Module 1 Unit 1

This is a **OPTIONAL READING.**

Melkote, S.R., & Steeves, H.L. (2001). Communication for development in the third world: Theory and practice for empowerment (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. pp. 19-45.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNICATION, DEVELOPMENT, AND EMPOWERMENT IN THE THIRD WORLD

There is no universal path to development.
Each society must find its own strategy.
Friberg and Hettne (1985: 220)

The second half of the 20th century brought a tradition of communication research and practice geared toward Third World development needs, an area that has come to be known as *development communication*. Research and projects addressing development communication flourished during the First Development Decade in the 1960s. The works of Daniel Lerner (1958), Wilbur Schramm (1964), Everett Rogers (1962, 1969), and many others such as Fredrick Frey, Lucien Pye, and Lakshmana Rao, attested to this lively interest.

Since the 1970s, Western development aid and all facets of the process, including communication, have been challenged. Many large and expensive projects promoting social change have failed to help their intended recipients, or have resulted in even worsened conditions for them. Development's primary focus on economic growth has ignored other crucial,

yet non-material aspects of human need. Further, economic development aid has contributed to much corruption and large gaps between the wealthy elite and the masses in Third World countries. Charges of gender bias, ethnocentrism and even racism abound in the literature of development studies and development communication as well. Increasingly, scholars have debated the value, purpose, and meaning of communication for development, debates which certainly parallel those on development itself.

This book explores the scholarship and practice of communication for development and empowerment in the Third World. However, the exploration cannot begin without first clarifying our understandings of key concepts, and how these meanings compare and contrast with how others use and define them. The most obvious are the four concepts in the title of the book and this chapter: *communication, development, empowerment*, and *Third World*. Combinations of these four yield additional concepts and accompanying controversies as well. Definitions of development communication vary not only with definitions of the terms that comprise it, but are also complicated by assumptions about related areas of study and practice. These include *development education, development journalism, international communication, transnational communication, international journalism, cross-cultural*, and *intercultural communication*. Most readily agree that development communication is concerned with the role of communication in social change, but so are all of these other fields. Of course there are substantial differences in focus, emphasis and scope, but these need to be explicated in each instance.

Terminology is a problem *within* the rubric of development communication and related areas, and varies enormously from text to text. The distinctions made between *development communication* (DC) and *development support communication* (DSC) constitute one example.[1] Other areas of continued contradiction and confusion include the distinction between *development communication* and *communication development*, and the meaning of *participatory communication*.[2]

The definition and boundaries of all these overlapping interdisciplinary areas have become even more fluid and nebulous in the past decade. The end of the Cold War, alongside greater polarization along ethnic, religious, and nationalistic lines, increased transnationalization, greatly increased information flow and influence, and a growing consciousness of marginalized groups and diminishing resources have challenged and changed the issues and questions.

Throughout this volume, beginning here, we attempt to untangle the contested and overlapping meanings of these terms and the areas of study and practice they signify. At the same time, we argue for the integrity and value of development communication. We agree that old views of the field are no longer appropriate. Yet, as long as development projects are carried out, development communication will take place. Planned yet self-reflexive communication, accounting for mistakes of the past, will remain crucial to the relative success—and ongoing transformation—of development.

Third World

We retain the term "Third World" in the title of the book's second edition quite deliberately, recognizing that the term is controversial and many would not make this choice. Hence, we take some space to explain our decision and our assumptions about the Third World, including its location and its characteristics.

What is the Third World?[3] Annual surveys of undergraduate students in the authors' classes show that while classifications of alignment/non-alignment no longer contribute to popular conceptions of the term, connotations of poverty, unemployment, famine, overpopulation, and economic underdevelopment remain strong. These connotations are contrasted to those of First World, which is the opposite.

John Isbister (1991) traces the Third World notion to 18th-century France, where the three social classes were described as the first, second, and third estates. The first and second estates had the political power. The term third estate, or *tiers état*, became a revolutionary slogan during the French Revolution, which began in 1789 and sought to win and transfer political power from an elite few to the third estate.

Most scholars credit the French demographer Alfred Sauvy with first using the term Third World in a global sense (Isbister 1991; Pletsch 1981). However, they disagree somewhat on what Sauvy meant by the term. According to Isbister, in observing the state of the world following World War II, Sauvy saw that the majority were dispossessed and excluded, as had been the third estate in 18th-century France. Isbister (1991: 15) further notes that revolutionary theorists such as Jean-Paul Sartre used the term

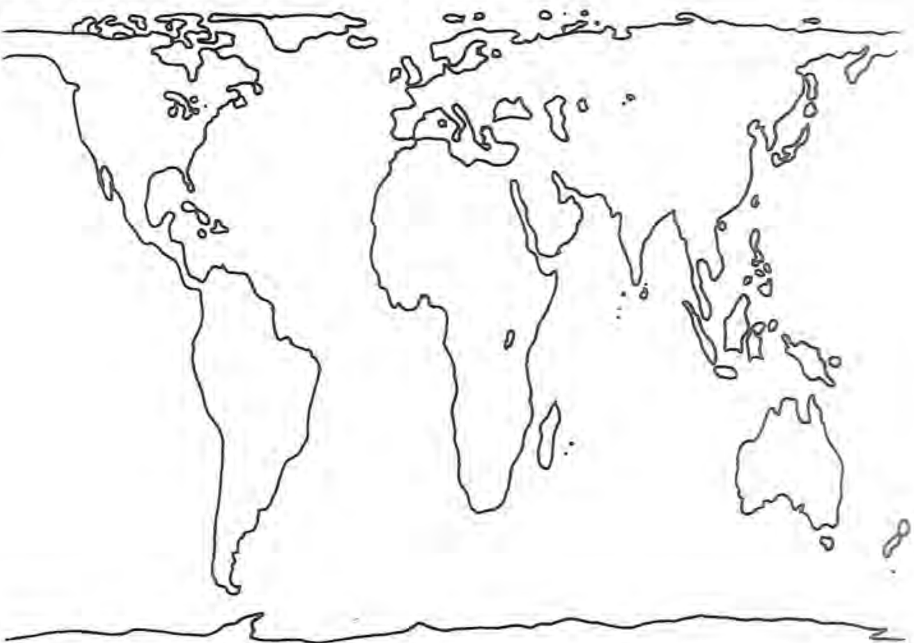
as "the banner of the hungry and oppressed." Pletsch (1981), however, illustrates how Sauvy used the term in the context of the Cold War, to describe the "neutral" contested part of the world, the part that both the First and Second Worlds wished to conquer.

Regardless of Sauvy's original intent, the term quickly converted to a political category implying neutralism in the context of the Cold War. In this sense, many politicians, journalists, social scientists, and others suddenly found the term useful in the early 1950s. The idea was also taken up by the Non-Aligned Movement, which included countries that did not wish to be officially aligned with either the West or the East. This group included many ex-colonies that gained political independence in the 1950s and 1960s.

Today, the major connotation of Third World is "underdeveloped," or simply "poor." So, in the popular imagination, the world now is divided into modern versus traditional (or poor) parts and the modern part was subdivided until 1989 into communist (or socialist) and free parts (Pletsch 1981). Now it tends to be simply a division between modern and poor. This picture is somewhat complicated by the emergence of so-called newly industrializing countries (e.g., Taiwan, South Korea, Mexico, Brazil, Singapore, Hong Kong, and the Philippines), yet the global geographic distinctions remain primary. Most of our students in the US think of Third World as economically poor, and as places in Africa, most of Latin America, Asia, and the Pacific.

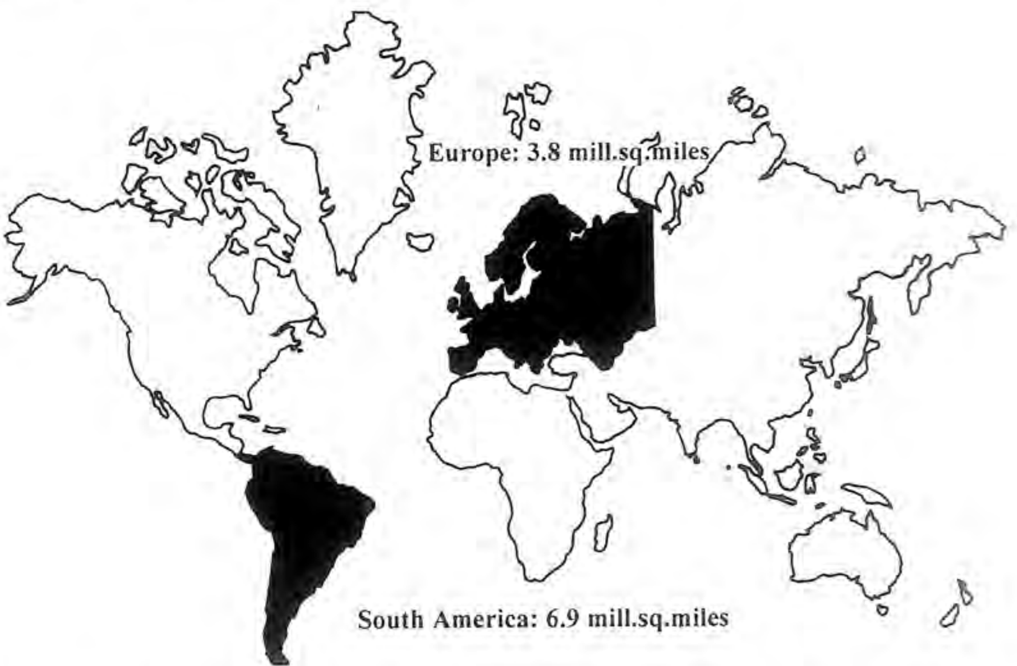
This geographic picture is reinforced by the most common Mercator map projections of the world on a flat surface (see Figures 1.1 to 1.3). The Mercator projection was developed in the 16th century as an aid to navigation, but eventually it became a reference base on which to put any kind of geographical information. The projection maintains directional accuracy[4] and reproduces shapes quite well. However, the price paid is that distances and areas are magnified toward the Poles, so that Greenland, for instance, looks enormous compared to what it really is relative to Southern landmasses such as Africa and South America. Many say that Mercator's projection promotes a Eurocentric view of the world. The North Pole is at the top. Europe is in the center and is disproportionately large. Also, only the top two-thirds of the globe are usually shown and the equator is down toward the bottom of the map, which further emphasizes countries in the North. Therefore, it may be argued that this popular visual reinforces the geographic conception of the Third World, i.e., of Third World as other, smaller, and apart.

Figure 1.1
World Map: Mercator Projection Comparing the North and South



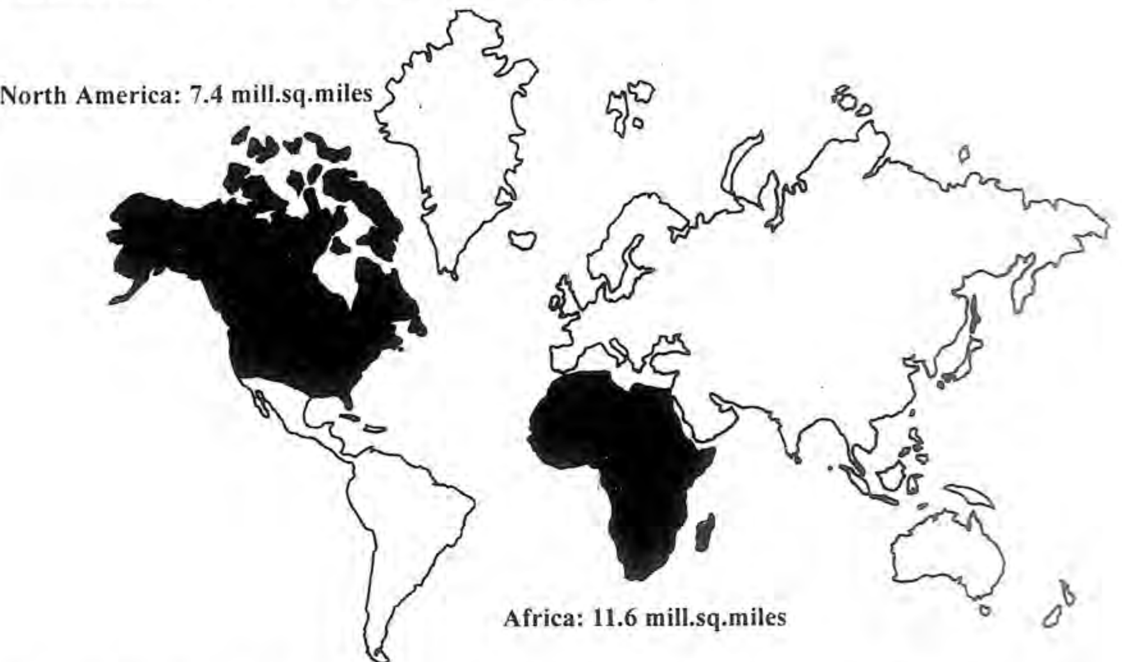
Note: The Mercator map distorts the world to the advantage of European colonial powers. "The North" is half as large as "The South," though it appears to be much larger on the Mercator map.
Source: Arno Peters. *Map of the World: Peters Projection.* © Akademische Verlagsanstalt. Distributed in North America by Friendship Press. Used by permission.

Figure 1.2
World Map: Mercator Projection Comparing Europe and South America



Note: The Mercator map shows Europe larger than South America, which is almost double the size of Europe.
Source: Arno Peters. *Map of the World: Peters Projection.* © Akademische Verlagsanstalt. Distributed in North America by Friendship Press. Used by permission.

Figure 1.3
World Map: Mercator Projection Comparing North America and Africa



Note: In the Mercator map North America appears to be larger than Africa, which in fact is much larger.
Source: Arno Peters. *Map of the World: Peters Projection.* © Akademische Verlagsanstalt. Distributed in North America by Friendship Press. Used by permission.

ERRATA

Melkote: ***Communication for Development in the Third World, 2nd Edition***

We regret that the following errors have occurred on pages 23 and 27 of the text.

Page 23: Figure 1.1 should feature the map printed on page 27.

Page 27: Figure 1.4 should feature the map printed on page 23.

The captions on pages 23 and 27 however are to remain where they are.

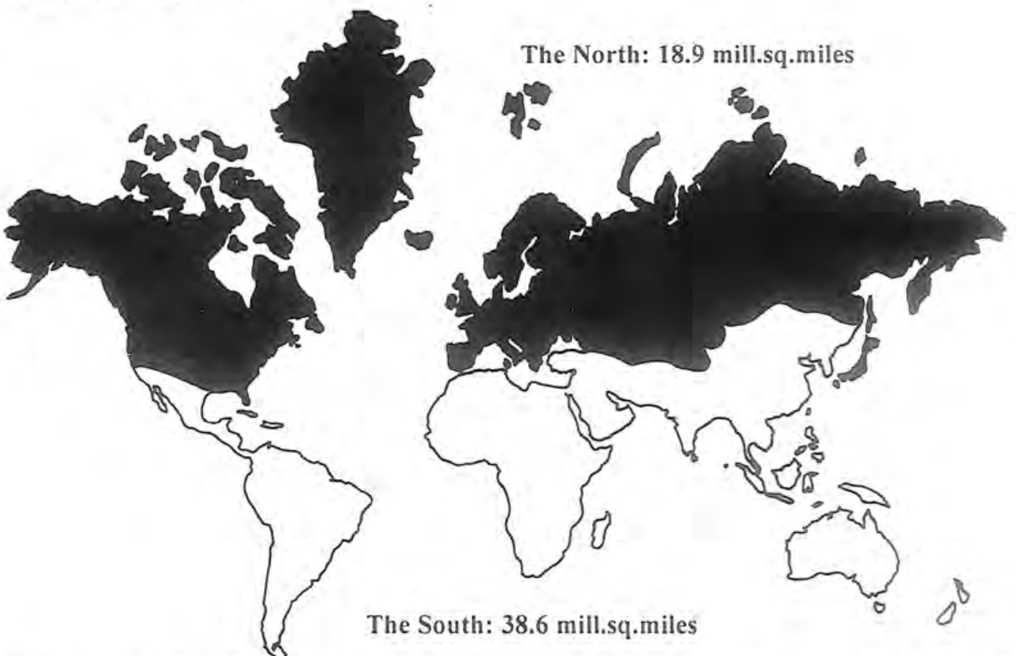
Newer map projections, such as the Peters projection (Figure 1.4) attempt to correct some of these problems. The Peters projection is an "equal areas" projection, meaning that all quadrants on the map represent equal land or sea areas. Also the equator is in the center. However, here, shapes are distorted, so that land areas toward the equator are elongated in a North–South direction and land areas toward the Poles are elongated in an East–West direction.

Statistics show that countries that most people think of as the Third World do have certain economic commonalties: they are usually characterized by less technological and linguistic integration within their own societies and with the rest of the world than are so-called First World countries and newly industrializing countries, by lower levels of industrialization, by greater poverty, and by less access to life's necessities and comforts. These broad commonalties are well illustrated on maps that use colors and geometric manipulations to show demographic difference (Kidron and Segal 1995).[5] Of course, some countries—especially in sub-Saharan Africa—reveal more extreme circumstances than others do. Hence, the term *Fourth World* has been used to refer to the most economically poor regions of the Third World.

Given these realities, is there a better term than Third World, one with more positive connotations? Many prefer *developing countries*. Yet, that term implies that some countries have finished developing and have "arrived," whereas others still struggle. Another is *less developed countries* (*LDCs*), which has some advantages in that it does not give the impression that a "Third" exists distinct from First and Second. But is the world "less" any more complimentary—and positive—than "Third?" The same criticism may be made of the term *underdeveloped countries*. Additionally, the term *South*—versus *North*—has been used. Simply scanning maps and statistics shows this categorization is overgeneralized, as many economically disadvantaged countries are in the North and some arguably First World countries are in the South, such as Australia and New Zealand. Finally, since the so-called Third World in fact constitutes two-thirds of the world, some have used the term *two-thirds world* to make the point.

While all of these terms have some advantages, we note that all of them—developing countries, LDCs, South, and two-thirds world—still delineate the Third World by geography. A major problem with the geographic criterion is that while characterizations like unintegrated, poor, and agricultural, may be somewhat legitimate in distinguishing the Third World from the modern part of the world, they greatly overemphasize

Figure 1.4
World Map: Peters Projection



Source: Arno Peters. "World Map: Peters Projection." In Ward L. Kaiser, *A New View of the World: Handbook to the World Map: Peters Projection.* © 1987 by Friendship Press. Used by permission.

the importance of these characterizations in comparison to others (Pletsch 1981). That is, in lumping together all Third World countries based on these characterizations, we ignore gigantic differences between them in other areas—historical backgrounds, cultural traditions, geographical conditions, and language situations. Take, for example, Honduras, the Philippines, and Nigeria. Is it really meaningful to describe and analyze the role of communication in all of these countries as a group? Maybe in a very general economic sense it is. But unless one takes specific national, regional, or local conditions into account, this understanding can never lead to any sensible practical applications.

Another argument against the geographic conception is that a Third World exists within the so-called First World and vice versa. Many people and groups within the First World are disadvantaged in ways that are similar to the disadvantages of the Third World. As long as we use countries as units of analysis to categorize them as First, Second, or Third World, we may be glossing over serious ethnic, regional, and class divisions within countries. For example, Tehranian (1994: 275) categorized India as a combination of First and Third Worlds. "It can be divided into three distinct groups: (*i*) an underdeveloped agrarian and semi-urban population of about 350 million, (*ii*) a developing industrial population of about 100 million putting India among the top-10 industrial nations, and (*iii*) a developed middle class of nearly 400 million" making it one of the largest middle classes in the world. Similar divisions may also be seen in industrialized countries such as the United States where there are geographically and socially isolated impoverished groups. Therefore, as one scholar cautions:

> To divide the world into "developing" and "developed" nations hides the fact that in most countries there are also groups of affluent and wealthy people, who form part of [a] global web of people with similar living standards and united by common economic interest and often similar educational background (Ernberg 1998: 113).

Yet, does moving away from the geographic distinction merely extend the presumption that a certain type of economic development must occur in all disadvantaged societies globally? Pletsch (1981: 576) notes the modernization presumption underlying the economic distinctions:

> The governing distinctions underlying the three worlds scheme—traditional/modern and ideological/free—not only allocate the most diverse

societies and cultures to the same categories, they also imply a pseudo-chronological or historical relationship among the categories themselves. The traditional societies are all destined to become modern ones, according to this scheme, somehow and to some degree.

To address all of these problems, some prefer to define Third World in terms of oppression by some combination of race, class, gender, and nation, which then becomes inclusive of groups living within industrialized countries. The recognition of oppression does not necessarily imply a particular type of development as the solution. It merely affirms the struggle for empowerment (Isbister 1991; Mohanty 1991a). We concur with this view of Third World, which is consistent with its revolutionary origins, connoting opposition to systematic disadvantage by class, race, ethnicity, language, and/or national origin. Therefore, we assume that *development* and *development communication*, the central concepts of this book, are not processes that occur a long way away, but occur everywhere, in virtually any community on the planet.

At the same time, we recognize that the most extreme and widespread situations of poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, hunger, disease, sanitation, and refugee displacement are located in geographic areas conventionally labeled the Third World. Therefore, much of what we say—and most of our examples—have geographic specificity consistent with the conventional conceptions of Third World. We will use the terms developing countries, South, and Third World interchangeably when used in this sense. At the same time, we emphasize that the ideas and processes we describe are not geographically specific, and that development, communication, empowerment, and development communication can occur everywhere.

COMMUNICATION

Issues of words and language are certainly issues of communication. As the media of mass communication spread in the early 20th century, the potential for terms like Third World to be transmitted and legitimized greatly increased. Scholars in fields such as sociology, psychology, and

political science increasingly questioned mass media's influence and potential to effect change—both in individuals and in society. These questions led to a plethora of communication models and accompanying assumptions and theories about the components of the process, the process itself, and the context in which communication takes place, as different communication contexts have yielded their own sub-fields of communication studies. As we shall see, scholars of communication and development have created models consistent with development contexts and goals.

The earliest models of communication describes or assumes a relatively linear process whereby someone sends a message to someone else via a channel and gets a response, called feedback. Interference in the process—whether psychological or environmental—is often called noise. This exchange process may occur on more or less equal basis. But when the initiative and ability lie overwhelmingly with the sender, the result is an impersonal, one-way flow of messages. Of course, this is the case with mass communication, where the media create and send messages, with few opportunities for feedback from audience members and seldom via the same channels. Given the sheer volume of messages transmitted by the mass media and broad media access, especially in societies with market economies, early theories assumed that mass media had considerable power to inform and influence.

Much has happened since the 1950s and 1960s when the early models and theories of communication were being devised. Empirical research revealed flaws in these ideas, pointing to the need for considerable refinement to account for differences in context and audience demographics. Additionally, enormous advances have been made in communication technologies, resulting in rapid increases in information flows globally. Radio and television stations have multiplied exponentially. The Internet is revolutionizing our home and work environments, as is the cellular phone and fax machine. All this has largely been a result of the convergence of three technological inventions: computers, which provide information-storage and data-transfer capacities previously unknown; satellites, which relay information over vast distances quickly; and digitization, which converts any kind of communication data—pictures, sound, text—to a binary code that can be readily transmitted, decoded and delivered to the intended individual or audience.

Social scientists interested in questions of message transfer and effects have developed increasingly sophisticated hypotheses to address

problems with the early theories and also to account for the increased complexity of the communication environment. Studies based on these new theories have supported the role and power of mass media in, for example: setting an agenda for public discourse; influencing public opinion; persuading or educating in the context of planned campaigns; providing role models for children and others to imitate; providing varied gratifications that may meet audience needs; and cultivating audiences' perceptions of society, in a manner more consistent with media content than statistical reality (McQuail 1994). New information technologies have inspired new and more elaborate arguments about the power of these technologies to deliver information, set agendas, persuade, socialize, educate, satisfy myriad audience needs, and democratize societies.

At the same time that social scientists have been analyzing mass media's effects on society, critical scholars have challenged the relatively linear nature of the models and their isolation from economic and political processes in society. These scholars assumed links between culture and communication in the idea of communication as shared meaning, versus information transmission or persuasion (Carey 1989). Communication is the maintenance, modification, and creation of culture. In this sense, the processes and institutions of communication, of culture, and of development are all woven together. It becomes impossible to think of communication as predominantly a process of information transmission.

Because of the assumed inseparability of culture and communication, many critical scholars argue that communication reinforces hegemonic values and priorities in society. The hegemonic process is assumed to be subtle and seductive, such that most audience members do not resist the values embedded in messages; and, in fact, they actively accept them. The fact that hegemony allows the mainstream transmission of some alternative perspectives gives an illusion of balance, even though only selected non-mainstream messages are allowed, messages that can be most easily co-opted by the dominant system. Hence, a major focus of much critical work is to carry out textual analyses that expose the dominant values embedded in media content, based on the assumption that exposure alone provides an important consciousness-raising function that may challenge hegemony. There are many textual conventions that powerful groups use to reinforce dominant messages, conventions supported by standard traditions and values of media practice. These include, for instance, making light of non-mainstream views, undercounting those with alternative views, overemphasizing support for mainstream views,

and an over-reliance on government and corporate sources. Media traditions that reinforce these conventions include focusing on events versus on context, on conflict versus on consensus, and on individuals versus on groups. Additionally, economic motives, deadlines, and competition between journalists contribute to what gets in the media and how it is represented.[6]

One key tool on which we will briefly elaborate is language and the selection of labels that support hegemonic agendas. Several prominent critical theorists and philosophers have developed arguments about the power of the dominant discourse to shape society and in fact create reality. There are numerous historic examples of this. For instance, in missionary and colonial times all African people were classified into "tribes" headed by "chiefs" regardless of the hierarchical or egalitarian nature of the group (Staudt 1991: 12). This was a way to establish linguistic relationships of superiority and inferiority consistent with the values and style of Europeans. In contemporary society, it is frequently evident in the news that the policy or public relations implications of word choices outweigh accuracy in selections, as the United States' initial refusal to use the word *genocide* for the 1994 Rwandan slaughter of Tutsis by Hutus.

A careful examination of the language and imagery of development certainly provides insights into values and agendas of those communicating. Earlier we discussed the term Third World and alternatives to that term. One alternative is *underdeveloped*. Suppose instead that the term *overexploited* is used. The meaning changes immediately in a way that may challenge our usual ways of thinking. Further, many nouns and adjectives have been used to describe people in developing countries—including here in this volume. In recent articles and texts, it appears that *peasant* is no longer acceptable for general use.[7] However, many other terms appear to be used nearly interchangeably. These include: *poor, oppressed, marginalized, disadvantaged, peripheral, exploited, neglected, excluded, disempowered, dispossessed, disenfranchised, devalued, vulnerable*, and *underprivileged*. Even the term *development starved* has been used (Moemeka 1994). This set of labels suggests substantial variation in intended meaning and appropriate context of use. Some labels appear ethnocentric, depending on the context. Others appear more politically correct. Staudt (1991: 14) points out that in the context of development projects, the individuals to whom technologies or services are directed are commonly referred to as *targets*, suggesting military

imagery, or as *beneficiaries*, suggesting welfare imagery and also assuming a positive outcome. While most scholars and practitioners of development communication want to avoid offence, it is clear that subtle—and sometimes blatant—forms of racism, sexism, and ethnocentrism do remain evident, and must be continuously examined and exposed.

In addition to theorizing relationships between communication and culture and examining the power of the dominant discourse, critical scholars have focused much attention on the role of large institutions in controlling global communications. They point out that the organizations that are most influential in disseminating information are the largest ones, including private corporations, foundations, governments and their branches, and major political parties. These large political and economic institutions have power and influence over the manufacture and distribution of hardware, provision of training, decisions about message channels, the creation of messages, and export of cultural products (e.g., television programs) in a manner consistent with their values. Some of the largest organizations today are the transnational corporations. "Most governments do not have an economic power matching that of large transnational companies and are unable to control the global flow of capital, which often affects the development of nations more than political decisions" (Ernberg 1998: 113–14).

The inventions of the information age have strengthened critical scholars' concerns and arguments about large political and corporate institutions, and their roles in influencing global cultural change supportive of Western economic, political, and ideological values. Critical scholars concede that hegemony is never complete, and that resistance is possible. The Internet, in particular, allows greatly expanded possibilities for information access, information sharing, and coalition-building by marginalized groups. Yet possibilities translate into realities for very few, and most of the world's people have still not talked on the telephone. Illiteracy and other barriers and biases make Internet access still inconceivable for the vast majority.

In sum, many scholars and practitioners continue to think of communication as a relatively linear process of information transmission, causing or contributing to change in knowledge, attitudes and/or behaviors. Others view communication as a much more complex process, inseparable from culture, which is sustained and challenged by global and local economic, political, and ideological structures and processes.

Development

Like communication, development means different things to different scholars and practitioners. Therefore, the theory and practice of development communication cannot be meaningfully discussed without defining development as well as communication. Although the importance of defining development should be obvious, relatively few studies of development communication bother to do so, leaving it to the reader to figure out the authors' assumptions. Jo Ellen Fair and Hemant Shah (1997) looked at 140 recent studies of communication and development and found that only about a third conceptualized development.

Where definitions are provided, understandings about development do vary greatly. Though most would agree that development means improving the living conditions of society, there has been much debate on just what constitutes improved living conditions and how they should be achieved. In later chapters we will detail three perspectives or ways of thinking about and practicing development in considerable detail. Here we introduce them briefly.

The first is *modernization*, based on neo-classical economic theory, and promoting and supporting capitalist economic development. This perspective assumes that the Western model of economic growth is applicable elsewhere, and that the introduction of modern technologies is important in development. Evidence of modernization can be readily observed in local-level projects that aim to persuade people to adopt technologies, and also in the macro-level policies of governments and aid organizations that pressure Third World countries to sacrifice education and human services for economic growth.

Critical perspectives constitute a second way of thinking about development. These perspectives challenge the economic and cultural expansionism and imperialism of modernization; and they argue for political and economic restructuring to produce a more even distribution of rewards in society. These perspectives do a good job of exposing and critiquing the flaws of modernization, yet they have been less successful so far in proposing concrete alternatives, and they seldom form the primary basis of funded development projects.

Liberation or *monastic* perspectives constitute the third area of scholarship and practice on development that we highlight in this volume. The Brazilian educator Paolo Freire (1973) is among the most well-known

proponents of development as liberation. These perspectives derive largely from liberation theology, which prioritizes personal and communal liberation from oppression, as the key to empowerment and self-reliance, which is the goal of development. Liberation theology assumes that all people want to become fully human, which means free and self-reliant, and that they have the internal capacity to develop themselves on their own terms. However, internal and external forms of oppression restrict their ability to do so. Therefore, the purpose of development is liberation from oppression, with a focus on both individuals and communities. Large Western governments and corporations constitute one major source of oppression because they are motivated by a desire to make a profit, which usually means that workers, consumers, and others are exploited in the process. However, liberation theology argues that the oppressors are oppressed too, because they don't realize that their oppression is dehumanizing. The human potential of all is therefore best reached by working toward universal human liberation. As long as oppressors and oppressed exist, neither can be free.

This mode of thought differs from the other two (i.e., modernization and critical perspectives) in that the basic premises and goals are primarily spiritual, not economic; however, material realities are not ignored as in other theologies. Liberation theology recognizes links between material and non-material needs and the impact of unmet material needs and economic exploitation on spiritual growth. Proponents of liberation perspectives do not necessarily side with critics of modernization. The basic premise is that individuals must be free to choose, and that their choice is not inevitably against the values of modernization.

It is important to emphasize that the three perspectives highlighted here and elsewhere in this book are neither mutually exclusive nor exhaustive. They certainly overlap, and in fact we will argue that all three offer valuable insights and arguments. Further, there are other themes in the scholarship and practice of development that intersect with these three that have challenged their assumptions and methodologies. These include the *basic needs, sustainable development*, and *women and development* perspectives or themes, all introduced in the early 1970s. The *basic needs* perspective argues for prioritizing the survival needs of the world's poor—versus assuming that the benefits of infrastructure development will "trickle down." Another significant theme has been the *sustainable development* or *sustainable environment* perspective. This perspective assumes that maintaining the biological diversity of the plant is essential to the survival of humanity. Hence development that does not prioritize environmental

sustainability is doomed to fail. A third major theme or perspective is *women in development* (WID) or, more recently, *gender and development* (GAD). Proponents of this perspective demonstrate that most development aid has ignored or marginalized women's views and interests. As women's roles are central to most development goals, failing to consider women seriously jeopardizes project success.

Empowerment

Another key—and controversial—concept that we explore in this book is *empowerment*. The construct of empowerment is mentioned frequently in the communication and development literature, but terms, exemplars, levels of analysis, and outcomes have not been fully explicated. Empowerment cannot be understood without first defining *power*. As scholars and practitioners, it is important that we consider power and control in development theory and practice. From Foucault (1980), we assume that power is meaningful only in social relations. It is constituted in a network of social relationships. There are several kinds of relational power (Rowlands 1998: 13). These include: power over (controlling power); power to (generate new possibilities without domination); power with (collective power, power created by group process); and power from within (spiritual strength that inspires and energizes others). "Power over" is especially relevant here, as it refers to those who have access to formal decision-making process. *Real* change may not be possible unless we address power inequities between marginalized individuals and groups at the grassroots and those who make policy and aid decisions. The other kinds of power—power to, power with, and power from within—may be instrumental in attaining greater power over.

Like power and the other concepts explored in this chapter, empowerment means different things to different people. In recent years, much has been written about alternative, highly participatory, empowerment-oriented approaches to development. These are varied, and they are not mutually exclusive.[8] Jo Rowlands (1998) reviews the literature of empowerment, dividing it into three overlapping dimensions: personal empowerment (developing individual consciousness and confidence to confront oppression), relational empowerment (an increased ability to

negotiate and influence relational decisions), and collective empowerment (collective action at the local or higher level to change oppressive social structures). Santi Rozario (1997) traces the history of the empowerment concept, which she argues has been overused. She divides empowerment into two primary models: One model "is based on empowering the individual, not on encouraging collective social action by the oppressed" (p. 46).[9] The other model is consistent with Paolo Freire's approach, which emphasized "conscientization and radical social action" (p. 47).

Our interest is in Rozario's latter model, consistent with Rowlands' third model, collective empowerment. Given the nature of this book, which can be described as the study and practice of directed social change, and given the power inequities in societies between and among individuals, groups, and organizations, our definitions of empowerment are connected to the building and exercise of power for social change. In this book, empowerment is defined as the process by which individuals, organizations, and communities gain control and mastery over social and economic conditions (Rappaport 1981); over democratic participation in their communities (Zimmerman and Rappaport 1988); and over their stories. In our approach, there is an increased interest "in local autonomy, culture and knowledge; and the defense of localized, pluralistic grassroots movements" (Escobar 1995a: 215). These and other themes and perspectives pervade the scholarly and professional literature of development studies and development communication, alongside an underlying approach reflecting one or a combination of primary approaches highlighted in this book.

Development Communication

The theory and practice of development communication as described in this book, either explicity or implicity, reflect varied underlying views about communication, development, and empowerment. These views usually are linked by shared assumptions that yield consistency with development communication as well. Development communication scholars and practitioners still tend to be split between those who view communication as an organizational delivery system versus those who view communication more broadly, as inseparable from culture and from

all facets of social change. This orientation rests on certain assumptions consistent with certain divisions in views on development, empowerment, and development communication.

The links are perhaps most evident in the case of the information transmission view of communication and the modernization perspective on development. For those who view communication as a process of message delivery, it is easy to view development as a process of modernization via the delivery and insertion of technologies, and/or inculcating certain values, attitudes, and behaviors in the population. Communication and information are persuasive tools that can assist in the modernization process. Communication in the form of market research can assist in decisions about development goals and communication strategies. Persuasive or marketing communications subsequently "sell" development ideas and associated technologies to target audiences. In this sense, development communication under the modernization framework is often viewed as a process of persuasive marketing.

In contrast, critical frameworks reject marketing models that aim to spread and support Western technologies and economic and political values. Critical perspectives also view persuasive campaigns as manipulative and potentially harmful, with inadequate attention to the larger cultural context in which people live. Additionally, proponents of these perspectives observe that large development projects involve multiple economic interests that may benefit others more than the population supposedly served. North American and European expatriates live lavishly in developing countries at the expense of taxpayers at home, and often doing jobs for which local expertise is available. Additionally, corrupt leaders and government officials in developing countries find ways to enhance their wealth with foreign aid, hence increasing gaps between the haves and the have-nots. For those with critical perspectives, therefore, development communication is a process of consensus building and resistance. It is not a linear process, but must be historically grounded, culturally sensitive, and multi-faceted, with attention to all the political, economic, and ideological structures and processes that comprise society.

A focus on empowerment has a direct consequence on the objectives of development communication. In the future, just the delivery of new information and technological innovations will be inadequate. Empowerment requires more than just information delivery and diffusion of innovations. An important focus of development communicators will be to help in the process of empowerment of marginalized individuals, groups, and organizations. This calls for grassroots organizing and communicative

social action on the part of women, the poor, minorities, and others who have been consistently and increasingly marginalized in the process of social change. The implication for development communication, then, is a reconceptualization of its role. Greater importance will need to be given to the organizational value of communication (than the transmission function) and the role of participative social action communication in empowering citizens. This will also imply a multidisciplinary focus. Development communication will need to borrow and adapt concepts and practices from social work, community psychology, community organization and other areas engaged in empowering people, communities, and organizations.

Liberation perspectives suggest yet a different way of defining and operationalizing development communication. As the purpose of development is assumed to be freedom from oppression, and personal and communal empowerment, the development communication process must support these goals. Therefore, development communication is not message exchange but rather "emancipatory communication" that will free people to determine their own futures. That should include everyone participating in the process, not just the so-called target groups. The assumption is that once people get in touch with their sources of oppression as well as their sources of power, they will then be able to find solutions. The nature of emancipatory communication may vary. Many projects grounded in liberation perspectives include spiritual practice, consistent with the religion of the group involved. Additionally, Paolo Freire and others advocate particular forms of *dialogue* (interpersonal and small group strategies) that will lead to expanded consciousness and power—and therefore liberation. These dialogic processes enable participants to identify and explore issues that have meaning for them.

Aside from differences in underlying assumptions about communication and about development, the scholarship and practice of development communication vary greatly in strategic scope, i.e., the range of methods and approaches included as part of development communication. Given the convergence of mass communication and information technologies, it makes sense that all of these technologies would be relevant. Also significant are small group, interpersonal and pedagogic strategies of communication, as are traditional forms of communication and folk media. Some authors include religious and spiritual practice as crucial elements of development communication. In most texts, however, authors emphasize particular strategies of communication, with less attention to the others.

Finally, development communication involves issues at all levels of consideration. What is possible at the micro (individual and grassroots) level often depends on constraints at the macro (global or national) and meso (large community or regional) levels. Yet, at the same time, action at the grassroots may influence higher-level policy and practice. We believe that no useful theory can ignore any level of analysis and practice. Yet most development communication texts focus attention at one level, therefore, neglecting major issues (and populations) relevant to the process.[10]

Obviously, we cannot ignore serious problems of individual and local deprivation while waiting for modernization to be revised. Yet, development projects may not be able to empower certain classes of people until larger structures of global capitalism are first addressed. This is clearly illustrated in a recent book titled *Disposable People: New Slavery in the Global Economy* (Bales 1999). The book reports research estimating 27 million economic slaves globally. These are not people exploited in sweatshops, but children and adults forced to work by violence and threats of violence. The violence and force do not come exclusively from the economic motives of business owners, but additionally from families who want consumer goods and are willing to sacrifice family members to get them. For instance, the title of Bales' (1999) chapter on forced prostitution in Thailand is "One Daughter Equals One Television." Clearly, these are problems requiring interventions at multiple levels. They cannot be alleviated by grassroots projects alone.

ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

Though the perspectives of the role of communication in development as held in the 1950s and 1960s have changed, the need for development communication remains important. This book will trace the history of development communication, present diverse approaches and their proponents, critique these approaches as appropriate, and provide ideas and models for development communication in the next century. We will critically examine the dominant development paradigm that has guided much of the development theory and practice in the Third World since World War II. Our interest in examining the perspectives on development

is to identify and critique interventions and practices that have emerged from those perspectives and analyze their political, economic and cultural consequences. An underlying theme throughout the book, is to critique the power of dominant systems of knowledge, question the truth claims of modernism, and sensitize the reader to the relationship between dominant knowledge and exercise of social power. In this approach, we are informed by the work of postmodern, feminist, and postcolonial scholars. We examine the local and "other" contexts and assert the heuristic value of alternative, non-Western, local experiences, and knowledge systems to the tasks of social change (Crush 1995). With more scholarship in this area, it should, hopefully, puncture the notion that all expertise in development and change can only come from the North or from local experts trained abroad. Local knowledge and experiences used to solve local problems are not only practical but they will resuscitate these subjugated knowledge systems and boost the self-confidence of the local people, the women, and the other marginalized groups and individuals. It is critical to the success of self-reliant and autonomous self-development activities (Parpart 1995).

Our approach is interdisciplinary. We recognize that the scholarship and practice of development communication has many disciplinary origins besides communication studies: political science, economics, sociology, social psychology, social work, education, women's studies, community psychology, community organization, and more. We aim to synthesize this material and present it in a conceptually organized manner, eliminating disciplinary jargon.

The book is divided into five parts. In Part I, this introductory chapter is followed by a brief overview of the evolution of the theory and practice of development communication (Chapter 2). As the remainder of the book is divided conceptually versus historically, Chapter 2 aims to provide historical context for the volume as a whole.

Part II focuses on modernization theory, including the dominant discourse of modernization, and development communication under modernization. We begin, in Chapter 3, with an introduction to modernization theory and discourse, and its evolution from the early years of development to the present. Chapter 4 details strategies of communication under modernization, especially strategies based on models of diffusion and social marketing. Examples from historic and contemporary projects are provided.

Part III discusses critical perspectives on communication and development. Chapter 5 critiques the dominant development discourse looking

specifically at the inherent biases in the discourse. This chapter describes many of the consequences of this discourse, often negative, that flow directly from its biases. Challenges to modernization, including dependency and world systems theories (from Marxism), women and development, and sustainable development, are then reviewed. Alternative approaches also are suggested. In Chapter 6, we take a critical look at the communication strategies used to guide social change in Third World countries. We then describe the newer, alternative roles for communication in development, including the renewed interest in local cultures and the use of indigenous communication media for development and change. We conclude this chapter by describing and critiquing the present interest in using information and communication technologies (e.g., the Internet) for rural development in the Third World.

In Part IV, we return to liberation perspectives on development. This is a departure from most development communication texts, which seldom extend their consideration beyond Freire's basic ideas and methodologies on dialogic communication. We begin, in Chapter 7, with an introduction to liberation theology and its role in development and in freedom struggle globally. Although liberation theology is often associated with Roman Catholicism in Latin America, there have been liberation theologies associated with Protestantism (as in African–American liberation theology), and with every major religion, including Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism. Areas of overlap between critical and liberation perspectives are also considered. Chapter 8 discusses the ways in which liberation theology has been operationalized in development projects. This necessitates attention to meditation and prayer as communication—forms of communication seldom considered in communication studies, yet crucially important to the daily lives and well-being of most of the world's people.

In Part V, the final section of the book, we focus on communication and empowerment. We summarize our own views, synthesizing insights from previous chapters and arguing for new directions in theory and practice. We recognize the failures and harmful outcomes of much development aid, yet we support the crucial importance of development interventions under many circumstances in improving people's lives. Likewise, we agree with most critiques of development communication, yet we believe in its necessity and value, to the extent that legitimate critiques are addressed. We agree with those who argue—usually from critical, liberation, or feminist perspectives—that development should prioritize the needs of groups most oppressed. Additionally development

must be culturally and historically sensitive, recognizing the nature and relative salience of key social divisions, such as gender, class, race, ethnicity, age, religion, and nation.

The key goal of development must be empowerment, whether at the individual, community, or national level. Empowerment is multi-faceted, in that, creative survival requires both material and non-material resources, resources that vary by context. In Chapter 9, we attempt to reconceptualize the role of development communication in facilitating empowerment outcomes. However, there is no single recipe for facilitating empowerment. All models and experiences of communication for development offer useful lessons and insights. Careful case studies documenting approaches and outcomes from multiple perspectives are needed as we move forward in rethinking development communication.

SUMMARY

This chapter discusses key terms used repeatedly in this text. The meaning of *Third World* has evolved historically. It has been used to refer to the oppressed and revolutionary groups within a country (Isbister 1991) and it has referred to the block of countries with neutral status in the context of the Cold War (Pletsch 1981). Today, the term is most commonly used to refer to those countries (in Asia, Africa, and Latin America) considered less technologically advanced and poorer than so-called First World countries. Other labels often used interchangeably with Third World are developing countries, less developed countries (LDCs), under-developed countries, and South. We occasionally use all of these terms. We critique, however, the geographic connotations of Third World (and the other terms) in that there are oppressed groups within every First World country and elite groups within every Third World country. Additionally, the geographic grouping foregrounds economic status and disregards enormous variation on other dimensions.

Communication has often been used to refer to a linear process of information exchange, resulting in knowledge acquisition or persuasion. However, we prefer a definition that emphasizes a process of shared meaning that takes place in a cultural and political-economic context and is inseparable from that context. Hence, the processes and institutions

of communication, culture, politics, economics, and development are all interwoven. The role of communication in society cannot be understood apart from other processes and structures of society, and their unique histories and circumstances.

Development is usually understood to mean the process by which societal conditions are improved. However, there is much disagreement on what constitutes improvement. For instance, a modernization perspective, based on neo-classical economic theories, assumes that a Western model of economic growth is universally desirable. Critical perspectives, grounded in Marxist thought, challenge the economic and cultural expansionism and imperialism of modernization, arguing for new economic arrangements to create more even distribution of rewards in society. Liberation perspectives derive largely from liberation theology, which prioritizes personal and communal liberation from oppression as the key to empowerment and self-reliance, which should be the goal of development. These perspectives overlap each other, and with additional themes and perspectives included in this text, e.g., in the areas of basic needs, women and development, and sustainable development.

Empowerment, the goal of development from liberation and other perspectives, is defined as the process by which individuals, organizations, and communities gain control and mastery over social and economic conditions, over democratic participation within their communities, and over their stories (Freire 1970; Zimmerman and Rappaport 1988). While some use this term to refer exclusively as empowerment within the individual, we are concerned with collective empowerment.

The meaning of *development communication*, the focus of this text, varies depending on how one views and defines the component concepts of development and communication. Our understanding of development communication emerges from our understanding of development as empowerment and communication as shared meaning. It involves issues at all levels of consideration: the grassroots, large community, regional, national, and global levels.

NOTES

1. Moemeka (1994: viii) sees DSC as a historic phase that has passed, i.e., as the second of three stages in the place assigned to communication in development. The

third stage is DC. In contrast, others such as James (1994: 331–32), Jayaweera and Amunugama (1987: xix) and Melkote (1991: 263), distinguish DC and DSC by level, scope and nature of strategy, with DC associated with macro-level hierarchical entities, and DSC with grassroots participatory entities.

2. Brenda Dervin and Robert Huesca (1997) do an excellent job of sorting out meanings of participatory communication, distinguishing participation-as-end vs. participation-as-means assumptions in research and practice.
3. For a comprehensive analysis of the term 'Third World', see Melkote and Merriam (1998).
4. The advantage of Mercator's projection for navigational purposes is that it maintains the true direction of any one point relative to another. So that, for instance, if you draw a line diagonally anywhere at 45 degrees to the equator it always points northeast or northwest.
5. See also comparative statistics contained in annual reports of organizations such as the United Nations Development Programme (1998) and the World Bank (1999).
6. For an analysis of textual conventions and reinforcing media values and traditions, see Gitlin (1980) and Steeves (1997).
7. We do occasionally use the term peasant in this text, but only in reports of research by others who use the term.
8. In addition to other lines of argument to be discussed, they include communitarian theory (Tehranian 1994), and environmentally-oriented perspectives, including ecofeminism.
9. She traces this model to Solomon (1976), who blamed internalized oppression for African Americans' marginalization and powerlessness in the larger society.
10. Some texts, for instance, focus primarily on *macro-level* issues of information flow (Reeves 1993; Stevenson 1994) and/or of communication and information technologies and policies (Sussman and Lent 1991; Woods 1993), though from varying ideological perspectives. Moemeka's (1994) collection also is directed at the macro-level, emphasizing the role of world trade in development communication. Most other recent texts emphasize theory and strategy at more local levels, with little attention to global power structures. Several of these—Mody (1991), Nair and White (1993), White et al. (1994), Riano (1994), Jacobson and Servaes (1999)—tend (with some internal inconsistencies) to align themselves with Freire's dialogic pedagogy and criticize diffusion and marketing approaches that reinforce top-down participation. Others (Hornik 1988; Singhal and Rogers 1999) see value in diffusion and marketing models but attribute failures to poor planning.