**Free flow of information**

After the Second World War and the establishment of a bi-polar world of free market capitalism and state socialism, theories of international communication became part of the new Cold War discourse.

For the supporters of capitalism, the primary function of international communication was to promote democracy, freedom of expression and markets.

The concept of the 'free flow of information' reflected Western, and specifically US, antipathy to state regulation and censorship of the media and its use for propaganda by its communist opponents.

The 'free flow' doctrine was essentially a part of the liberal, free market discourse that championed the rights of media proprietors to sell wherever and whatever they wished.

As most of the world's media resources and media-related capital, then as now, were concentrated in the West, it was the media proprietors in Western countries, their governments and national business communities that had most to gain.

The concept of 'free flow' therefore served both economic and political purposes.

Media organizations of the media-rich countries could hope to dissuade others from erecting trade barriers to their products or from making it difficult to gather news or make programs on their territories. Their argument drew on premises of democracy, freedom of expression, the media's role as 'public watchdog' and their assumed global relevance.

**Example**

For their compatriot businessmen, 'free flow' assisted them in advertising and marketing their goods and services in foreign markets, through media vehicles whose information and entertainment products championed the Western way of life and its values of capitalism and individualism.

For Western governments, 'free flow' helped to ensure the continuing and unreciprocated influence of Western media on global markets, strengthening the West in its ideological battle with the Soviet Union.

The doctrine also contributed to providing, in generally subtle rather than direct ways, vehicles for communication of US government points of view to international audience.

**Role of news agencies in free flow of information**

**Reuters:** founded 1851**,** Wide range of access in terms of information, covered 26 languages, more than 150 countries. Funding by UK government.

**Tag line:** (Independence, Integrity and freedom from Bias)

**AFP: founded 1835,** world first news agency

Tag line: total objectivity, editorial quality and reliability

**AP: founded 1848:** Provide coverage to all parts of the globe for used by media around the

**Role of international news channels:**

**BBC: founded 1922,** millions of viewers, numbers of channels, All work under one policy guideline, world oldest national broadcaster, and largest broadcaster in the world by number of employees. Revenue: 4.889 billion in pound. More than 40 languages

**Tag line:** Partial independent and honest information.

CNN: founded in 1980, owned by warner media under Turner broad casting system. first news channel provide 24 hours coverage, Is an American news-based television channel owned by AT&T's Warner Media.Has 42 bureaus, As of September 2018, CNN has 90.1 million television households as subscribers (97.7% of households with cable) in the United States:

Example: In January 2017, Trump criticized the network during a press conference the following day, and refused to take a question from CNN reporter [Jim Acosta](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jim_Acosta), claiming that the network was "[fake news](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fake_news)"

**Tag line:** The most trusted name in News

**Modernization Theory**

* Complementary to the doctrine of 'free flow' in the post-war years was the view that international communication was the key to the process of modernization and development for the so-called 'Third World'.
* Modernization theory arose from the notion that international mass communication could be used to spread the message of modernity and transfer the economic and political models of the West to the newly independent countries of the South.
* Communications research on what came to be known as 'modernization' or 'development theory' was based on the belief that the mass media would help transform traditional societies.
* This pro media bias was very influential and received support from international organizations such as UNESCO and by the governments in developing countries.
* **Difference between traditional to Modern**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Traditional** | **Modern** |
| Standard family structure | Small family structure |
| Little spatial and social mobility | High rates of social mobility |
| Social stratification | Neutral orientation |
| Undifferentiated political structure | Highly defines political structure |
| Traditional elites and hierarchical sources of authority | Rational legal sources of authority |
| Idealistic Patterns of education | Modern and professional education |

**Exponent**

**Daniel Lerner**, a political science professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, whose classic work in the field, *The Passing of Traditional Society* (1958) - the product of research conducted in the early 1950s in Turkey, Lebanon, Egypt, Syria, Jordan and Iran - examined the degree to which people in the Middle East were exposed to national and international media, especially radio.

In this first major comparative survey, Lerner proposed that contact with the media helped the process of transition from a 'traditional' to a 'modernized' state, characterizing the mass media as a 'mobility multiplier', which enables individuals to experience events in far-off places, forcing them to reassess their traditional way of life. Exposure to the media, Lerner argued, made traditional societies less bound by traditions and made them aspire to a new and modern way of life.

The Western path of 'development' was presented as the most effective way to shake off traditional 'backwardness': according to Lerner: **Western model of Mmodernization,** exhibits certain components and sequences whose relevance is global. Everywhere for example increasing **Urbanisation** has tended to raise **literacy**; rising literacy has tended to increase **media exposure;** increasing media exposure has 'gone **with' wider economic participation (per capita income) and political participation.**

**MODEL: Urbanization🡪 Literacy🡪 Media exposure🡪Eco and political participation**

Western society, Lerner argued, provided 'the most developed model of societal attributes (power, wealth, skill, rationality)', and 'from the West came the stimuli which undermined traditional society that will operate efficiently in the world today, the West is still a useful model'.

**Wilbur Schramm,** whose influential book, *Mass Media and National Development,* was published in 1964 in conjunction with UNESCO, saw **the mass media as a 'bridge to a wider world'**, as the vehicle for transferring new ideas and models from the North to the South and, within the South, from urban to rural areas.

Schramm, at the time Director of the Institute for Communication Research at Stanford University, California, noted: **the task of the mass media of information and the 'new media' of education is to speed and ease the long, slow social transformation required for economic development**, and, in particular, to speed and smooth the task of modernizing human resources behind the national effort.

Schramm endorsed Lerner's view that mass media can raise the aspirations of the peoples in developing countries. The mass media in the South, **he wrote, 'face the need to rouse their people from fatalism and a fear of change**. They need to encourage both personal and national aspirations**. Individuals must come to desire a better life than they have and to be willing to work for it'.**

Notably the newly established United States Agency for International harness the power of the mass media to 'modernize' the newly independent countries of the South. In the 1970s, modernization theorists started to use the level of media development as an indicator of general societal development.

**Everett Rogers**, saw a key role for the mass media in international communication and development. Such research benefited from the surveys undertaken by various US-government-funded agencies and educational foundations, especially in Asia and Latin America for what **Rogers (1962) called 'disseminating innovations'.**

This **top-down approach** to communications, a one-way flow of information from government or international development agencies via the mass media to Southern peasantry at the bottom, was generally seen as a panacea for the development of the newly independent countries of Asia and Africa. But it was predicated on a definition of development that followed the model of Western

industrialization and 'modernization', measured primarily by the rate of economic growth of output or Gross National Product (GNP).

It failed to recognize that the creation of wealth on its own was insufficient: the improvement of life for the majority of the populations depended on the equitable distribution of that wealth and its use for the public good

It also failed to ask questions like development for whom and who would gain or lose, ignoring any discussion of the political, social, or cultural dimensions of development In many Southern countries, income disparities in fact increased over the succeeding thirty years - despite a growth in GNP.

Mass media were assumed to be a neutral force in the process of development, ignoring how the media are themselves products of social, political, economic and cultural conditions.

In many developing countries economic and political power was and remains restricted to a tiny, often unrepresentative, elite, and the mass media play a key role in legitimizing the political establishment. Since the media had, and continue to have, close proximity to the ruling elites, they tend to reflect this view of development in the news.

**Usage:**

The international communication research inspired by the modernization thesis was very influential,

* In shaping university communication program, research centers globally that provided huge amount of data on the behaviour, attitudes and values of the people in the South.
* Useful in analyzing the relationship of media growth to economic development, measured in terms of such indicators as sales of communication hardware and gross national product.
* They are also useful in international promotion of advertising and marketing.
* Important to understand the Cold War context in which modernization theory emerged, a time when it was politically expedient for the West to use the notion of modernization to bring the newly independent nations of Asia, the Middle East and Africa into the sphere of capitalism

**Sshortcoming**

1. Modernization theorists was their assumption that the modern and the traditional lifestyles were mutually exclusive, and their dismissive view of the culture of the 'indigent natives' led them to believe in the desirability and inevitability of a shift from the traditional to the modern.
2. The dominant cultural and religious force in the region - Islam - and a sense of collective pan-Islamic identity were seen as 'sentimental sorties into the symbolism of a majestic past'. The elites in the region had to choose between 'Mecca or mechanization'.
3. The crux of the matter, but how one should move from traditional ways toward modern life-styles. The symbols of race and ritual fade into irrelevance when they impede living desires for bread and enlightenment'.
4. What modernizers such as Lerner failed to comprehend was that the dichotomy of modern versus traditional was not inevitable.
5. Despite all the West's efforts at media modernization, Islamic traditions continue to define the Muslim world, and indeed have become stronger in parts of the Middle East. In addition, these cultures can also use modern communication methods to put their case across. In the 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran, for example, radical groups produced printed material and audiocassettes and distributed them through informal networks to promote an anti-Western ideology based on a particular Islamic view of the world
6. However, since the gap between the rich and poor was growing, as elsewhere in the developing world, Ssouthern scholars, especially those from Latin America, argued that the chief beneficiaries of modernization program were not the 'traditional' rural poor in the South but Western media and communication companies, which had expanded into the Third World, ostensibly in the name of modernization and development,
7. But in fact, in search of new consumers for their products. They argued that modernization program were exacerbating the already deep social and economic inequalities in the developing countries and making them dependent on Western models of communication development.

Partly as a result of the work of Latin American scholars, the proponents of modernization in the West acknowledged that the theory needed reformulation. In a revised version of modernization theory, a shift has been detectable from support for the mass media to an almost blind faith in the potential of the new information and communication technologies - in what has been called 'a neo-developmentalist view'. Also noticeable is the acceptance of a greater role for local elites in the modernization process. However, the importance of Western technology remains crucial in the revised version too. According to this view, modernization requires advanced telecommunication and computer infrastructure, preferably through the 'efficient' private corporations, thus integrating the South into a globalized information economy.