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Office hour: M, T, Th, 11:00 am to Noon  
Thursdays by appointment.  
Rabb 114  
Extension: 62091

Summer 2008  
Class meets in Rabb 119

## **Communication and Social Change in Developing Countries.**

AAAS 117A

Monday, Tuesday and Thursday 1:55 to 4:15 PM

### **Course description**

This seminar examines the role of communications and communication systems within and between developed and underdeveloped nations. It discusses the political consequences of new information technologies, such as satellite broadcast systems, cassette recorders, and low cost electronics, and how they impact upon Third World countries undergoing rapid social change. In some cases these technologies promote autonomy and freedom for mass publics. In other cases they help domestic elites and/or transnational actors restrict choice. The course suggests how several issues must be sorted out before the impact of different communications technologies on development can be assessed. The writing of several communications scholars will be examined including those of Pool, Lerner, Cherry, Rogers and Schramm.

### **Introduction**

The press has been a key actor in the construction of the modern nation state (Gelliner 1983; Hobsbawn 1990; Anderson 1991). Newspapers, pamphlets, primers, mail order catalogs, and other print media have taught readers what it means to be Indian, Brazilian, Mexican, Jamaican, Cuban, Dominican, Zimbabwean, Indonesian and others. They have standardized "national" languages, stimulated commerce, disseminated political intelligence, and whipped up support for foreign wars. The electronic media, beginning with the telegraph, extended this national project and facilitated the integration of national economies into an international economy. Satellites, computers, and telecommunications are presently transforming that international system into a transnational or global one.

In Europe, the nation state was the base upon which the international economic system was built. In Africa, the Caribbean, Latin America, and South East Asia, the modern media of communication were employed to integrate Third World economies and peoples

into the international market economy; only later were they harnessed to the causes of nationalism and nation building. As a result, the press has generally served the international capitalism and imperialism better than it has served national development.

There have been four main problems with contemporary studies of the African, Caribbean, Latin American, and some Asian countries media. First, there is the underlying assumption that the Western media are free and should be the “guiding light” for all other media systems, including those of Africa. Second, there is a neglect of other forms of communication in developing countries, such as word of mouth, dance, art, traditional music, and oral literature, which have existed in these regions for centuries. Many Third World communities live in rural areas and often depend on other forms of communication, in addition to radio, for information. Third, there is a failure to recognize that the media in countries formerly ruled by Britain, Belgium, France, Spain, and Portugal, all emerged from colonialism with different communication models and today operate in ways somewhat different from each other. Fourth, there is no thorough examination of the external, along with the internal factors, that affect media performance in the Third World. More attention is often focused on the internal factors.

This course explores the role of media in economic development. In particular, we seek to outline the conditions under which the media contributes to the successful adoption of policies aimed at economic progress. Our core thesis is that successful economic development requires the coordination of efforts by politicians with the interests of the populace on policies that bring about economic growth. However, the nature of the relationship between political actors in charge of reform is characterized by a conflict of interests. The role of media as a key mechanism for transforming these situations of coordination between politicians, those who own the means of production, production, and exchange (that is, the capitalist class that owns the media) and the populace is analyzed. Specifically, we consider four factors – media ownership and autonomy, legal structure, quality of the media, and consumer demand – and how they impact media as a coordination-enhancing mechanism.

A free press is not a luxury. It is at the core of equitable development. The media can expose corruption. They can keep a check on public policy by throwing a spotlight on government action. They let voice diverse opinions on governance and reform, and help build public consensus to bring about such a media that helps markets work better. They can facilitate trade, transmitting ideas and innovation boundaries. The media are also important for human development, bringing health and education information to remote villages in countries from Indonesia to Nicaragua. But as experience has shown independence of the media can be fragile and easily compromised. It is clear that to support development, media need the right environment-in terms of freedom, capacities, and checks and balances.

The main purpose of development is to “spread freedom” to unfree citizens. An independent media is essential to sound and equitable economic development. The media helps to give a voice to the poor and the disenfranchised. An independent press also provides a solid foundation for a free and transparent society. Is this true in the Third World?

*There are no formal prerequisites for this course; however, introductory work in either AAAS, Politics, Sociology, Economics or Psychology would be helpful. The course grade will be based on a mid-term exam and a take home final. There will be lectures but when possible, most class exercises will be discussions.*

### **Required Reading**

1. Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom*  
Anchor Books, Random House Inc., New York City, 1999
2. G. Hayden, M. Leslie, and F. Ogandum, *Media and Democracy in Africa*,  
Transaction Books, Trenton, NJ. 2003
3. World Bank Institutes *The Right to Tell: The Role of the Media in Mass  
Economic Development*, The World Bank, Washington D.C. 2002
4. Terhi Rantanen, *The Media and Globalization*. Sage Publications, London,  
Thousand Oaks, CA. 2006
5. Eoin Devereux, *Understanding the Media*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Sage Publications,  
Los Angeles, Thousand Oaks, CA. 2007

## **Weekly Outline and Reading Assignments**

Communication, History, and Theory:

June 2 and 3

- Amartya Sen. *Development as Freedom*, **Read Chapter 1**
- G. Hyden and M. Leslie, *Media Democracy in Africa*, **Read Chapter 1**
- The World Bank Institute, *The Right to Tell: The Role of Mass Media in Economic Development*, **Read Chapters 1 and 2**
- Terhi Rantanen, *The Media and Globalization*, **Read Chapter 1**
- Eoin Devereux, *Understanding the Media*, **Read Chapter 1**

Communication and Social Change:

June 5 and 9

- Amartya Sen. *Development as Freedom*, **Read Chapters 2-3**
- G. Hyden and M. Leslie, *Media Democracy in Africa*, **Read Chapter 2**
- The World Bank Institute, *The Right to Tell: The Role of Mass Media in Economic Development*, **Read Chapters 3-7**
- Terhi Rantanen, *The Media and Globalization*, **Read Chapters 2 and 3**
- Eoin Devereux, *Understanding the Media*, **Read Chapter 2**

Collusion with a New Order:

June 10 and 12

- Amartya Sen. *Development as Freedom*, **Read Chapters 4-6**
- G. Hyden and M. Leslie, *Media Democracy in Africa*, **Read Chapters 3-6**
- The World Bank Institute, *The Right to Tell: The Role of Mass Media in Economic Development*, **Read Part II**
- Terhi Rantanen, *The Media and Globalization*, **Read Chapters 4 and 5**
- Eoin Devereux, *Understanding the Media*, **Read Chapters 3 and 5**

Communication Development and the New International Information Order:

June 16 and 17

- Wellington W. Nyangoni, *The Western Media and the Third World*, **Read Chapters 1-3.**
- Amartya Sen. *Development as Freedom*, **Read Chapters 7-10.**
- The Third World Bank Institute, *The Right to Tell: The Role of the Media in Economic Development*, **Read Chapters 13-15.**
- Eoin Devereux, *Understanding the Media*, **Read Chapter 4**

- Tehri Rantanen, *The Media and Globalization*, **Read Chapter 6**

State of Third World Media:

June 19 and 23

- Amarya Sen. *Development as Freedom*, **Read Chapters 11-12**
- Wellington W. Nyangoni, *The Western Media and the Third World*, **Read Chapters 4-5**
- G. Hyden and M. Leslie, *Media Democracy in Africa*, **Read Chapters 6-7**
- The World Bank Institute, *The Right to Tell: The Role of Mass Media in Economic Development*, **Read Chapters 16-17**
- Tehri Rantanen, *The Media and Globalization*, **Read Chapter 7**
- Eoin Devereux, *Understanding the Media*, **Read Chapter 6**

Documentaries and Case Studies:

June 24 and 26

- G. Hyden and M. Leslie, *Media Democracy in Africa*, **Read Chapters 8-9**
- Eoin Devereux, *Understanding the Media*, **Read Chapter 7**
- The World Bank Institute, *The Right to Tell: The Role of Mass Media in Economic Development*, **Read Chapters 18-20**

Documentaries and Reviews:

June 30 and July 1

Take Home Final Examination Questions given on June 24 and due in my office not later than 5pm on July 1.

### ***Library Reserve List***

1. Wellington Nyangoni, *The Western Media and the Third World*
2. Richard R. Cole (Ed), *Communication in Latin America: Journalism, Mass Media and Society*, Scholarly Resources, 1996
3. Patrick H. O'Neil, *Communicating Democracy: the Media and Political Transitions*
4. Gerald Sussman, *Communication, Technology, and Politics in the Information Age*, Sage Publications, 1997
5. Festus Eribo, *Press Freedom and Communication in Africa*, Africa World Press, 1997
6. Frances T. Seow, *The Media Enthralled: Singapore Revisited*

**If you have a documented disability and would like a reasonable accommodation made for you, please see me immediately after class.**

**Academic integrity is central to the mission of educational excellence at Brandeis University. Each student is expected to turn in work completely independently, except when assignments specifically authorize collaborative effort. It is not acceptable to use the word or ideas of another—be it a world-class philosopher or your lab partner—without proper acknowledgement of that source. This means that you must use footnotes and quotation marks to indicate the source of any phrases, sentences, paragraphs or ideas found in published volumes, on the internet, or created by another student.**

**Violations of University policies on academic integrity, described in Section 3 of *Rights and Responsibilities*, may result in failure in the course or on the assignment, and could end in suspension from the University. If you are in doubt about the instructions for any assignment in this course, you must ask for clarification.**

**If you are working in a group that I have authorized, I will expect your answers to resemble those of your partners, otherwise I expect you to do your work separately from your friend, classmates, family members, and so on. You not permitted to have anyone other than your professor help you on written assignments outside of class. If your have questions on the type of help you may receive, please ask me before you seek help from someone.**