succession in six cities: Amritsar, Bombay, Calcutta, Lucknow, Madras and Srinagar. New centres are to be opened during the Sixth Plan (1978–83) in three more cities: Ahmedabad, Bangalore and Trivandrum.

There were 676,618 licenced television receivers in the country at the end of 1977. Most of them are in the four metropolitan cities of Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta and Madras. There is no question of private ownership of television in rural areas except by a few wealthy families.

The other non-SITE city-based stations also put out some programmes on improved agriculture and other aspects of rural development. But they account for a small percentage of total transmission time, the bulk of which is applied to entertainment, news and discussions of current affairs. The most popular television programmes are the screening of feature films. Many among the middle class and the rich who own sets have undertaken the investment as a wholesale purchase of movie entertainment; it is cheaper in the long run to see films on television, and it obviates the discomfort of queuing for tickets.

There are 921 television sets in schools, 538 of them in Delhi and 272 in and around Bombay. Educational television thus augments the already high level of information and education in the urban areas, instead of benefiting those whose need for non-formal education is greatest.

It will be evident from this survey of the four modern mass media that, except for SITE, they have been in no position to reach the rural masses directly. The social education messages carried by them can travel only indirectly to the weaker sections of the population, who constitute the majority, through extension workers and opinion leaders such as the village teacher, chairman of the Panchayat (village council), organizers of industrial trade unions and unions

of agricultural workers, teachers at adult education centres and other social workers.

The modern mass media can play their largely indirect role in social education more effectively if they disseminate information of relevance to the poor more systematically and thereby increase the two-step flow of information. Many information officials and extension workers are recruited from an urban middle class background, and have inadequate knowledge for various agricultural and industrial occupations and the lower rates which actually prevail in many areas, or the availability of bank credit at concessional interest rates for the poor.

The pluses
and minuses of SITE

The Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE), which was conducted for a year from 1 August 1975, was the first occasion on which the government concerned itself not only with the production of rural-interest television programmes and their transmission, but also with their wide-scale social consumption.

Direct reception sets with 24-inch screens were installed in 2,330 villages in backward districts of six states with programmes in four languages: Oriya for Orissa; Hindi for the states of Bihar, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh; Telugu for Andhra Pradesh; and Kannada for Karnataka.

SITE utilized ATS-6, which was made available and put into geostationary orbit by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration of the United States. The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISEO) was responsible for all technical operations of the ground segment, including the maintenance of the direct reception sets. Doordarshan, as the Indian television organization is known, was responsible for the software.

There was a morning transmission of one and a half hours for school children, with pro-

grammes of twenty-two and a half minutes each in the four languages. The programmes covered science education, biographies of great Indians, health education, current affairs and entertainment. The evening transmission of two and a half hours was intended for the rural adult public (though children turned up in the evening too and accounted for well over a third of the audience). It carried news; entertainment programmes, many of which served also to portray the unity underlying India's cultural diversity; and instructional programmes on agricultural improvement, animal husbandry, health, hygiene and nutrition, and family planning. A news bulletin formed part of a half-hour 'national segment' in Hindi, which was telecast in all the six clusters.

In addition to the six clusters served via satellite, a low-power terrestrial television transmitter at Pij, in Gujarat, telecast a one-hour programme each evening. About 500 conventional television sets were installed in 355 villages of Kheda district, with more than one set in several villages. The Pij transmission comprised the half-hour national programme of SITE in Hindi, telecast through rediffusion, and a half-hour Gujarati programme prepared at Ahmedabad under the auspices of ISRO. In several programmes the Charantari dialect prevalent in Kheda district, instead of standard Gujarati, was employed.

While the experiment was an unqualified success in terms of hardware and technical operations, SITE was only a qualified success as an exercise in social education for the rural population.

The software operations presented a more varied and continuous challenge during SITE than the installation and operation of hardware. The main reason for the limited social impact of SITE was that there were only three base production centres (HPCs) to make the bulk of the programmes for villages with varied agroeconomic and cultural backgrounds, many of them more than a thousand kilometres apart.

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Area-specific programmes were therefore minimal. And it is a truth apparent to common sense that decentralized and area-specific programmes, employing the local dialect and depicting the local agro-economic and human landscape, are necessary in any attempt to persuade people to change their attitudes and practices in agriculture or hygiene or, even more so, in family planning.

The commonsense view on the need for area-specificity and the employment of local speech in development communication is borne out by the findings of a research study undertaken by ISRO. It entailed holistic studies by anthropologists in seven villages: one each in the six clusters served by the satellite and, in addition, one village, served by the Pij terrestrial transmitter. The anthropologists lived for about a year and a half in the respective villages for data collection and continuous observation prior to, during and after the conclusion of SITE. Their findings have been written up by Dr Binod Agrawal in a report that says:

The linguistic profile of these villages shows a higher use of dialects than the standard language of the region . . . None of the languages spoken in the villages were used on TV except in Dadusar where Charautari was utilized to some extent. Furthermore, the use of English-sounding technical names (in programmes on agriculture and animal husbandry) compounded the problem . . . If the programmes were entertaining enough in terms of songs and dances, language did not become a barrier. Due to this reason, recreational programmes of other clusters were viewed with enthusiasm in all the villages . . . The Hindi common news was almost ineffective in all villages . . . The problem of lip synchronization affected the credibility of the TV medium to an extent (in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka which used one video and two audio channels).[1]

The last observation is at variance with the claim made in the foreword of a report[2] based on a study in the two states that 'our experiment conducted in the Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka

clusters has had encouraging results. This finding has wide potential for application in most of the developing countries'.

Opposite opinions on the efficacy of SITE as a communication exercise (as distinct from the success of the hardware operation) have been expressed by the authors of the reports on the in-house survey[3] conducted by ISRO and of the Planning Commission survey that has been referred to already. The first entailed the interview thrice of about 6,500 respondents in twelve experimental and six control villages in each cluster: for base-line survey prior to, and for assessing impact during and on the conclusion of SITE. The Planning Commission survey, also in three rounds, covered a smaller sample of 1,600, divided between five experimental and five control villages from each of the six clusters.

The two surveys differ not so much in the actual findings of positive and negative changes in levels of information or in attitude—both cite some instances of greater gain in the control villages!—as in the interpretation of the data, and in the resulting verdict on SITE. Whereas the ISRO survey tends to be self-congratulatory, the Planning Commission survey is skeptical.

Impediments to research

Unfortunately, all the research studies conducted during SITE, including the above two, were vitiated by the prevailing atmosphere of fear of the government on the part of Indian citizens. SITE began a little over a month after the establishment of emergency by the government.

Even in normal times Indian villagers are suspicious of all strangers—officials or researchers—who approach them for information on the extent of their landholding or income, or their attitude towards government-sponsored programmes. It was unrealistic to expect them to respond candidly to questions put to them, specially by interviewers identified with the government, during the emergency.

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In the circumstances, the holistic study appears to be the most reliable guide to the social impact of SITE. The anthropologists—unlike the visiting interviewers—lived for a year and a half in the respective villages and could continuously observe at close range the nature and extent of impact of television viewing in the seven villages.

The impact of the telecasts from the terrestrial transmitter at Pij, which put out part of the programmes in the local speech, comes through more impressively from the holistic study than that of the telecasts via satellite. However, interesting cases are also reported of the adoption of improved agricultural and health practices—but not of family planning—as the result of television viewing in villages in the six SITE clusters.

INSAT-I

In the absence of conclusive evidence of SITE having proved effective in terms of social impact, the planners have not so far included any financial provision in the Five Year Plan (1978–83) to utilize for telecasts the first Indian-owned satellite (INSAT-I), which is expected to be put into orbit in 1981.

The satellite, which is being purchased from the Ford Aero-Space Corporation of the United States, will be multi-purpose: it will have twelve transponders for telephony; a second payload for collecting meteorological data; and a third payload consisting of two transponders that can be used for telecasts and radio networking.

The only use of the third payload firmly planned so far is for strengthening the sound broadcasting network. All India Radio does not have a network of cable, microwave, MW and SW transmitters of sufficient strength and interference-free reliability to provide nation-wide delivery of signals of satisfactory quality. INSAT-I will strengthen the radio network, to transmit programmes of national interest—music, or running commentaries on Independence Day or Republic Day celebrations or on sports events or broadcasts to the nation by the President or Prime Minister.

Apart from providing the radio networking facility as an incidental benefit, the two transponders to be fitted on INSAT-I will have the capacity to telecast one video and one audio channel each. The experiment with one video and two audio channels during SITE has evidently been deemed unsatisfactory. Whether, when and what use will be made of the two transponders for telecasts is an open question.

The best way to utilize the telecast facility of INSAT-I would be, it seems to this writer, to serve certain parts of India that are sparsely populated and where terrestrial television transmission will be forbiddingly expensive. Additionally, the satellite can be utilized to enable the simultaneous telecast throughout the country of events of national significance whose coverage would be predominantly visual rather than verbal, such as the Republic Day pageant. There will be problems of language even in the marginal use of INSAT-I suggested here, as there will be in any use of a satellite for communication in a polyglot country.

For the rest of India, there should ideally be a large number of low-power terrestrial transmitters to provide localised programmes in the local speech, based on formative research and responsive to feedback. The next best course would be to have a dozen or more high-power terrestrial stations, with the necessary number of relay transmitters, to provide programmes for, and produced in, each of the major linguistic-cultural regions of India.

All this, however, presupposes the availability of abundant resources to expand television as a means of social education. That is not the case.

District-level broadcasting

A government-appointed working group studied and made recommendations in 1977 on the

future pattern of growth, and the appropriate form of autonomous organization of radio and television.

Their report urged the establishment of a chain of local radio stations at district level and, similarly, television stations with low-power transmitters for providing programmes of local appeal and relevance. The report ably sums up the principles of sound social education:

Instructional broadcasting presupposes specific small audiences in terms of age (for example, school broadcasts) and in terms of agro-climatic and socio-cultural variables including language. Decentralised and participative development from below suggests the need for decentralised messages through local radio and television. We would envisage the Station as something more than a single studio-transmission complex, distant and seemingly exclusive, or even inaccessible to the people it is intended to serve. Instead, we envisage at the local level a small and relatively simply equipped 'mother station' with a cluster around it of small recording units and programming facilities which will help bring broadcasting to the people and the people to broadcasting. This consideration applies both to radio and television.[4]

They stressed that the station manager should not only have the responsibility of running his station but of organizing listening or viewing groups within the range of his transmitters. This is a far-reaching recommendation. When implemented, it will provide rural access to radio and television for the first time on a large scale. However, in view of the resources constraint, the group recommended first priority for providing local sound broadcasting at district level. The number of districts is 392.

A great advantage of decentralized broadcasting is that it can help to preserve the traditional and folk forms of communication and apply them for contemporary purposes. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has a Song and Drama Division, and many state governments also make use of troupes of traditional media performers. But live perform-

ances are difficult and expensive to organize, and therefore have been few in relation to the scale of the need to reach the minds and hearts of the rural population through their own community media. District-level broadcasting will enable a quantum jump in the utilization of the community media for social education.

These media include ballads, folk drama and various forms of stylized narration, of which every cultural region of India has a rich heritage. They bear witness to the fact that entertainment versus instruction is a false antithesis. Depending on the content, entertainment can be the best form of social education, even as formal education can lead to alienation.

Policy unmatched by performance

The initiatives described above are laudable but the follow-up action has not been impressive. An example of administrative slackness is the easy and lazy prescription of the availability of electricity as a condition for the installation of community viewing television sets in the coverage area even of the post-SITE terrestrial stations, though SITE had demonstrated the workability of battery-operated television receivers.

A second example is the failure to provide local studio facilities for post-SITE telecasting. The six post-SITE 'rural stations' are—except in the case of Hyderabad—merely transmitters, which are fed by the same three Base Production Centres of SITE. The Delhi BPC continues to prepare programmes in Hindi for transmission in the three widely separated states of Bihar, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. All three BPCs have extremely limited facilities by way of O.B. vans and portapacks.

Out of the six post-SITE 'rural' stations, two—Jaipur and Hyderabad—are state capitals. There, a large number of middle- and upper-class residents acquired television sets in the

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hope of adding this latest amenity to the range of their entertainment. However, these stations are required to put out programmes of predominantly rural interest. This has left the well-to-do television families disappointed and angry. Ironically, it has brought negligible benefit to the intended beneficiaries because of the lack of viewing facilities on any large scale in villages. About 1,800 of the SITE direct reception sets have so far been converted for terrestrial reception and installed in the area covered by the post-SITE transmitters. The central government is handing over to the states the responsibility it had undertaken during SITE for community viewing. It will hereafter be for the state governments to maintain the community viewing sets and augment their number. This implies the likelihood of the rural population in the backward states, who need television most for adult education and agricultural extension, having the least exposure to it.

In respect of sound broadcasting the 1978–83 Plan provided, for the first time, for the establishment of five low-power radio stations for operation at district level on an experimental basis, each station broadcasting in the locally prevalent dialect instead of the literary form of the regional language. This radical experiment in local broadcasting is yet to be launched.

Again, from all accounts available so far the National Adult Education Programme has got off to a feeble start both quantitatively in terms of number of adult education centres which have started work, and qualitatively in terms of the social education they provide. The programme has worked well only where it has been taken up by dedicated voluntary workers.

Altogether, the performance has thus been poor in follow-up of the promise held out in 1977 of new beginnings in the multiple directions of formal schooling, adult education, decentralized and participatory broadcasting, and improved political participation.

Though this has caused disappointment, it is clear that there can be no better strategy of social education for the 1980s. It is to be hoped that the new central government will give more concrete shape to, and implement with vigour, the four-pronged strategy for improving the quality of life of the economically deprived millions of the world's largest democracy.

Notes

1. Binod C. Agrawal, 'Television Comes to a Village: An Evaluation of SITE', ISRO, Ahmedabad, October 1978 (mimeo.).
2. 'One Video-Two Audio Transmission in SITE', Audience Research Unit, All India Radio, Hyderabad; November 1976 (mimeo.).
3. Binod C. Agrawal, J. K. Doshi, Victor Jesudason and K. K. Verma, 'Social Impact of SITE on Adults', ISRO, Ahmedabad, September 1977 (mimeo.).
4. Akash Bharati: National Broadcast Trust, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, New Delhi, February 1978.