# Internationalizing "International Communication"

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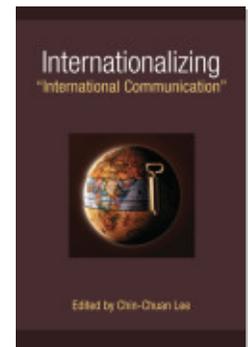Published by University of Michigan Press

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# Beyond Modernization and the Four Theories of the Press

## Jan Servaes

Lerner's model is, at least, an approximation of the Western experience and must not be accepted as a developmental inevitability. Lerner's attempt to generalize to a universal process from rather limited historical experience should be treated with great caution. The model is an ethnocentric identification of Western (especially American) middle-class values and images.

   —Chin-Chuan Lee (1980, p. 21)

Perhaps the main feature in the philosophy of American exceptionalism is the argument that the United States is unique, but at the same time its values and interests are universal.

   —Hemant Shah (2011, p. 148)

Differences or diversity cannot and will not stop understanding and communication, but ignoring them will.

   —Georgette Wang (2011c, p. 271)

The above opening quotes are just three among a selection of available critical assessments of the Western bias in international and development communication (see the list of references for starters). Together they could be summarized in a few succinct points that

- Question and broaden the epistemological and ontological assumptions on which our scientific field is based. We need to look for ways

to complement the still dominant Western positivistic perspectives with interpretive social constructivist approaches, which might contribute to a more universalistic interpretation of reality.

- At the level of the so-called Kuhnian paradigm discussion the original model of modernization has been complemented/replaced by other models, such as dependency, multiplicity, globalization. However, these alternatives tend to be driven by a Western missionary zeal for outward expansion. More attention needs to be paid to perspectives which are inward looking and less determined by "imperialistic" objectives.

- Consequently, our methods and techniques for inquiry need to be reconsidered in view of the above considerations. The limitations of quantitative methods and findings have become obvious. However, qualitative inquiries also need to be critically assessed. An integration of quantitative and qualitative techniques from a participatory perspective may provide more adequate and relevant answers.

- Comparative cross-national or intercultural research too often starts from an implicit Western bias. Models and frameworks developed in a Western context are used as templates for evaluation and comparison. A genuine indigenous starting point may be needed.

If the above is "common knowledge," why hasn't the mainstream of international and development communication research embraced these obvious considerations? That could be the conclusion emerging out of the findings of three scholars who have been assessing the "richness" of the field in a historical perspective: Jo Ellen Fair, Hemant Shah, and Christine Ogan. They each, either alone or with their graduate students, by examining journal articles, books, and book chapters wanted to highlight the directions that the research took in different periods, broadly defined as from 1958 to 1986, from 1987 to 1996, from 1997 to 2005, and from 1998 to 2007.

In the 1958–86 period models predicting either powerful effects or limited effects informed the research: "Communication has been a key element in the West's project of developing the Third World. In the one-and-a-half decades after Lerner's influential 1958 study of communication and development in the Middle East, communication researchers assumed that the introduction of media and certain types of educational, political, and economic information into a social system could transform individuals and societies from traditional to modern. Conceived as having fairly direct and

powerful effects on Third World audiences, the media were seen as magic multipliers, able to accelerate and magnify the benefits of development" (Fair, 1989, p. 145).

In the 1987–96 period, "Lerner's modernization model completely disappears. Instead, the most frequently used theoretical framework is participatory development, an optimist postmodern orientation, which is almost the polar opposite of Lerner who viewed mass communication as playing a top-down role in social change. Also vanishing from research in this latter period is the two-step flow model, which was drawn upon by modernization scholars" (Fair & Shah, 1997, p. 10).

The two more recent periods, which partly overlap, 1997–2005 and 1998–2007, provide new findings that may be surprising to some. I quote from Shah's essay first:

First, Lerner's model of media and development has reappeared in the 1997–2005 time period after totally disappearing in the 1987–1996 period. Second, only two other theories from the traditional US-based behavioral science approach, social learning theory and knowledge gap, appear in the 1997–2005 period. The third trend to note is that the two most prominently mentioned theories in 1997–2005—participatory communication and social learning—reflect two popular development communication project orientations that were mentioned as innovations in the 1987–1996 study: participatory development and edu-tainment (Shah, 2007, p. 13).

Shah explains the persistence of "old" ideas, especially Lerner's model (1958, 1977), from a technological deterministic perspective: "Each new technological innovation in the postcolonial world since 1958—television, satellites, microwave, computers, call centers, wireless technology—has been accompanied by determined hope that Lerner's modernization model will increase growth and productivity and produce modern cosmopolitan citizens" (Shah, 2007, p. 24; see also Shah, 2011).

Also Ogan and her students (2009) conclude that studies have moved away from mass communication and toward Information and Communication Technologies' (ICTs') role in development, that they infrequently address development in the context of globalization, and often continue to embrace a modernization paradigm despite its many criticisms. They argued, "We believe that the more recent attention to ICTs has to do with the constant search for the magic solution to bringing information to people to transform their lives, allowing them to improve their economic condition, educate their children, increase literacy and the levels of education and spread democracy in their countries. Despite years of research

that tells us that information is necessary but insufficient to bring about this change, ICTs have become the most recent iteration of the holy grail for development. And even if communication scholars know better because critical scholarship written over the last 30 years has told them so, newcomers to this field from other information-based disciplines may not have such close acquaintance with that literature. Furthermore, because of the appeal of the modernization paradigm, there is a tendency to forget that it cannot work" (Ogan et al., 2009, pp. 667–68).

In other words, there may be more at stake than ignorance. It may well be that the Western bias in international communication was and is a convenient way for the powers that be to maintain the status quo, assisted by a community of academics who, as Pierre Bourdieu eloquently argued, are a conservative lot sui generis (Servaes, 2012).

It is my intention to provide some additional ammunition in this chapter by looking at the historical context in which international communication evolved, questioning some of the assumptions on which the so-called Four Theories of the Press were based, and briefly outlining a possible way out of the current stalemate.

## The Historical Context for the "Western Bias"

The proclamation of the Four Freedoms by President Franklin Roosevelt on 6 January 1941 (Freedom of Speech, Freedom of Expression, Freedom from Want, and Freedom from Fear), the launch of the Marshall Plan in 1947 after the Second World War, the establishment of the Bretton Woods financial system and the creation of the World Bank, the IMF, the United Nations, and its regional and specialized affiliates, all led to what Amy Staples (2006) called the birth of development, or what Eric Louw (2010) has characterized as the Pax Americana.

Many developing countries saw the "welfare state" of the North Atlantic nations as the ultimate goal of development. These developing nations were attracted by the new technology transfer and the model of a centralized state with careful economic planning and centrally directed development bureaucracies for agriculture, education, and health as the most effective strategies to catch up with the industrialized countries. This perspective has been typified by many, including myself, as the modernization paradigm (Servaes, 1999, 2008).

Modernization accelerated the growth of a Westernized elite structure and of urbanization. Latham (2000) explains how social science theory

helped shape American foreign policy during the Kennedy administration and resulted in the Alliance for Progress with Latin America, the Peace Corps, and other U.S. development aid programs worldwide. It was assumed that, with the help of foreign aid, the rural backward areas would be developed in the area of agriculture, basic education, health, rural transportation, community development, and so forth. As a result, government bureaucracies were extended to the major urban centers. In fact, the United States was defining development as the replica of its own political-economic system and opening the way for the transnational corporations. Christopher Simpson (1994, 1998), Rohan Samarajiva (1987), and Hemant Shah (2011), who examined the beginnings of the development communication concept, find that the seminal work by Daniel Lerner (1958) and Wilbur Schramm (1954) was a spin-off from a large and clandestine audience research project conducted for the Voice of America by the Bureau of Applied Social Research. Some of their research reports still remain classified by the CIA. They note the strong influence exerted by the demands of psychological warfare, in the context of the Cold War, on the early studies of communication in the United States: "Exploratory work on the early period suggests the following pattern of net influence flows: marketing research to communication research; marketing and communication research to psychological warfare; from psychological warfare to communication and development" (Samarajiva, 1987, p. 17).

Similar observations have been made by other scholars (see, e.g., Ambrose, 1983; Krige & Barth, 2006; McMichael, 2008; Roberts, 2006; Schiller, 1969, 1976; Smythe, 1981; Smythe & Van Dinh, 1983; or Tunstall, 1977).

The broadcasting system was used mainly for entertainment and news. Radio was a channel for national campaigns to persuade the people about specific and select health and agricultural practices. According to Robert White (1988, p. 9): "The most significant communication dimension of the modernization design in the developing world has been the rapid improvement of the transportation, which linked rural communities into market towns and regional cities. With improved transportation and sources of electric power, the opening of commercial consumer supply networks stretched out into towns and villages carrying with it the Western consumer culture and pop culture of films, radio and pop music. Although rural people in Bolivia or Sri Lanka may not have attained the consumption styles of American middle-class populations, their life did change profoundly. This was the real face of modernization."

## Communication for Development

From the 1950s onwards, communication models became increasingly central to the programs of development being undertaken. The basic idea was that communication stimulates and diffuses values and institutions that are favorable to achievement, mobility, innovations, and consumption, or, what it means to "become modern." According to Lerner (1958), the general psychological conditions captured by the concept of empathy stimulated mobility and urbanization, which, in turn, increased literacy and consequently economic and political participation—all essential to the modernization process. The media would serve to stimulate, in direct and indirect ways, the conditions of "psychological mobility" that were considered crucial to economic development. In other words, central in Lerner's 1958 study was the argument that empathic persons have a higher degree of mobility, meaning a high capacity for change, and were more future oriented and rational than so-called traditional people. The driving concepts behind the link between communication and development were basically of a quantifiable and linear nature: How much and in what ways can communication contribute to the process of modernization? Such questions relied primarily on transmission models of communication derived from work in information engineering, in political campaigns, and the diffusion of ideas. Based on Lerner's concept of empathy, Inkeles and Smith (1974) concluded their comparative analysis of six developing countries that "modern" people increasingly trust the mass media more than personal media for world news. Hence, in their opinion, modern people prefer national and international news rather than sports, religious, or local news.

Building on Lerner's work, Wilbur Schramm (1964) took a closer look at the connections between mass communication and modernizing practices and institutions. He suggested that there are at least three indispensable functions performed by the mass media in a modern or modernizing society: they are "watchdogs," "policy makers," and "teachers" for change. Schramm proposed that every country should aim at a minimum level of mass media facilities: 10 copies of daily newspapers, five radio receivers, two cinema seats, and two television receivers per 100 inhabitants. Reflecting the influence of the two-step flow theory of communication and the stress on attitudes and attitudinal change, Schramm saw modern communication media as supplementing and complementing the oral channels of a traditional society. Schramm suggested that the mass media functioned as mobility multipliers. The relative popularity of these models within the devel-

opment literature and practices of the time can be traced to three attributes associated with this way of conceptualizing the communication process. First, because they identified communication basically as the transfer of information focused on efficiency or effects. This was true both in a social sense, such as in Rogers's (1962) diffusion of innovation theory (which has changed somewhat in the course of five editions, as observed by Hoffmann 2007), as well as in a technological deterministic sense (for which McLuhan 1964 is the chief proponent). McLuhan (1964) sees technology as a value-free and politically neutral asset in bringing about the modernization of under-developed countries. He argued that technology gradually creates a totally new human environment. This "totally new human environment" was that of the modern society. In other words, technology is an inexorable force in development, irresistible and overwhelming. Rogers (1962, 1986, 2003) stressed the adoption and diffusion processes of cultural innovation. Mass media are important in spreading awareness of new possibilities and practices, but at the stage where decisions are being made, personal communication is far more likely to be influential. Therefore, the general conclusion is that mass communication is less likely than personal influence to have a direct effect on social behavior.

Also, the communication models fit neatly into the nature and mechanics of mass or mediated communication, an emergent and powerful force at that time. In other words, communication was primarily about the manipulation of messages and people for the purposes of directed development. Implicit in this formulation was the idea that media messages are like a "bullet" or "hypodermic needle," whose effects are quickly and efficiently inserted into the consciousness of receivers. Over the years—as documented by Hornik (1988), Leeuwis and Van Den Ban (2004) and in the historical meta-analysis summarized in the introduction—this may have changed slightly but not fundamentally.

### A Critical Assessment of the Modernization Paradigm

Since the 1960s, communication and modernization has come under attack from distinct sides in different parts of the world. The most important points of this criticism of the modernization view of communication can be summarized as follows (further elaborated in Servaes, 1999, 2008):

1. Empirically, what has been studied are primarily specific, quantitatively measurable, short-term, and individual effects that are generalized in a questionable manner. When testing Lerner's thesis, for instance, several

scholars, including Schramm and Ruggels (1967), have found little evidence of any single pattern of mass media growth in relation to literacy, urbanization, and per capita income. Rather, the evidence showed that these patterns vary widely by region, environment, or culture.

2. This approach starts from basic positivistic and behavioristic positions that presuppose a linear, rational sequence of events, planned in advance and with criteria of rationality determined externally. The assumption is that human behavior can be explained in terms of independent, isolated, and direct causalities, as has been the case with the behavioristic stimulus-response model. The process of communication through mass media is compared to the communication process in face-to-face situations. The transmission of information is viewed as an isolated and linear activity, with a beginning and an end. This concept, which is directly derived from the mechanistic information theory, is, in my opinion, difficult to transfer to processes of human interaction where the context, in which the transmission or communication process occurs, form an integrated and substantial part of the overall process.

3. Positivism assumes "reality" can be "objectively" and empirically grasped, and rarely questions these assumptions. Indeed, the normal mode is to laugh off those who do, or request they empirically invalidate empiricism. In many cultures, however, the immeasurable (i.e., that which cannot be named, described or understood through any form of reason) is regarded as the primary reality. Rather than a stimulus-response switchbox, people are regarded as active, creative, purposeful creatures. Writing about the Brahmin view of "oneness and subjectivity," Jayaweera and Amunuguma (1987, p. 41) say such challenges "are not likely to be considered seriously by social scientists . . . who purport to live in the real world of empirical science. But then their 'real world' . . . is being shown up to be mostly a fiction, and that, by the most scientific among them, the high-energy physicists."

4. In most Sender-Receiver models the social context in which communication takes place is absent. Therefore, according to Thomas (1982, p. 84), "the entire notion of a Sender-Receiver relationship may tend to obscure the process of information transmission as it occurs at the social level of behavior." The notion of intentionality is still considered to be a basic aspect of any definition of communication. This notion assumes implicitly—in the "uses and gratifications" theory even explicitly—that each human activity can be explained on the basis of a subjective definition provided by the actors themselves. In other words, human behavior

is not conditioned by one's place in a social context (system or subsystem, social group or class), but by the individual's self-defined place and impact on his or hers environment. This results in dominant and dominated man-man relationships that are consistent with the anti-historical dominant man-environment relationship that constitutes the Western world view of history. More specifically, the two-step-flow hypothesis neglects the fact that a great amount of information flows directly from the media to users without passing through an opinion leader. Furthermore, the concept of opinion leader has proven to be far too simple. It can be said, for instance, that change can and should occur from below by those who need it on their own behalf.

5. Little attention is given to sociological and contextual factors except for commercial and ideological reasons. By motivating individuals to aspire to mobility and higher standards of living, the media, in editorial material as well as advertising, are creating the kind of consumer demand that maintains the dependence of Third World economies on the West. Partly because of the high proportion of imported programs, partly because of imitation, the dominant message of the media is conservatism, materialism, and conformism. Even schools and educational TV programs reinforce this kind of ideas. At the same time, by omitting advertising from much research and only concentrating on the content of editorial material, these researchers divert attention away from the principal intended object of the mass media, namely to produce and market to advertisers the means to complete the marketing of consumer goods and services. Therefore, Dallas Smythe (1981, p. 250) argues that "in this way, they [these researchers] naturally protect from investigation the blind spot: the audience and its work."

6. As a result of the underlying ethnocentrism and endogenism one takes for granted that results derived from U.S. campaigns can be extrapolated toward Third World settings, or that the media hardware as well as software has to be imported from "outside." This rather deterministic perspective has had very negative consequences, especially in the field of technology transfer. Therefore, one could argue for an integrated and multidimensional approach in which communication technology has to be considered as a complement to the development process. However, in reality, one often observes that technologies are under the control of those with power and will be used in ways consistent with those interests or remain inaccessible to the majority of the population, or both.

7. The static and ahistorical manner of studying communication processes leads to the supposition of a stable social system where social har-

mony and integration prevails and where class struggle or social conflicts and contradictions are non-existent. Rao (1986, p. 202) says such research "equals a long series of empirical-analytical, fragmentary, piecemeal studies, guided by the dichotomy of facts and values, directed by the interested to steer social technology for status-quo purposes, and epistemologically handicapped by the Kantian tradition of confining reality to predefined categories which are applied to it."

## The Four Theories

Traditionally, in communication sciences one used to refer to the book by Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm (1956) for a positioning of the relationship between media and society, or, the so-called normative media theories. Siebert, Peterson and Schramm started from the assumption that "the press always takes on the coloration of the social and political structures within which it operates. Especially it reflects the system of social control whereby the relations of individuals and institutions are adjusted" (Siebert, Peterson, & Schramm, 1956, pp. 1–2). The four models they identified have become critiqued since for being too Western-centric and for making unrealistic universalistic claims. Additions such as the "development model" and the "democratic-participatory model" were introduced (for an overview, see, e.g., Hachten, 1996; Hachten and Scotton 2007; Merrill, 1974, 1979, 1989; McQuail, 2005; Nerone, 1995; or Servaes, 1989). However, Siebert's starting thesis was never questioned. The above-mentioned authors also think that, as summarized by John Merrill (1979), "media systems are, of course, closely related to the kinds of governments in which they operate; they are, in essence, reflective and supportive of the governmental philosophy. When viewed in this way, it is possible to say that all press systems are enslaved—tied to their respective governmental philosophies and forced to operate within certain national ideological parameters" (Merrill, 1979, p. 153).

Three of the more recent contributions to the tradition of comparative media theories and systems are the work by Christians et al. (2009), the overview presented by Daniel Hallin and Paolo Mancini (2004), and the assessment of recent social and media changes in central and eastern Europe by Karol Jakubowicz (2007). Of these three, Hallin and Mancini's work is the one most often quoted and used in comparative analytical ways (see, for instance, the recent overview of European journalism education, edited by Terzis, 2009).

Hallin and Mancini (2004) distinguish between three models: the North Atlantic or Liberal Model (which includes Britain, United States, Canada, and Ireland), the Northern European or Democratic Corporatist Model (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland), and the Mediterranean or Polarized Pluralist Model (France, Greece, Italy, Portugal, and Spain). A fourth model has been added by Karol Jakubowicz (2007), who, assessing the central and eastern European region and quoting Hallin and Mancini, argues that, since the falling apart of the former Communist bloc, central and eastern European journalism has embraced the liberal or Anglo-American version of professional journalism. While many local people (including journalists) initially welcomed the "spreading of the gospel of democracy" (especially the financial benefits that accompanied it) into their world, this new love affair has lost some of its glamour lately, especially since the 2008–9 global financial meltdown has had a sobering ripple effect on all sectors of society, including the post-Communist version of journalism with its blind belief in unbridled individual freedom and free market principles. However, because of the strong historic role of the state, "the Democratic Corporatist Model, we suspect, will have particularly strong relevance for the analysis of those parts of Eastern and Central Europe that share much of the same historical development" (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 305).

In view of the recent economic crisis, the far too optimistic hint by Hallin and Mancini (2004, p. 301) that "there is . . . a clear tendency of convergence toward the Liberal system" against the two other models may need to be re-assessed. Hallin & Mancini warn against simplistic generalizations—there are important differences among and within the media systems they grouped together—and plead for more comparative historical and ethnographic research on the subject. They also make an effort to assess how the three models "might relate to other systems" in the so-called developing world: "Even though the Liberal Model has dominated media studies and has served as the principal normative model against which other media systems have traditionally been measured, it is probably the Polarized Pluralist Model, more than the other two, that is most widely applicable to other systems as an empirical model of the relation between media and political systems. We suspect that scholars working on many parts of the world—eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, Latin America, the Middle East and all of the Mediterranean region, Africa, and most of Asia—will find much that is relevant in our analysis of Southern Europe, including the role of clientelism, the strong role of the state, the role of media as an instrument of political struggle, the limited development of mass circula-

tion press, and the relative weakness of common professional norms" (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 306).

Hallin and Mancini's comparative analysis still overemphasizes political, technological and economic conditions, and implicitly disregards, apart from the proverbial lip service, the importance of cultural dimensions in media systems and societies. By collapsing almost all non-Western countries and regions under one category, they do injustice to the complexity, specificity, and richness of local, national, and sociocultural systems. For instance, in the African context, the anthropological analysis of the African political and media system by Francis Nyamnjoh (2005, 2007) or the philosophical observations by people like Kwame Appiah (2005, 2006) and Molefi Kete Asante (2007) are far more sophisticated and multifaceted than the Polarized Pluralist Model may make us believe.

### A More Complex and Integrated Framework for Normative Media Theories

Already in the eighties (see, e.g., Servaes, 1982, 1989; Servaes & Tonnaer, 1992) I have argued in favor of a triple and dialectically integrated framework for the study of the so-called normative media theories: at a philosophical, a political-economic, and a culturalist-anthropological level. Christians et al. (2009, p. 16) use a more or less similar typology: a philosophical level focusing on normative traditions; a political one assessing models of democracy; and the different roles the media can play. We consider the role of the media part of the culture at large.

My critique was that the classic models are based on, on the one hand, a too restricted (Western) description of concepts like "freedom," "democracy," "objectivity," and so on, which allow little or no generalizations; and that, on the other hand, reality often doesn't comply with the principles defined in philosophical terms. Traditional principles such as the freedom of the press and professional journalism practices, I contended, need a radical rethinking in order to become an integral aspect of the process of democratization in both media and society. I am glad to notice that this 'coupling of journalism and democracy' was the theme of a recent special issue of *Journalism*, edited by Beate Josephi, who concluded: "All panelists (Nerone, Zelizer, George, Waisbord, i.a. [inter alia]) agreed that the dominance of the journalism and democracy paradigm found to date in scholarly literature has led to a distortion in the way journalism is perceived" (Josephi, 2013, p. 441).

The increasing multiplicity and convergence of ICTs, the Internet,

and social networks, the deregulation of media markets, and the cultural globalization/localization of media products and services forces a re-assessment of international communication. Multi-tasking on different media platforms and the 24/7 news circles challenge journalists not only in technical ways but force them to reconsider classic notions of balance, objectivity and bias (Thussu, 2008). This also accounts for the interpretation of concepts such as cultural and press freedom in, for instance, the post-communist world (Casmir, 1995; De Smaele, 1999; Jakubowicz, 2007), Asia (Iyer, 2001), Latin America (Beltran, 1993; Fox, 1988) or Islamic society (Hussain, 2006); a discussion on journalism ethics and universal versus particular values (Christians & Traber, 1997; Karikari, 1996; Preston, 2007; Ukpabi, 2001), journalism in a Buddhist (Dissanayake, 2006; Gunaratne, 2007) or Confucian/Chinese (Chen, 2004; Gunaratne, 2005) tradition; or deontological codes and practices in different parts of the world (Mendel, 2008; Pigeat & Huteau, 2000).

Christians et al. (2009) identify four distinct yet overlapping roles for the media: the monitorial role of a vigilant informer collecting and publishing information of potential interest to the public; the facilitative role that not only reports on but also seeks to support and strengthen civil society; the radical role that challenges authority and voices support for reform; and the collaborative role that creates partnerships between journalists and centers of power in society, notably the state, to advance mutually acceptable interests. Each role could be associated with a specific set of competencies, which the journalist or knowledge worker of the future needs to acquire in order to perform adequately. In other words, competencies are characteristics that individuals have and use in appropriate, consistent ways in order to achieve a desired performance. These characteristics include knowledge, skills, aspects of self-image, social motives, thought patterns, mind-sets, and ways of thinking, feeling, and acting (Dubois & Rothwell, 2004; Irigoin et al., 2002; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). The journalistic competencies needed to operate in today's complex world are manifold and are almost impossible to acquire during a regular journalism program. They range from core or generic competencies (e.g., communication, teamwork) to managerial competencies (e.g., empowering others, decision making) and technical or specialist competencies related to specific jobs within the journalism profession. In other words, a competency is measured by identifying the behaviors or tangible results (outcomes) produced by their use in the context of the work performed.

### For Instance: Thailand

If we return to the earlier argument made by Hallin & Mancini that most countries in Asia are leaning towards a Polarized Pluralist Model and apply this to the case of Thailand, we are faced with a complex picture. Thailand was once recognized as the country with the most liberal media system in Southeast Asia. Thailand has also been boasting about its constitution as being one of the most democratic in the region (Chongkittavorn, 2000, p. 37).

Therefore, as Thailand has never been colonized in a formal sense, the country provides an interesting case study. Advocates of the Liberal Model claim that if the press were regulated it would become a servant of the state. Privately owned media competing in a free market, they argue, can ensure complete independence from the government. The fourth estate is ensured by the market relationship between the press and its audience. Ideally, through their buying power, consumers, not the government, act as the controllers of press output (Wheeler, 1997, p. 129).

Unfortunately, the privately owned media in Thailand do not operate in this ideal way. As the media rely largely on advertisement revenues, it is hard to keep them away from external political and economic pressures. Since its inception in 1932 the Thai democracy has always been an oligarchy, governed by an ever-changing coalition of elites (Lertvicha, 1987; Nelson, 2004). Hence, it is difficult to stop the nature of corruption in Thailand as journalists chose their careers and media increase income by censoring themselves, and for the most part they reliably transmit the message of the rulers to the people (Lertrattanavisut, 2004; Phongpaichit & Priryarangsan, 1994). Furthermore, under the concept of "lèse majesté," the media cannot cover news about the royal family in a disrespectful or critical way.

Within such a frame, the political situation in Thailand has turned into turmoil, with the Thai people roughly divided into two groups. The first group consists of the grass roots that were happy with former prime minister Thaksin's populist policy and those advocating globalization and a total neo-liberalism. The second group consists of the suburban middle class and intellectuals who advocate the king's sufficient economy concept (Likhitsomboon, 2006, 25; Prasirtsuk, 2007). Each group claims to promote a more sufficient economy and civic and just society (Wasi, 2003, p. 136).

Several characteristics make the Thai media system different from most other media systems in Asia (see Cheypratub, 1995; Chongkittavorn, 2000; McCarco, 2000; Servaes, 1999; Servaes, Malikhao, & Pinprayong, 2009; Siriyuvasak, 2004, 2005; Supadhiloke, 2007, 2008; Taveesin & Brown, 2006). Or, as Lauren Kogen, who assessed the relevance of the Hallin & Mancini model in the case of Thailand, concludes: "Citizens unsatisfied with the Thai version of democracy are protesting against the current regime, and continue to be suppressed, sometimes violently, by the state. During such uncertain times, civil society, the corporate world and the government will be facing off to try to find a way to balance power in the new system" (Kogen, 2010, p. 343). Whether Thais opt for total liberalization or a sufficient economy or a mixture of both, the Thai democratic and media system will remain difficult to comprehend from a Western perspective.

### Challenges Ahead

Each from their specific vantage point, the following scholars provide unique insights and perspectives for a better understanding of what the future has in store: Bhambra (2007), on modernity; Braman and Sreberny-Mohammadi (1996), on globalization and localization as "interpenetrated globalization"; Cimadevilla and Carniglia (2004), on sustainability and rural development; Friedmann (1992), on empowerment; Geertz (1983), on local knowledge and "blurred genres"; Gunaratne (2005, 2011), on Asian philosophical perspectives; Hall and du Gay (1996) and Bera and Lamy (2008), on cultural identity; Lie (2003), on intercultural communication spaces; Thornton and Cimadevilla (2010), on participation; Tremblay (2007), on the relationship between communication and sustainable development; and Wronka (2008), on social justice and human rights.

This also implies that the cultural perspective has to be fully embraced, as argued by southern scholars such as Kwame Anthony Appiah (2005, 2006), Wimal Dissanayake (2006, 2011), Mohan Dutta (2011), Guo-Ming Chen (2004, 2011), Hattam (2004), Shelton Gunaratne (2005, 2011), Swaminathan (1994), Majid Tehranian (2007), and Georgette Wang (2011a).

Gunaratne (2005) attempts to de-Westernize communication theory. He interprets press theories from the perspective of Eastern philosophy and the emerging theory of living systems. He also draws from quantum physics, post-Parsonsian systems thinking, and world-systems analysis to derive a more humanocentric theoretical framework that reflects the integration of Eastern ontology with Western epistemology.

Hattam (2004) advocates for a socially engaged Buddhism that involves a creative and dialectical attitude toward Buddhist teachings as a middle way. It attempts to apply these principles to the highly complex and increasingly globalized world. A range of socially engaged perspectives are outlined including those from Nagarjuna, the Dalai Lama, Thich Nhat Hanh, Sulak Sivaraksa, and the Think Sangha.

Dissanayake (2006, 2011) argues for a new concept of humanism: "Humanism as generally understood in Western discourse . . . places at the center of its interest the sovereign individual—the individual who is self-present, the originator of action and meaning, and the privileged location of human values and civilizational achievements. However, the concept of the self and individual that is textualized in the kind of classical works that attract the attention of Asian communication theorists present a substantially different picture. The ontology and axiology of selfhood found in Buddhism differs considerably from those associated with European humanism. What these differences signpost is that there is not one but many humanisms" (Dissanayake, 2006, 6).

Many humanisms may lead to what Appiah calls the cosmopolitan challenge: "If we accept the cosmopolitan challenge, we will tell our representatives that we want them to remember those strangers. Not because we are moved by their suffering—we may or may not be—but because we are responsive to what Adam Smith called "reason, principle, conscience, the inhabitant of the beast." The people of the richest nations can do better. This is a demand of simple morality. But it is one that will resonate more widely if we make our civilization more cosmopolitan" (Appiah, 2006, p. 174).

## By Way of Conclusion: "Internationalize" Media Education

These are some of the "problems" and "constraints" a genuine "internationalizing" of international communication may have to come to grips with. However, an equally important "internationalization" may need to take place in journalism and media education.

Professional education (of journalists and others) continues to be based on local or national parameters. It has to break out of its national carcass and internationalize. One of the central questions is "how do we escape national stereotypes in journalism education? How do we break the mode of a nationally biased understanding of media and news?" More multicultural and international "authentic" learning experiences, more innovative and critical reflection, more problem solving, social negotiation of information

and knowledge, and collaboration are the challenges for journalism educators of the future. This will have a tremendous impact on teaching and learning (Servaes, 2009).

New needs for visual and online literacy will soon lead us into difficulties comparable to that of illiteracy in the nineteenth century. Like the illiterate of those times, the new illiterate will be, as we can clearly see from the diffusion patterns of new technologies, of lower social status, with an associated lower income and level of education. Medium-term developments may lead to a dichotomized social body made of, on the one hand, wealthier, better educated, and new literates having the skills and the means to access and use ICTs and, on the other hand, poorer, less educated, and new illiterates kept out of the new tech scene and deprived of most technologies and hence denied access to an increasing amount of information and culture. Hence, the need for new forms of media education.

Furthermore, in order to promote participation, it is important to reinforce independent and pluralistic media. For media to be able to offer a critical view of government, political and economic systems must enable the media to operate in as open a public sphere as possible. Press freedom is never guaranteed, particularly when media industries are commercialized, even in a democracy. Apart from creating the appropriate political and economic environments for an independent media system, it is crucial to educate journalists to the highest ethical and professional standards possible. How to deal with a permanent overload of information will be the key challenge for journalists and citizens alike, and how to regulate this in a democratic way will be the challenge for public authorities (Servaes, 2005). For both journalists and citizens the capacity and speed to access, retrieve, select, and reproduce information and turn it into knowledge will determine power and facilitate change in the age of globalization.

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