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Alternative Media and Political Change in Africa: Analytical Schemes for Assessing Significance and Potential.

By Dr. Temba S. B. Masilela

Abstract

This paper uses a reassessment of the legacy of Paulo Freire as a point of departure to construct analytical frameworks, based upon insights from development and political communication, for use in assessing the significance and potential of alternative media for political change in Africa. The notion of alternative media is understood as incorporating a variety of dimensions (difference, independence, opposition, and representation) whose importance is determined by the parameters of particular struggles. The paper eschews country-specific analysis and is sceptical of the likely trajectories of the democratization processes (transitions) in Africa.

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Media Alternatif et Changement Politique en Afrique: Schemas Analytiques Pour Evaluer la Signification et le Potentiel

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Résumé

Cette communication se sert de la ré-évaluation des travaux de Paulo Freire comme point de référence. On construit ainsi le cadre analytique, dans les limites duquel on revoit la communication politique qu'il faut dans le développement, tout en faisant la ré-évaluation de la signification et du potentiel du média alternatif, qui puisse assurer le bon changement politique en Afrique. Par la notion de "média alternatif" on entend l'intégration de plusieurs réalités (différence, indépendance, opposition, représentation), l'importance de chaque élément étant déterminée par les paramètres spécifiques à chaque cas. Cette communication donne des exemples précis, pour illustrer la situation dans chaque pays évoqué. Monsieur Masilela est un peu sceptique à l'égard d'une démocratisation généralisée en Afrique.

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Introduction

This unit, a consideration of alternative media and political change in Africa, straddles the three main objectives of ACCE's 1994 pre-biennial and biennial conferences. Firstly, there is a reassessment of the legacy of Paulo Freire vis-a-vis his African contemporaries — Amílcar Cabral and Franz Fanon. Secondly, there is the mapping of the political and socio-economic trajectory of Africa since the mid 1960s. Thirdly, the conceptualization and specification of the role of communication in efforts to engender sustainable development are presented. This author's particular lived experience and various encounters with the work of Paulo Freire provide a backdrop for this unit.

My introduction to the ideas of Paulo Freire was his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. The dedication in the book — "To the oppressed, and to those who suffer with them and fight at their side (Freire, 1970:7)" — resonated with the liberation struggle and commitments to Marxism and African Socialism. Consistent with these intellectual commitments, I studied political economy at university level at a time when attention was first being turned to the post-independence crisis in Africa. This was also a time when Tanzania and Kenya were held up as examples of competing models of development. After a brief stint on a daily newspaper, I re-encountered Paulo Freire, this time as a student in a development support communication program. The oppositions which Freire demonstrated in his article on 'Extension or Communication' (Freire, 1973) were a frequent reference point in the construction of a framework for analyzing communication activities undertaken in support of development. The final aspect of my lived experience that is a backdrop for this unit is the series of democratization processes that occurred across Africa from the late 1980s. These democratic transitions, the most dramatic of which culminated in the April 1994 elections in South Africa, brought to the fore, the question of the importance of political communication, and alternative media in particular, in political change.

The Purpose of the Paper

The purpose of this paper is to construct frameworks, informed by insights from pertinent bodies of scholarship, that can be used to assess the significance and potential of alternative media for political change in Africa. The unit agrees with Turner's contention that in theory building, a combination of conceptual frameworks, propositional statements and analytical models is most likely to generate testable theory (1987:166). In its construction of these conceptual frameworks, the unit takes into account the predisposition of various bodies of scholarship to ascribe agency to different social actors ie. social movements, classes, elites, and protest groups.

The first part of this paper seeks to situate the legacy of Paulo Freire within the context of contemporary debates about the significance of alternative media for political change in Africa by reconceptualizing the past 40 years of development communication. The first section constructs a conceptual framework which is informed by development communication theory and practice. The second part constructs a conceptual framework drawn from political communication theory that can be used to explore the potential of alternative media for political change in Africa. These two frameworks are proposed as analytical schemes for an empirical investigation of the significance and potential of alternative media for political change in Africa.

Because of the number of countries involved and the variety of media and political dynamics in each, the unit does not attempt the impossible — a generic schema of alternative media systems and political dynamics that at the same time capture the diversity of the continent. The unit is rather pitched at drawing together theoretical insights that are of possible utility in assessing the significance and potential of alternative media for political change in Africa. The unit thus eschews country-specific analysis.

This unit does not examine the comparative work on democratic transitions invigorated by the seminal work of Guillermo

O'Donnell and Phillippe Schmitter (1986) *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies*, because the media are only of tangential concern to scholars working in this tradition. It should be noted, however, that work in this tradition focuses on elite behaviour and elite decision-making (Bermeo, 1990:361). For an African perspective on 'transition theory' see Caron et. al. (1992).

Neither does this unit engage other theoretical perspectives on the nature of democratization processes in Africa. These complex and contentious debates — encapsulated in the academic conference on 'Democratization Processes in Africa: Problems and Prospects' held during the Seventh General Assembly of CODESRIA in 1992 — are telescoped in *CODESRIA Bulletin* Nos. 1& 2, 1992. A commentary on the debates notes that:

"Most striking was the pervasive and almost unanimous skepticism, a sense of déjà vu, regarding the likely trajectories of the democratization process as a whole and multi-partyism in particular. Here, the weight of the argument rested on a sober and detached historical interpretation as against the palpable optimism bordering on the euphoric. References to new movements, democratic regimes or popular movements almost always generated a quick response. What is so new, popular and democratic about these movements and regimes?"

This unit shares the skepticism regarding the likely trajectories of the democratization process and multipartyism in Africa expressed by participants at the conference and analyzes the significance and potential of alternative media for political change in Africa against this backdrop. For other perspectives on democratization processes in Africa, see the journal *Africa Today* Vol.40 No.4 (1993) which has a number of articles on this issue.

Insights from Development Communication Theory and Practice

The past 40 years of development communication theory and practice can be conceptualized in terms of four basic models that

have at different periods held sway over the discipline:

- Development as modernization and communication as innovation adoption,
- Development as liberation from dependency and communication as cultural action,
- Development as meeting basic needs and communication as social marketing, and
- Development as human development and communication as a support function.

This coupling of various conceptions of communication to particular conceptions of development is for schematic purposes. The various conceptions of communication (as cultural action, as social marketing, and as a support function) contained in the schema can and have been appropriated to various projects. In terms of impact at the grassroots of African society, the extent to which these various conceptions resulted in substantially different practice on a large scale is debatable.

In rethinking development and the legacy of Paulo Freire, one has to bear in mind that his intervention was articulated within the framework of the second model (development as liberation from dependency and communication as cultural action). Within the specific confines of development theory, Goulet (1979) contends that liberation connoted a victory over privilege, stagnation and dependency. It had both negative and positive dimensions: liberation *from* certain evils and liberation *for* human fulfillment, however defined. In practical terms, Goulet argues that oppressed people seek liberation from three conditions.

The first condition from which oppressed people seek liberation is psychic paralysis or despair induced by the internalization of self-images which are destructive of esteem and confidence. "One essential part of the liberation process, therefore, consists in 'extrojecting' (the term is Paulo Freire's) or casting out the introjected self-portrait which one's exploiters have a vested interest in perpetuating" (Goulet, 1979:556). The second condition from which oppressed people seek liberation is the political

and economic domination of privileged classes, which strips people of their creativity. The third condition from which oppressed people seek liberation is servitude to nature and ignorance. Goulet notes that this is why every revolutionary movement stresses the vital role played by learning.

The Place of Culture in Liberation and Development

This conception of the role of communication in the process of development as one of cultural action had been preceded by theoretical debates about the role of culture in the anti-colonialist liberation struggle. It was for instance argued that "to take up arms to dominate a people is, above all, to take up arms to destroy or at least to neutralize, to paralyze, its cultural life. For with a strong indigenous cultural life, foreign domination cannot be sure of its perpetuation" (Cabral, 1973:39-40).

Cabral noted that because independence movements were as a rule marked by a succession of cultural manifestations, it was usually taken for granted that they were preceded by a "cultural renaissance" of the dominated people. "More than that: it is assumed that culture is a method of group mobilization, even a weapon in the fight for independence. From experience of the struggle of my own people and, it might be said of all Africa, I feel this is a too limited, if not erroneous, conception of the vital role of culture in development of the liberation movement" (Cabral (1979:206). While the exercise of imperialist domination demanded cultural oppression and the attempt at a direct or indirect liquidation of what was essential in the subject people's culture, Cabral argued that with few exceptions the era of colonization was not long enough in Africa to destroy or significantly depreciate the essential elements in the culture and traditions of the colonized people. "That is why the problem of a 'return to sources' or a 'cultural renaissance' does not arise for the mass of the people" (Cabral, 1979:207). The question of the dynamics, imperatives and ramifications of culture for development endeavours, however, still has to be addressed.

In an analysis of the question of development and cultural values in the history of Africa, Mafeje (1988) asks if African intellectuals are to answer the call for the re-instatement of culture in development studies, justified as this call is in the context of anti-imperialist and nationalist struggles, where should they begin? Mafeje points out that modernization theories have been discredited, the nationalism of the "Dependencia" theorists is structural rather than cultural, and classical Marxism never used culture as a critical concept in its theorizing of society. Mafeje concludes that the problem "cannot be deciphered through *received theory or contrived universalism*. It requires intimate knowledge of the dynamics of African culture in a contemporary setting" (Mafeje, 1988:8 emphasis added).

For communication scholars and practitioners, who emphasize the importance of culture as a method of group mobilization, one of the most important of these received theories is undeniably the work of Paulo Freire. It was Freire who theorized and popularized the notion of development communication as a liberatory practice.

Conscientization as Humanizing Pedagogy

Freire analyzed the terms 'extension' and 'communication' and detected a basic contradiction between the two. Genuine dialogue with peasants (communication), was incompatible with 'extending' to them technical expertise. Behind the practice of agricultural extension, was an implicit ideology of paternalism, social control, and non-reciprocity. This ideology was based upon "an unjustified lack of faith in the people, an underestimation of their power of reflection, of their ability to take on the true role of seekers of knowledge" (Freire 1973:117).

Further, "to reject problem-posing dialogue at any level is to maintain an unjustifiable pessimism towards human beings and to life. It is to lapse back into the practice of depositing false knowledge which anaesthetizes the critical spirit, contributes to the 'domesticating' of human beings" (Freire, 1973:127). Freire's

central contention is that human beings can know only to the extent that they *problematize* the natural, cultural and historical reality in which they are immersed.

Goulet (1973:ix) points out that "to problematize in Freire's sense is to involve an entire population in the task of codifying reality into symbols which generate critical consciousness and empower them to alter their relations with nature and social forces." In addition, Freire's deconstructive methodology consisted of both codification and decodification which are strategies to achieve that praxis which is based on naming, reflecting and acting (Taylor, 1993:6). Janmohamed argues that Freire's pedagogic strategies are remarkable and powerful because they introduce peasants to knowledge as power and to the possibility of agency. The two components of the method (technical procedures that introduce peasants to literacy and ideology critique) "permit peasants to understand that from an analytic angle, linguistic and social structurations are based on differential relations of elements that can be separated and recombined, and therefore controlled, by the subject performing the operation" (Janmohamed, 1993:107).

Freire contends that true commitment to the people, which involves the transformation of the reality by which they are oppressed, requires a theory of transforming action which assigns the people a fundamental role in the transformation process. For Freire, this theory of transformative action is conscientization, a humanizing pedagogy, in which a permanent dialogue is established with the oppressed. Conscientization

implies that revolutionary leaders do not go to the people in order to bring them a message of 'salvation', but in order to come to know through dialogue with them both their objective situation and their awareness of that situation — the various levels of perception of themselves and of the world in which and with which they exist. One cannot expect positive results from an education or political action program which fails to respect the particular view of the world held by the people. Such a program constitutes cultural invasion, good intentions notwithstanding (Freire, 1970:84).

The Limitations of Freire's Intervention

Freire was, however, very conscious of the limitations of his own well-intentioned intervention in the process of political change in Africa. In an examination of literacy campaigns in Guinea-Bissau, Freire states that:

What I could not do in Guinea-Bissau is overstep the political limitations of the moment. As a foreigner, I could not impose my proposals on the reality of Guinea-Bissau and on the needs as perceived by political leaders. For example, the linguistic question was one of the boundaries that I could not step over, although I fully discussed with the educators my concerns about carrying out the literacy campaign in the language of the colonialists (Freire and Macedo, 1987:103 emphasis added).

Conscientization called for conducting literacy campaigns in a language that was part of the 'social practice of the people.'

In a critique of conscientization, Berger notes that a crucial assumption of conscientization and its transplantations, ie. consciousness raising is "that lower-class people do not understand their own situation, that they are in need of enlightenment on the matter, and that this service can be provided by selected higher-class individuals" (Berger, 1974:113). The concept thus implies an 'epistemological arrogance', a 'hierarchical view of consciousness' and leads to paternalistic action.

Because all human beings constantly engage in the enterprise of ascribing meaning to reality, Berger (1974:166) argues that every human group is at the center a meaning-giving enterprise. "Meaning, in other words, is not something added to social life, that one may or may not want to look into, depending on one's particular interests. Rather, meaning is the central phenomenon of social life, and no aspect of the latter can be understood without looking into the question of what it means to those who participate in it." Berger et. al.(1973:16) in an elucidation of the concept of 'meaning' point out that any kind of consciousness is plausible only in particular social circumstances. These circumstances are called *plausibility structures*. What is important

about these circumstances is that "social change invariably entails change in plausibility structures." The import of this contention for an analysis of the significance of alternative media is specified later in this paper.

The Deflation of the Radical Agenda

Despite the many insights generated by this model of the development process, the conception of development as liberation and the attendant role of communication as one of cultural action never gained acceptance among the major players in the development business — bilateral or multilateral development agencies, and international development NGO's. This was in no small measure due to the radical social and political agenda that this perspective entailed.

It should be noted that although Freire was influenced by the works of Cabral and Fanon, he did not adopt the overtly Marxist revolutionary model proposed by Fanon. Taylor (1993:2) in an examination of the texts of Paulo Freire argues that "we cannot demythologise Freire by imposing an illusion of coherence on his inconsistencies". Taylor states that:

Regrettably, among the most conspicuous failures in Freire is the absence of a clear definition of the 'oppressed' and the 'oppressor' (Stanley, 1972) and the lack of clarity about what constitutes 'class' (Youngman, 1986). This omission is important, first because the analysis of 'class' would allow us to look at both the causes and consequences of oppression or liberation, thus exposing the way in which *inequality* is conceptualized. Second, it would help us distinguish the dialogue which takes place between individuals from the dialogue which takes place between oppressors and oppressed, and the different dynamics that take place inter- and intra-groups (Taylor, 1993:67).

The fortunes of the conception of development as one of liberation and the attendant role of communication as one of cultural action were also tied to (a) the political trajectories and successes and failures of post-colonial African nation-states (Davidson, 1992), (b) the weakness of the social formations over

which states presided (Leys, 1994), and (c) the depoliticization of social actors (political parties, trade unions etc) that was a common feature of post-independent Africa. The legacy of Paulo Freire has to be reinterpreted in the light of the failure of the political project to which he subscribed. The above factors doomed that project.

The Continued Search for Participatory Communication Strategies

This author argues elsewhere (Masilela, 1994) that the four basic models that have at different periods held sway over the discipline of development communication over the past 40 years have all had in common a search for participatory communication strategies. This paper elaborates upon that argument by conceptualizing the optimism of the moment about alternative media and democracy in Africa, in terms of a continued search for participatory communication strategies. This search for participatory communication strategies was the focus of research conducted under the auspices of UNESCO (O'Sullivan-Ryan and Kaplan, 1980) and International Centre for Higher Studies in Communication of Latin America [CIESPAL] (Jouet, 1980).

The work undertaken by CIESPAL was premised on a recognition of the dependent character of the theory of communication and methodologies of research being utilized in contemporary Latin America. CIESPAL proposed the search for theoretical and methodological alternatives and "prioritized research into two issues: the role of communication in education and in popular organization and mobilization" (Marques de Melo, 1988:441). These two issues are central in any analysis of the significance and potential of alternative media for political change in Africa, thus the importance of Freire.

In Africa, the debate about participatory communication strategies has in part been conducted under the auspices of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). The 1990 International Conference on Popular Participation in the

Recovery and Development Process in Africa emphasized that the existence and vitality of popular organizations were central to the realization of popular participation. The people

have to press for democratic participation at all levels of decision-making both as a matter of right and civic responsibility... it is essential that they establish independent people's organizations at various levels that are genuinely grass-root, voluntary, democratically administered and self-reliant and that are rooted in the tradition and culture of the society (ECA, 1990:8).

This is reinforced by Bratton and Van de Walle's suggestion that political transitions in Africa are best explained by the analysis of contingent, domestic political processes rather than by diffusionist and structural interpretations of political events. "We suggest that African governments introduce political reforms primarily in response to active demands, spontaneous and organized, from a loose, multi-class assemblage of indigent protest groups (Bratton and Van de Walle, 1992:420).

Questions for Assessing the Significance of Alternative Media

Based upon the above review of development communication theory and practice, what questions can be identified for use in assessing the significance of alternative media for political change in Africa? This paper suggests the following questions:

- Are alternative media engaged in sustaining community-based organizations and social movements?
- Are alternative media used as vehicles of praxis which create the opportunities for the processes of codification and decodification?
- Do alternative media contest the plausibility structures that underpin social change?
- Do alternative media problematize the historical reality in which people are immersed?

- Do alternative media engage in permanent dialogue with the oppressed in a language that is part of the 'social practice of the people'?
- Do alternative media promote learning, creativity and a critical spirit in people?
- Are alternative media engaged in articulating a 'return to sources' or 'cultural renaissance' among the culturally alienated?
- Do alternative media promote the internalization of self-images which are destructive of esteem and confidence?

These questions constitute a framework that can be used in investigating the significance of alternative media for political change in Africa. As suggested by Anyang' Nyong'o (1991:4) any analysis of the significance of alternative media for political change in Africa must take account of the differences in African state responses to democratization measures, namely, (a) pre-emptive channeling of democratization initiatives, (b) domesticating democratic initiatives through sluice-gate reforms, (c) conditional surrender to open politics and pluralism, and (d) neither reform nor reaction — an uneasy defense of the status quo.

Insights from Political Communication Theory

The next part of this paper proposes a second conceptual framework based upon political communication theory. This is a body of literature which directly addresses the issue of the significance of the media in political change. Political communication has been defined as the "arena in which different types of discourse revolving around politics vie to gain ascendancy in the political interpretation of the situation." This definition stresses the interaction of contradictory discourses proffered by actors (politicians and journalists) who share neither the same status nor the same legitimacy, but who by reason of their respective positions in the public arena guarantee the functioning of mass democracy" (Wolton, 1990:12).

In a review of political communication, Blumer et al. (1990:262) contend that two different traditions can be identified. One is primarily concerned with institutional politics, struggles over the power to govern, and regards receivers of messages as potential side-takers. Another that is primarily concerned with cultural politics (the functions of widely disseminated symbolic forms), struggles over meaning (ideology, hegemony, encoding and decoding), and regards consumers of texts as meaning makers. These two traditions are replicated in conceptions of the significance of alternative media for political change. Owen-Ibie's (1994) article in *Africa Media Review* entitled 'Press Responsibility and Public Opinion in Political Transition' is conducted within the first tradition. Julie Frederikse's (1982) book *None But Ourselves: Masses and the Media in the Making of Zimbabwe* is an extended and graphic example of the second tradition.

Blumler et. al. also distinguish between those traditions (primarily from the United States) that focus primarily on the media content-audience interface and attribute 'limited effects' or power to the media; and West European traditions that encompass the power relations between media systems and political systems in their analysis, and have long heralded a 'return to the notion of powerful mass media'. In the latter tradition

media power is manifested not only in influences on citizens' political ideas, but also and especially in the limited range of actors with chances to speak by virtue of their recognition by media as suitable 'witnesses' on events of the day, as well as in the limited range of issues that are likely to attract extensive and prominent media attention at any news moment in time (Blumler et al., 1990:264).

The theorizing and research that have been conducted within these various traditions in the study of Political Communication constitute one axis for assessing the potential of alternative media for political change in Africa. The other axis of this framework is constituted by consideration of the dimensions of those media institutions that are defined as alternative.

The Dimensions of Alternative Media

The notion of alternative media incorporates a variety of dimensions (difference, independence, opposition, and representation) whose importance is determined by the parameters of particular struggles. Broadly defined, alternative media are "those forms of mass communication that avowedly reject or challenge established and institutionalized politics, in the sense that they all advocate change in society, or at least a critical reassessment of traditional values" (O'Sullivan et. al., 1994:10). The difference between alternative media and mainstream/establishment media can thus be pinpointed in terms of particular issues such as non-commercialism and partisanship (Berger, 1991). Alternative media may also be defined by their independence in terms of their aesthetics and their relationships with their audiences/constituencies.

Because of the utility of alternative media in oppositional politics as a means of mobilizing and maintaining social movements — and their unattractiveness to advertisers — they are often linked to electoral campaigns and lack staying power as alternatives in the marketplace. The type of alternative media that exhibits staying power without succumbing to pressures to join the mainstream tends to be community media. This paper concurs with O'Sullivan et. al. (1994: 10) who assert that "community media may sometimes be classed as alternative in that they frequently represent groups who feel that their viewpoints and concerns are not sufficiently represented within existing local or national media."

This paper accepts as the defining feature of community or alternative media the fact that: "Community media, in reaction to the mass media, attempt to redefine the communication realm (i.e. the relations between informer and informed) and to enhance, through the acquisition of simple technology, the possibilities that people have of intervening in the process of information production" (Council for the Development of Community Media, 1977:397). This conception focuses on the potential of alternative media to alter the conditions of possibility.

In addition to this defining feature, various schemas have been proposed to distinguish alternative media from state, commercial and public media. Alternative media are distinguished by their ownership and management structures, their financing, their regulation, their programming and their policy stances on issues of access and participation. In terms of their ownership and management, alternative media are community owned and managed through duly elected representatives or direct and voluntary community participation. In terms of their programming, alternative media carry community oriented programming produced by community members for community members. In terms of their policy stances on issues of access and participation, alternative media are — highly responsive to highly targeted audiences and use interactive methods as much as possible (Tehrani, 1990:108).

Radio Pluralism and Ethnicity

In the context of the current "democracy movement" in Africa, Karikari (1993:107) contends that although the reassertion of independent press activity is a prominent feature of the movement, "the more significant historic development is the emergence of independent radio broadcasting. The implications of this development could be far reaching as far as the development of free expression, or the manifestation of a pluralism of ideas in public affairs is concerned." The emergence of 'radio pluralism' in Africa has been acknowledged and highlighted by both the *Bamako Declaration on Pluralism in Radio* issued in September 1993 and the *Airwaves for a Pluralistic Africa* report of a pan-African meeting of radio producers held in Benin in June 1992. Hogue (1994), however, points out that there is a potentially 'dark side to free airwaves' as "in some countries, the end of state monopoly has enabled repressive and antidemocratic forces to express themselves more loudly than in the past."

What is implied in Hogue's cautions about a potentially 'dark side to free airwaves' is the problem of ethnicity in political

change in Africa. Ake (1993:2) notes that "to the extent that Africa remains pre-capitalist and pre-industrial, pre-capitalist social structures such as ethnic groups and their associated forms of consciousness will prevail. What needs explaining ... is the politicization and transformation of ethnic exclusivity into major political cleavages." Concerns about the potential use of alternative media for purposes of ethnically-based political mobilization derive from conceiving of ethnicity in terms of boundaries and exclusivity. The persistence and strength of ethnic identity in Africa, however, derive from the fact that ethnicity represents a 'condensation of culture' (Ake, 1993). The possibilities for alternative media in Africa may accordingly be linked to their adequacy in articulating condensations of culture.

Questions for Assessing the Potential of Alternative Media

Based upon the above sketch of the purview of political communication theory and the exploration of the notion of alternative media, what questions can be identified for use in assessing the potential of alternative media for political change in Africa? This unit suggests the following questions:

- Do alternative media articulate a countervailing discourse to that proffered by politicians?
- What are the power relations between the alternative media and the ruling class?
- What is the source of the legitimacy that alternative media enjoy in the political arena?
- Are alternative media highly responsive to exclusive interest e.g. groups in society (ethnic groups)?
- Are alternative media preoccupied with institutional politics (struggles over the power to govern) or cultural politics (struggles over popular culture)?
- Are alternative media modes of expression for condensations of culture, and do they speak in indigenous languages and idioms?

- Do alternative media redefine the communication realm (ie. engage in qualitatively different interface between themselves and their audiences ?)
- Do alternative media give voice to a wider range of social actors and issues than state, commercial, or public media?

These questions constitute the second framework proposed by this unit for use in investigating alternative media and political change. They raise issues and utilize concepts not foregrounded by questions informed by development support communication theory and practice.

Conclusion

The two frameworks that have been constructed in this unit are proposed as analytical schemes for an empirical investigation of the significance and potential of alternative media for political change in Africa. The frameworks are conceptualized as sensitizing analytical schemes (Turner, 1987:162) which are provisional and only useful for interpreting empirical events in particular historical contexts. The analytical schemes consist of propositional statements that connect one set of variables (collectivities) to another set of variables (actions).

Freire's pedagogic strategies are significant in this regard because they introduce peasants to the possibility of agency. Taylor (1993:71) however, points out that the deficiencies in Freire's conceptualization derive from the assumption that the interests and agenda of collectivities necessarily dovetail with those of individual learners. In the analytical schemes constructed in this chapter, the media are seen as important because they are channels of mediation processes for different social actors i.e (social movements, classes, elites, and protest groups). The analytical schemes suggested in this unit are intended for use in isolating the generic properties of these mediation processes.

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