THE IMPEDIMENTS OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION PLANNING IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: A CASE STUDY OF NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT
In the practice of development communication today, there is awareness that careful planning is all-important if objectives are to be attained. Furthermore, there are a realization that extant factors in the environment of development communication action are able to facilitates or frustrate the attainment of planning objective. B while the available literature provides informed guidance to the communication planner on the processes of planning, it is critically silent on the extant factors the communication environment which may negate or boost planning. This paper attempts to fill the gap. The paper analyses the relevant extant factors in the environment of development communication action into "active" and "passive" groups, showing how they both affect planning. Specifically, the paper focuses on the "active" (i.e. policy) group of factors and identifies five major ones extant in the rural sector. The values these policy factors are presented and their implications for communication planning discussed.
Keywords: Communication, Media Study, Planning, active and passive

INTRODUCTION
In the dominant perspective of communication planning today, environment factors have a high salience. Thus, Hancock (1981:12), for instance defines communication planning as the preparation of both long-range and short-range plans (i.e. strategic and operational) for the efficient and equitable use of communication resources; and for the realization of communication policies, in the context of a particular society's goals, means and priorities, and subject to its prevailing forms. Middle and Wedemeyer (1985:12) see planning as "the conscious effort to adapt a system to its environment in order to achieve system goals. "And Moemeka (1989) not only highlights environmental factors in his definition of development communication planning, he goes further to state that: in seeking solution to the problems of communication in development, it is imperative to first look at the larger development process, and then at the role or roles of communication within the larger system. From this assumption, then that environmental factors are indeed highly salient in (development) communication planning, two further questions arise. They are (1) which elements of the "larger development process" (or environment) are salient? and (2) how may these environmental factors affect planning? This paper will address these two questions. Specifically, the analysis will focus on extant policy factors and their salience for development communication planning in the rural sector. Also, the rationale and processes of development communication planning will be outlined as a necessary background to the discourse.

COMMUNICATION PLANNING RATIONALE
A good way to explain the rationale for planning in development communication lies in tracing out the evolution of development communication as a concept.

An early concept of development communication was the dominant paradigm, so-called (Rogers, 1989); Lerner, 1958; Schramm, 1964). Under the dominant paradigm, communication for development was seen as a one-way transmission of pro-development or pro-modernization messages through the mass media in order to foster a "climate for development" in the audience. The audience was analyzed into opinion leaders and followers; and additionally, into early and late innovators. These analytic features of the audience were utilized in information diffusion. But the communication perspective and strategies remained, in essence unilinear. A later concept of development communication was the alternative paradigms or the (development) project support communication approach (Rogers and Storey, 1987). Under the project support communication approach, communication became a component technology in the package required to meet specific purchase were aligned with those of the development project. The target audience communication was defined by the social groups on which the development processes was focused. The media used became a purposive mix of mass, interpersonal and folk media determined by the characteristics of the development message and target groups. To cap it all communication actions were reviewed in sponse to findings of formative evaluation of the development project. Under the project support communication approach, therefore, the concept of development communication became more instrumental and requiring of deliberate design decisions. The contemporary view of development communication carries the deliberate and instrument nature of alternative paradigms further. For one, it is a view marked by great sophistication in its understanding and exploitation of the processes of communication effects. These processes, for instance, are now being confirmed in a hierarchy ranging from informational through persuasion to mobilizational effects, and the require effort for each level is being mapped (Rogers and Storey, 1987:822).

Further, the contemporary view of development communication is being increasingly influenced by social marketing perspectives. Following Kotler and Zaltman definition of social marketing as the design, implementation, and control of programs calculated to influences the acceptability of social ideas and involving considerations of product planning, pricing, communication, distribution, and marketing research (Rogers and Storey 1987:42) communication professionals now feel a need to coordinate communicator, channel, message, audience and feedback factors in the development communication activity. Perhaps the most significant index of the contemporary view is the idea of the communication campaign. Giving what they call a 'minimal' definition, Rogers and Storey state that a (communication) campaign intends to generate specific out comes or effects in a relatively large number of individuals, usually within a specified period of time and through an organized set of communication activities. In the same vein, though with a different emphasis, Flay and Burton (1990) define the communication campaign as an integrated series of communication activities, using multiple operations and channels, aimed at population of large target audiences, usually of long duration, with a clear purpose. Evidently, the contemporary view construes development communication as a multifarious as well as a purposive activity. An activity whose effect is liable to be perspersed by its multifarious nature.Consequently, an activity requiring an interactive design, in other words, a planning input, to ensure its

effectiveness. In the campaign notion, contemporary development communication seems to be drawing a parallel between the military campaign and development communication action. Since, like the military campaign, development communication action develops a welter of men, materials, machine, money and natural phenomena; then, like the military campaign, development communication action needs in blue print that welds together its diverse inputs for coordinated action towards a singular purpose.

COMMUNICATION PLANNING PROCESSES

According to Moemeka (1989:18), development communication planning is a deliberate, systematic and continuous effort to organize human activity for the efficient use of communication resources and for the realization of communication policies, in the context of a particular country's development goals, means and priorities and subject to its prevailing forms of social, economic and political organization. Clearly, the definition underscores the features of deliberateness, purposiveness and integration which are central to development communication planning. Additionally, and more significant, however, is its indication that extant policy and sociostructural environments are important elements in development communication planning.

Further, Moemeka analyses the communication process into five steps, namely:
1.   Identification of communication needs and resources,
2.   Goal clarification
3.   Strategy selection
4.   Operational planning
5.   Evaluation

The identification step entails the determination of salient elements of the social and physical environments, the audit if extant communication structures and policies, and the determination of communication strategies and actions appropriate to the situation. The clarification step involves the careful formulation of socioculturally acceptable and feasible objectives of communication. The selection step relates to the process of informed choice of the most technically and socially feasible communication action in the given situation. The operation step involves the tactical specification of communication action. Here all the practical issues material to the communication action are considered and decided. Lastly, the evaluation step concerns the systematic of the entire development communication in order to either (1) assess the achievement of current action and draw lessons for future section (as in summative evaluation), or (2) obtain indicative data on an ongoing action for reinforcement or corrective purposes (as in formative evaluation). Jefkins and Ugboajah (1986:21) provide an additionally instructive perspective on communication planning in their discussion of the six-point public relations planning model.

In the model, communication planning comprises the following six activities. The first activity is the analytical audit of the situation. The second is the identification and prioritization of communication objectives. The third is the definition of the publics at whom communication will be targeted; while the fourth activity is the determination of communication media and methods required to carry out the communication action. The

fifth activity concerns financial budgeting (for staff, materials and time). And the sixth activity concerns the assessment of the outcomes of communication action.

As a perspective on communication planning, the six-points model uniquely introduces three consideration additional to those discussed by Moemeka. One, the six-point model introduces the need for conscious prioritization of communication objectives, thereby increasing the chances of overall effectiveness. Two, the model underscores the need to define a target public, which again is not only an aid to effectiveness but, also, an aid to accurate summative evaluation. And there, by requiring the planner to draw up a financial budget, the model compels him to constantly keep in view the financial implications of his recommendations.

PLANNING EFFECTIVENESS AND POLICY ENVIRONMENT

To address the question of how the policy environment affects, one needs to recall the rationale of communication planning. Simply put, development communication planning is done to ensure the efficient and effective use of communication in support of development. Thus, effectiveness may be regarded as one of the primary criteria for determining the quality of planning. The question, then, becomes how does the extant policy environment affect planning effectiveness? Broadly, planning effectiveness may be facilitated or obstructed in several ways. For one, the choice of communication media as well as the mode of carrying out the communication activities recommended may aid or hinder the effective realization of the communication plan. Alternatively, the particular mix of communication media decided on (relative to the activities necessary) may facilitate or hinder effectiveness. Still, the manner of integrating the communication media and activities, to the extent that it is or is not the most efficient, may or may not aid planning effectiveness. Taken together, the foregoing may be regarded as the intrinsic ways in which planning effectiveness may or may not be facilitated. There are, however, at least two extrinsic or contextual determinants of effective planning, and they are (1) the sociopolitical and economic milieu in which the development communication will take place, and (2) the extant development policy environment.

The sociopolitical and economic milieu may be regarded as a passive contextual factor in the sense that it provides the symbolic topography (so to speak) that the communication action must encounter and overcome. The extant policy environment on the other hand, constitutes a relatively active contextual factor because in its execution and reformulation, extant policy continually seeks to influence the elements and processes of the communication action towards its preferred direction. For the communication planner, therefore, the extant policy environment constitutes a force continually tending to subvert or enhance or otherwise affect the actualization of planned communication.

ENTANT POLICY FACTORS AND THEIR COMMUNICATION IMPLICATION

A survey of the literature on rural development reveals at least five major issues of extant policy environment. They are
1.   the scale (agricultural) production
2.   the choice of (production) support/supervisory organizations,

3.   the nature and extent of popular participation,
4.   the approach to (and management of) extension and
5.   the mode of credit

The actual forms that these policy factors may take in rural development situations as well as the challenges they pose to communication planning will now be considered. Extant policy on the scale of agricultural production may give preferential encouragement to (1) large-scale private farm or (2) smallholder (family) farms, or (3) farms owned by collective (Gaitskell, 1976). The scale of production favoured by extant policy will not only call for appropriate communication strategy responses, but also define the kinds of communication problems to be addressed by planning. If, for instance, extant policy favours smallholder farms, then, depending on the peculiar communication profile of a specific rural area, the appropriate communication strategies that may be considered should include the traditional interpersonal media strategy (which Ugboajah call "oramedia"), the modern interpersonal media strategy, the localized mass media strategy, or the integrated media approach. Selection of any of these strategies would, of course, be affected by the existing communication infrastructure. Thus, where the mass media are not decentralized, or where there is a serious shortage of extension agents the localized mass media or the modern interpersonal strategies, respectively would be inappropriate. Regarding the choice of production support organizations, extant policy may option for (1) government ministries or (2) special commissions/authorities, or (3) traditional rural associations, or (4) community development cooperatives, or (5) business enterprise cooperatives, or (6) policy tool (e.g. marketing, credit, supply, etc.) cooperatives (Gaitskell, 1976, Youngjhohns, 1976). Extant policy will often opt for government ministries as production support organizations. Usually, ministries have the advantage of a readily available body of trained personnel as well as established procedures and equipment for rural communication. In this way, they could be a communication planner's dream resource. Not only would the planner be able to apply a centralized mass media strategy (particularly, where the mass media are substantially publicly – owned) approach (especially, where a totalitarian state ideology and party cadres are in face) Ministries, though, are inveterate turf-protectors and, in that way, they may also be a communication planner's nightmare when several of them (as is often the case) are required to collaborate on one development communication project. Special problems of inter-organizational coordination may therefore face the communication planner dealing with ministries as production support organizations.

Traditional rural associations which include the kinship, age-grade and other in derigenous groupings are comparatively less frequently favoured as supervisory/ support organizations. Instead, policy tends to create special authorities or policy tool cooperatives. Where traditional rural associations are opted for, however, the communication planner is presented with the logical necessity of foregrounding traditional interpersonal media in the configuration of communication activities/the recommend.

As a policy factor, popular participation relates to whether or not, and how, the general rural populace takes part in deciding and carrying out development activities. Policy in this case may take any of the following forms: (1) central authorities take a predominant role

in decision making; (3) local private entrepreneurs, regarded as typically unsympathetic to the development of the rural poor, are excluded from project decision-making and execution; (4) selected strategic elements of local private enterprise are included in project decision-making and execution; or (5) elective or quasi-elective rural bodies are constituted to take part in development decision-making (Gaitskell, 1976). While the utility of popular participation in development action may be supported both by logic and by the results of empirical research, policy in the developing world still tends to give the pride of place to central authorities. The communication planner is therefore often called upon to mobilize the people to accept, support and execute projects which they have neither requested nor been consulted on. Clearly, an integrated media strategy would here recommend itself. There is also the question of local entrepreneurs who, though quite influential, may be partly or wholly excluded (as a matter of policy) from participating in development action. Such influential entrepreneurs will, of course, pose a propaganda challenge to the communication planner. It will be necessary to propagate official rationale for excluding the local entrepreneurs as well as to anticipate and neutralized their misinformation and disinformation activities. Appropriate communication strategies for this purpose will likely include a combination of centralized mass media and traditional interpersonal media. With respect to extension, policy relates to the conceptual approach to extension on one hand, and to the operational definition management of extension or the other (Hunter, 1976: Haggs, 1976). What may be called the traditional conceptual approach views extensions as a one-way transfer of information (and other inputs) from a central authority to the target rural population. Contact between the authority and its rural target population. Contact between the authority and its rural target is made through the extension agent who acts as a vector of superior knowledge and technologies which the backward rural targets must struggle to assimilate and adopt. A later and different concept of extension is exemplified by the community development approach.

This approach sees extension as a two-way process. The extension agent, being a friend of the rural community, patiently interacts with the target community helping it articulate its development information (and input) needs. It is after such articulation; and subsequent requests, that the agent conveys the information and inputs from the central authorities to the target community. Certainly the communication problems that will be posed by the community development approach will be quite different from those posed by the "traditional" approach. The community development approach being a compulsory two-way process, will involve a heavier traffic of information than the traditional approach. The anticipated heavy traffic will of course require an integrated media strategy in order to optimize both communication affectedness and communication effectiveness. A consideration of communication efficiency, in view of the heightened level of feedback, will also necessitate a localized media strategy. Further, the community development approach will require a great deal of trust-building activity. Ad the traditional interpersonal media strategy will recommend itself if for no other reason than that of cultural appropriateness. The traditional approach to extension, being more development-authority-directed, will require a detailed communication audit of the development authority itself in order to ensure that plan recommendations are fitted to its communication capabilities. Source credibility as well as message system factors will also

have to get prime consideration. The second policy aspect of extension concerns its operational specification and management. The possible operational range of extension are (1) regulation, (2) debt collection, (3) data collection and reporting, (4) input supply and rationing, (5) advice and research (Chambers, 1976). Extant policy may adopt (a) the all range of operations at once, (b) the full range in seasonal fractions, or (c) only corporation of the range. Regarding the management of the operations, policy may either encourage operation-based specification among extension agents or it may foster a generalist regime. The primary challenge to communication planning here lies in the differences obtaining in the nature of the component operations of extension. For example, the future of the debt-collection operation, and the relationship between extension agent and rural community which it engenders, is quite different from (even contradictory) that of the advice and research operation. The communication planner therefore, constrained to respond with a communication package which is correspondingly diverse. Another equally important challenge lies in the careful matching of extension agents' technical and communicative skills with the development needs of particular segments of the rural innovators being targeted. The problem here is one of ensuring that, from the (typically) chronically insufficient pool of extension personnel, a sufficient number of appropriately-skilled agents will be found to address changing rural needs as development action goes on. In this situation, it seems that modern inter-personal media strategies will require backing up with localized mass media strategies.

The final major policy factor that will now be discussed is the mode of credit regarding credit, extant policy environment may take any of the following form (1) highly subsidized credit as an incentive to innovation, (2) realistically priced credit, (3) encouragement of savings and, by implication, discouragement of credit, (4) encouragement of traditional money markets, particularly the private money lenders (Bottrall, 1976) At the basic level, the communication planner's awareness of the existing patterns if credit should help to direct his attention. Where the money is, it can be reasonably assumed, will also be where a high potential for effective action exists. Thus, the planner has his focus, broadly speaking, indicated by extant credit policy. Credit policy. Take, for instance, the traditional moneylenders. As a group the moneylenders tend to be cast, at best as not significant for development action, or at worst, as obstacles to the economic development of the rural poor. Research (Bottral, ib id) however suggests that there may be little empirical basis for such a reading of the role of traditional moneylenders. Where policy facours a role for them, communication planning may have to include fact-based image making for the moneylenders.Where credit is favoured, whether realistically priced or subsidized, required communication actions may have to involve not only expert advice on dealing with the credit institutions, but also monitoring and evaluation of the credit market. And a centralized mass media strategy inter-faced with traditional interpersonal media strategies would be apropos.

CONCLUSION

Although the contemporary view of development communication planning recognizes the importance of environment factors, the factors themselves and the way in which they are likely to impact on development communication planning have been little analyzed. The

result is that there is not only a critical gap in the theoretical literature, but the communication planner is left entirely without informed guidance in appraising and handling factors of extant policy environment. This paper has attempted in a preliminary way to fill the identified theoretical and practical gap in the contemporary discourse of development communication planning. Specifically, extant policy factors having a salience for development communication planning (and action) have been identified as including scale of production, choice of support/supervisory organizations, nature and extent of popular participation, approach to and management of extension, and mode of credit. The salience of these factors for development communication planning has been shown to lie in their influence on planning effectiveness. And communication strategies addressing these factors have been suggested.

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