

Review

Media, Communication and Development: Three Approaches. By Linje Manyozo. New Delhi: SAGE Publications India Pvt. Ltd., 2012, 248p. (paperback) ISBN 978-8-1321-0905-1. US List \$28.09.

Invented as a form of imperialism and institutionalized under the Bretton Woods program, the development project has evolved into a huge industrial complex involving stakeholders from both the global north and south who seek to understand and address a wide range of global issues. The contested field of development communication has been defined in varied ways and has come to represent different sets of practices, ideas, and theories that focus on using communication to facilitate social change, primarily in the global south. Linje Manyozo's book, *Media, Communication and Development* attempts to reframe the rather disjointed theoretical frameworks and scholarship of this nascent field. Manyozo defines development from a Marxist perspective, as a class conflict over resources and power. He notes that the contested nature of development communication evokes different perspectives, and calls for a more critical approach to defining the field. Development communication should be more than just the communication of development. Ideally, development communication should be a multi-faceted process that leads to a more socially just world through the engendering of citizen participation and empowerment. It must also include questioning current development discourse – how we think about and do development itself.

Manyozo's work adds to development communication scholarship by distinguishing between content, structure, and process in terms of the interrelationships between communication, media, and development. Additionally, the author gives legitimacy to perspectives from the global south where most of previous theorizing has emanated, but whose voices have been conspicuously absent from the literature. Quebral notes in the foreword that "Manyozo sees the southern story as more valid because it comes from those who have lived it" (xvi). This book pushes the boundaries further in terms of the theory and praxis map of the field by making the case for harnessing media and communication in ways that are both disruptive and transformative of the political economy of the development project.

The author delves into the history and scholarship of the development communication since its inception and outlines six schools that have influenced the field. These are: the Bretton Woods school, the Latin American school, the Indian school, the African school, the Los Banos school, and the communication for development and social change school. Manyozo attempts to make sense of the varied narratives and complex network of theories, concepts, and methodologies emanating from the different schools by presenting a typology of three methodological and theoretical approaches. He terms those three approaches the "media for development approach," the "media development approach," and the "participatory and community communication approach."

The book is organized by grouping scholarship in the field under the three main approaches in five chapters. The first chapter outlines the problem that the book seeks to ad-

dress, which is to reject the homogeneity that is associated with the theory and practice of development communication. The author attempts to rewrite the discourse by first contesting the narratives that assign the history and development of the field to Western origins by refocusing attention on the multiple schools from both the global south and north that have shaped the scholarship and practice of the field. Secondly, he calls for the need to reinsert postcolonial theory into the field as development communication is “a post colonial response that called for the need for ‘another’ kind of communication that was needed to meet the challenges of rural poverty, underdevelopment, inequality and global imperialism” (2). Additionally, the chapter presents a critique of the dominant binary thinking in which diffusionist and participatory approaches are deemed antithetical.

The second chapter explains the first of the three proposed approaches, which the author terms the “media for development approach.” This approach focuses on content through which citizens come to be informed and educated on important social issues. Development journalism and storytelling that addresses the information needs of multiple stakeholders represents an example of this approach. Manyozo suggests that media for communication should be a platform that empowers citizens to query how development policies and projects are implemented in their communities. New technologies such as mobile phones provide opportunities for citizen journalism through user generated content that enable citizens to not just be consumers but also producers of content.

Chapter three presents the “media development approach.” Here, the focus is on structure, in terms of “externally or organically developed initiatives that are strategically designed to build media, ICT infrastructures, policies and capacities” as a means for exercising good governance, free expression, political engagement and sustainable community development (112). Manyozo presents a critical postcolonial analysis by questioning external and donor-driven models of media development. Part of this critique is grounded in the politics and economics at play in relation to funding and ownership as they pertain to access, participation, and sustainability of these projects. He is very critical of the insertion of Western neo-liberal values and corporate interests associated with Western-centric third world development communication, and problematizes the pressure for southern civil society organizations to implement generic indicators and benchmarks that are not grounded in local realities.

The third approach, “participatory communication” (also known as the community engagement approach), is discussed in chapter four. This approach focuses on dialogic processes that promote active community participation in policy design and implementation. It highlights the agency of citizens and communities in shaping and making a difference in their own situation through deliberative collective actions at the local level. Grassroots engagement requires strengthening community capabilities and minimizing donor and external dependencies. Additionally, successful participatory communication requires contesting top-down hierarchical approaches and questioning power relations between local communities, experts, and donors who prescribe the nature of participation. Building on agricultural extension models, participatory action research, and Freire’s (1970, 2005) call for the development of critical consciousness, Manyozo asserts that this approach provides the platform for

local communities to contest power relations in radical ways that enable them to critique, intervene, and transform their world to meet their particular needs.

The author uses the final chapter to elaborate on the connections and interrelationships between the proposed three approaches and Mansell's (2011, 2012) conception of participation, policy, and power as central to development communication theorizing and practice. Throughout the book, Manyozo bemoans the re-emergence of modernization approaches that give legitimacy to the Western-centric ideas, as well as the external expert who dictates the level of engagement. This resurgence has resulted in several initiatives, interventions, and projects that have become white elephants at the detriment of the very people for whom these so-called experts presume to help. These undesirable consequences serve as a reminder that development needs to be practiced in dialogue with people in the communities in order to bring about outcomes that are both positive and transformational. Such dialogic partnership in development practice and theorizing requires acknowledging the power relations at play in order to achieve inclusive policymaking. Indeed, discourses underlying participatory approaches to development require more scrutiny and must be subject to greater critical analysis than the broad-brush discussions often proffered.

Drawing on his experiences growing up in Malawi, Manyozo inserts anecdotal stories to highlight the importance of personal narratives and local knowledge in theorizing about development communication. While the book is a fresh take that attempts to reframe some of the key debates of the field through the lens of postcolonial theory and political economy of development communication, it often reads as a list of one approach or model after the other. Also, because the book focuses on the three proposed approaches, it does not adequately address topics such as gender, spirituality, social movements, and new ICTs, among other issues pertinent to the field. The use of the three approaches sometimes reads as forced and seems to suggest these approaches are mutually exclusive, even though there are several overlaps, and as a result, the author often falls into the trap of self-repetition. While the author conveys the complexity of development communication, the book could be enriched with more examples of application of the proposed approaches.

Despite these limitations, Manyozo successfully brings together a wide range of theories, concepts, and histories that form the foundation of development communication as well as presents a critique of the field that is both compelling and insightful. This book is a valuable contribution to the body of literature in the field and should be particularly useful to students, scholars, practitioners, policy makers, and the general public interested in development and communication for social change.

References

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