THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

Theoretical and Practical Conceptions of Dialogue in
Participatory Action Research Approaches to Development
Communications

by

Jody Waters

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE

DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF THE GRADUATE PROGRAMME IN COMMUNICATION
STUDIES

CALGARY, ALBERTA

SEPTEMBER, 1992

Canada

Name ___Jody   Waters___

Dissertation Abstracts International is arranged by broad, general subject categories. Please select the one subject which most nearly describes the content of your dissertation. Enter the corresponding four-digit code in the spaces provided.

___Speech   Communication___.

SUBJECT TERM

| 0 | 4 | 5 | 9 | **U·M·I**

SUBJECT CODE

Subject Categories

THE HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

COMMUNICATIONS AND THE ARTS
Architecture 0729
Art History 0377
Cinema 0900
Dance 0378
Fine Arts 0357
Information Science 0723
Journalism 0391
Library Science 0399
Mass Communications 0708
Music 0413
Speech Communication 0459
Theater 0465

EDUCATION
General 0515
Administration 0514
Adult and Continuing 0516
Agricultural 0517
Art 0273
Bilingual and Multicultural 0282
Business 0688
Community College 0275
Curriculum and Instruction 0727
Early Childhood 0518
Elementary 0524
Finance 0277
Guidance and Counseling 0519
Health 0680
Higher 0745
History of 0520
Home Economics 0278
Industrial 0521
Language and Literature 0279
Mathematics 0280
Music 0522
Philosophy of 0998
Physical 0523

Psychology 0525
Reading 0535
Religious 0527
Sciences 0714
Secondary 0533
Social Sciences 0534
Sociology of 0340
Special 0529
Teacher Training 0530
Technology 0710
Tests and Measurements 0288
Vocational 0747

LANGUAGE, LITERATURE AND LINGUISTICS
Language
    General 0679
    Ancient 0289
    Linguistics 0290
    Modern 0291
Literature
    General 0401
    Classical 0294
    Comparative 0295
    Medieval 0297
    Modern 0298
    African 0316
    American 0591
    Asian 0305
    Canadian (English) 0352
    Canadian (French) 0355
    English 0593
    Germanic 0311
    Latin American 0312
    Middle Eastern 0315
    Romance 0313
    Slavic and East European 0314

PHILOSOPHY, RELIGION AND THEOLOGY
Philosophy 0422
Religion
    General 0318
    Biblical Studies 0321
    Clergy 0319
    History of 0320
    Philosophy of 0322
Theology 0469

SOCIAL SCIENCES
American Studies 0323
Anthropology
    Archaeology 0324
    Cultural 0326
    Physical 0327
Business Administration
    General 0310
    Accounting 0272
    Banking 0770
    Management 0454
    Marketing 0338
Canadian Studies 0385
Economics
    General 0501
    Agricultural 0503
    Commerce-Business 0505
    Finance 0508
    History 0509
    Labor 0510
    Theory 0511
Folklore 0358
Geography 0366
Gerontology 0351
History
    General 0578

Ancient 0579
Medieval 0581
Modern 0582
Black 0328
African 0331
Asia, Australia and Oceania 0332
Canadian 0334
European 0335
Latin American 0336
Middle Eastern 0333
United States 0337
History of Science 0585
Law 0398
Political Science
    General 0615
    International Law and
        Relations 0616
    Public Administration 0617
Recreation 0814
Social Work 0452
Sociology
    General 0626
    Criminology and Penology ... 0627
    Demography 0938
    Ethnic and Racial Studies 0631
    Individual and Family
        Studies 0628
    Industrial and Labor
        Relations 0629
    Public and Social Welfare 0630
    Social Structure and
        Development 0700
    Theory and Methods 0344
Transportation 0709
Urban and Regional Planning 0999
Women's Studies 0453

THE SCIENCES AND ENGINEERING

BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES
Agriculture
    General 0473
    Agronomy 0285
    Animal Culture and
        Nutrition 0475
    Animal Pathology 0476
    Food Science and
        Technology 0359
    Forestry and Wildlife 0478
    Plant Culture 0479
    Plant Pathology 0480
    Plant Physiology 0817
    Range Management 0777
    Wood Technology 0746
Biology
    General 0306
    Anatomy 0287
    Biostatistics 0308
    Botany 0309
    Cell 0379
    Ecology 0329
    Entomology 0353
    Genetics 0369
    Limnology 0793
    Microbiology 0410
    Molecular 0307
    Neuroscience 0317
    Oceanography 0416
    Physiology 0433
    Radiation 0821
    Veterinary Science 0778
    Zoology 0472
Biophysics
    General 0786
    Medical 0760

EARTH SCIENCES
Biogeochemistry 0425
Geochemistry 0996

Geodesy 0370
Geology 0372
Geophysics 0373
Hydrology 0388
Mineralogy 0411
Paleobotany 0345
Paleoecology 0426
Paleontology 0418
Paleozoology 0985
Palynology 0427
Physical Geography 0368
Physical Oceanography 0415

HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES
Environmental Sciences 0768
Health Sciences
    General 0566
    Audiology 0300
    Chemotherapy 0992
    Dentistry 0567
    Education 0350
    Hospital Management 0769
    Human Development 0758
    Immunology 0982
    Medicine and Surgery 0564
    Mental Health 0347
    Nursing 0569
    Nutrition 0570
    Obstetrics and Gynecology .. 0380
    Occupational Health and
        Therapy 0354
    Ophthalmology 0381
    Pathology 0571
    Pharmacology 0419
    Pharmacy 0572
    Physical Therapy 0382
    Public Health 0573
    Radiology 0574
    Recreation 0575

Speech Pathology 0460
Toxicology 0383
Home Economics 0386

PHYSICAL SCIENCES
Pure Sciences
Chemistry
    General 0485
    Agricultural 0749
    Analytical 0486
    Biochemistry 0487
    Inorganic 0488
    Nuclear 0738
    Organic 0490
    Pharmaceutical 0491
    Physical 0494
    Polymer 0495
    Radiation 0754
Mathematics 0405
Physics
    General 0605
    Acoustics 0986
    Astronomy and
        Astrophysics 0606
    Atmospheric Science 0608
    Atomic 0748
    Electronics and Electricity 0607
    Elementary Particles and
        High Energy 0798
    Fluid and Plasma 0759
    Molecular 0609
    Nuclear 0610
    Optics 0752
    Radiation 0756
    Solid State 0611
Statistics 0463

Applied Sciences
Applied Mechanics 0346
Computer Science 0984

Engineering
    General 0537
    Aerospace 0538
    Agricultural 0539
    Automotive 0540
    Biomedical 0541
    Chemical 0542
    Civil 0543
    Electronics and Electrical 0544
    Heat and Thermodynamics ... 0348
    Hydraulic 0545
    Industrial 0546
    Marine 0547
    Materials Science 0794
    Mechanical 0548
    Metallurgy 0743
    Mining 0551
    Nuclear 0552
    Packaging 0549
    Petroleum 0765
    Sanitary and Municipal 0554
    System Science 0790
Geotechnology 0428
Operations Research 0796
Plastics Technology 0795
Textile Technology 0994

PSYCHOLOGY
General 0621
Behavioral 0384
Clinical 0622
Developmental 0620
Experimental 0623
Industrial 0624
Personality 0625
Physiological 0989
Psychobiology 0349
Psychometrics 0632
Social 0451

♲

☐☐☐☐☐ U·M·I

SUJET   CODE DE SUJET

Catégories par sujets

HUMANITÉS ET SCIENCES SOCIALES

COMMUNICATIONS ET LES ARTS
Architecture	0729
Beaux-arts	0357
Bibliothéconomie	0399
Cinéma	0900
Communication verbale	0459
Communications	0708
Danse	0378
Histoire de l'art	0377
Journalisme	0391
Musique	0413
Sciences de l'information	0723
Théâtre	0465

ÉDUCATION
Généralités	515
Administration	0514
Art	0273
Collèges communautaires	0275
Commerce	0688
Économie domestique	0278
Éducation permanente	0516
Éducation préscolaire	0518
Éducation sanitaire	0680
Enseignement agricole	0517
Enseignement bilingue et multiculturel	0282
Enseignement industriel	0521
Enseignement primaire.	0524
Enseignement professionnel	0747
Enseignement religieux	0527
Enseignement secondaire	0533
Enseignement spécial	0529
Enseignement supérieur	0745
Évaluation	0288
Finances	0277
Formation des enseignants	0530
Histoire de l'éducation	0520
Langues et littérature	0279

Lecture	0535
Mathématiques	0280
Musique	0522
Orientation et consultation	0519
Philosophie de l'éducation	0998
Physique	0523
Programmes d'études et enseignement	0727
Psychologie	0525
Sciences	0714
Sciences sociales	0534
Sociologie de l'éducation	0340
Technologie	0710

LANGUE, LITTÉRATURE ET LINGUISTIQUE
Langues
Généralités	0679
Anciennes	0289
Linguistique	0290
Modernes	0291

Littérature
Généralités	0401
Anciennes	0294
Comparée	0295
Médiévale	0297
Moderne	0298
Africaine	0316
Américaine	0591
Anglaise	0593
Asiatique	0305
Canadienne (Anglaise)	0352
Canadienne (Française)	0355
Germanique	0311
Latino-américaine	0312
Moyen-orientale	0315
Romane	0313
Slave et est-européenne	0314

PHILOSOPHIE, RELIGION ET THÉOLOGIE
Philosophie	0422

Religion
Généralités	0318
Clergé	0319
Études bibliques	0321
Histoire des religions	0320
Philosophie de la religion	0322
Théologie	0469

SCIENCES SOCIALES
Anthropologie
Archéologie	0324
Culturelle	0326
Physique	0327
Droit	0398

Économie
Généralités	0501
Commerce-Affaires	0505
Économie agricole	0503
Économie du travail	0510
Finances	0508
Histoire	0509
Théorie	0511
Études américaines	0323
Études canadiennes	0385
Études féministes	0453
Folklore	0358
Géographie	0366
Gérontologie	0351

Gestion des affaires
Généralités	0310
Administration	0454
Banques	0770
Comptabilité	0272
Marketing	0338

Histoire
Histoire générale	0578

Ancienne	0579
Médiévale	0581
Moderne	0582
Histoire des noirs	0328
Africaine	0331
Canadienne	0334
États-Unis	0337
Européenne	0335
Moyen-orientale	0333
Latino-américaine	0336
Asie, Australie et Océanie	0332
Histoire des sciences	0585
Loisirs	0814
Planification urbaine et régionale	0999

Science politique
Généralités	0615
Administration publique	0617
Droit et relations internationales	0616

Sociologie
Généralités	0626
Aide et bien-être social	0630
Criminologie et établissements pénitentiaires	0627
Démographie	0938
Études de l' individu et de la famille	0628
Études des relations interethniques et des relations raciales	0631
Structure et développement social	0700
Théorie et méthodes.	0344
Travail et relations industrielles	0629
Transports	0709
Travail social	0452

SCIENCES ET INGÉNIERIE

SCIENCES BIOLOGIQUES
Agriculture
Généralités	0473
Agronomie.	0285
Alimentation et technologie alimentaire	0359
Culture	0479
Élevage et alimentation	0475
Exploitation des péturages	0777
Pathologie animale	0476
Pathologie végétale	0480
Physiologie végétale	0817
Sylviculture et faune	0478
Technologie du bois	0746

Biologie
Généralités	0306
Anatomie	0287
Biologie (Statistiques)	0308
Biologie moléculaire	0307
Botanique	0309
Cellule	0379
Écologie	0329
Entomologie	0353
Génétique	0369
Limnologie	0793
Microbiologie	0410
Neurologie	0317
Océanographie	0416
Physiologie	0433
Radiation	0821
Science vétérinaire	0778
Zoologie	0472

Biophysique
Généralités	0786
Medicale	0760

SCIENCES DE LA TERRE
Biogéochimie	0425
Géochimie	0996
Géodésie	0370
Géographie physique	0368

Géologie	0372
Géophysique	0373
Hydrologie	0388
Minéralogie	0411
Océanographie physique	0415
Paléobotanique	0345
Paléoécologie	0426
Paléontologie	0418
Paléozoologie	0985
Palynologie	0427

SCIENCES DE LA SANTÉ ET DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT
Économie domestique	0386
Sciences de l'environnement	0768

Sciences de la santé
Généralités	0566
Administration des hôpitaux	0769
Alimentation et nutrition	0570
Audiologie	0300
Chimiothérapie	0992
Dentisterie	0567
Développement humain	0758
Enseignement	0350
Immunologie	0982
Loisirs	0575
Médecine du travail et thérapie	0354
Médecine et chirurgie	0564
Obstétrique et gynécologie	0380
Ophtalmologie	0381
Orthophonie	0460
Pathologie	0571
Pharmacie	0572
Pharmacologie	0419
Physiothérapie	0382
Radiologie	0574
Santé mentale	0347
Santé publique	0573
Soins infirmiers	0569
Toxicologie	0383

SCIENCES PHYSIQUES
Sciences Pures
Chimie
Généralités	0485
Biochimie	487
Chimie agricole	0749
Chimie analytique	0486
Chimie minérale	0488
Chimie nucléaire	0738
Chimie organique	0490
Chimie pharmaceutique	0491
Physique	0494
PolymÇres	0495
Radiation	0754
Mathématiques	0405

Physique
Généralités	0605
Acoustique	0986
Astronomie et astrophysique	0606
Electronique et électricité	0607
Fluides et plasma	0759
Météorologie	0608
Optique	0752
Particules (Physique nucléaire)	0798
Physique atomique	0748
Physique de l'état solide	0611
Physique moléculaire	0609
Physique nucléaire	0610
Radiation	0756
Statistiques	0463

Sciences Appliqués Et Technologie
Informatique	0984

Ingénierie
Généralités	0537
Agricole	0539
Automobile	0540

Biomédicale	0541
Chaleur et ther modynamique	0348
Conditionnement (Emballage)	0549
Génie aérospatial	0538
Génie chimique	0542
Génie civil	0543
Génie électronique et électrique	0544
Génie industriel	0546
Génie mécanique	0548
Génie nucléaire	0552
Ingénierie des systèmes	0790
Mécanique navale	0547
Métallurgie	0743
Science des matériaux	0794
Technique du pétrole	0765
Technique minière	0551
Techniques sanitaires et municipales	0554
Technologie hydraulique	0545
Mécanique appliquée	0346
Géotechnologie	0428
Matières plastiques (Technologie)	0795
Recherche opérationnelle	0796
Textiles et tissus (Technologie)	0794
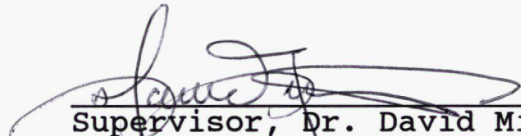
PSYCHOLOGIE
Généralités	0621
Personnalité	0625
Psychobiologie	0349
Psychologie clinique	0622
Psychologie du comportement	0384
Psychologie du développement	0620
Psychologie expérimentale	0623
Psychologie industrielle	0624
Psychologie physiologique	0989
Psychologie sociale	0451
Psychométrie	0632

♻

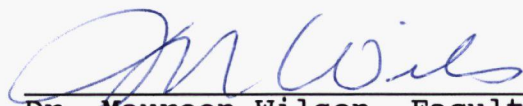THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Theoretical and Practical Conceptions of Dialogue in Participatory Action Research Approaches to Development Communications" submitted by Jody Waters in partial fulfillment for the degree of Master of Arts.

Supervisor, Dr. David Mitchell,
Graduate Programme in Communication
Studies

Dr. Edna Einsiedel, Graduate Programme
in Communication Studies

Dr. Maureen Wilson, Faculty of
Social Work

9/21/1992
Date

ii

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the relationship between participatory action research (PAR) and development communications, as it emerges theoretically and practically through the notion of dialogue. This is undertaken through a twofold interpretation of literature in PAR and development communications and practical experience in a development initiative in Nicaragua. The theoretical review indicates, firstly, where the PAR framework is constructed on ideas related fundamentally to communications. Secondly, this review illustrates that the theoretical linkage between PAR and development communications requires further elaboration through practical experience. The notion of dialogue guides this analysis, as the tenets of PAR define dialogue as a <u>condition</u> for participatory development. The theory-practice link proposed in this discussion emerges through the attempt to generate theoretical constructs from the ground up. This last issue has generally eluded previous research in development communications and helps to illustrate the necessity of uniting inquiry with practice in processes of social change.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The opportunity to undertake this project has been an incredible experience. The best part of this has been the people I came into contact with, both in Canada and Nicaragua, and to them, I owe a huge debt of gratitude. Happily, this outweighs the other formidable debts of a different type that I have developed. Those who know me will realize that this is not a statement to be taken lightly.

With affection and cariño, the following are those to whom I wish to express my appreciation for their support, patience, good humour and wise words: Maureen Wilson, David Mitchell, Edna Einsiedel, Ed Slopek, Ron Sept, Maureen Weir, David McGinnis, Brian Rusted, Rebekah Seidel, Anayancy Solis, Martin Kemp, Maryon McClary, Joan Campbell, Pat Connaughton, Ed and Maria Elena Carson, Elaine Henderson, Judy Butler, Bonnie Brownlee, Edith Gildart, Terry Hunsley, Guayo Rodriguez and Jane Woodin.

My Nicaraguan compañeras deserve special mention; I cannot express to them my appreciation for their kindness nor my estimation of the importance of the time I spent with them: Guiomar Talavera, Leonie Peterson, Rosa Jiménez, Martha Palacios, Iris Prado, Ana Isabel Espinoza, Margarita Urbina, Rebeca Centeno, Ana Maria Hernandez, Martha Olivia Gutierrez, Milagros Guerrero, Dionis Rojas Berrios and especially, Narcisa Urbina.

iv

Special thanks are due also to the women in the Communications Studies Programme office who have constantly amazed me with their good humour and their capacity to never be surprised: Sylvia Mills, Marion Hillier and Lorraine Ellert.

I also wish to acknowledge the financial support of the Canadian Bureau for International Education and the Canadian International Development Agency as well as the moral support and good advice of my project coordinator, Giselle Mitton.

My family has been a great support and help, surviving my many long-distance phone calls and their own general angst and anxiety. Many thanks, with love and appreciation, are due to my parents, and Tracy and Jay, for always giving me good reasons to come home.

Finally, throughout this process, I have had beside me a wonderfully supportive, patient and loving companion. For his understanding and constant encouragement, my love and deepest gratitude go to Scott. This experience has been made immeasurably more special because I have had him to share it with.

CONTENTS

-    Introduction
-    The Rise and Fall of the Dominant Paradigm
-    The Traditional Model of Development
     Communications
-    Diffusion of Innovations Theory
-    Critiques of the Dominant Paradigm
-    Toward a New Model of Development
     Communications: Dependency and Participation
-    Dependency Theory
-    The Emergence of Participation
-    The Impact of the Passing of the Dominant
     Paradigm

-    Introduction
-    Theoretical Bases of Participatory Action Research
-    Participatory Action Research
-    PAR in Third World Development
-    The Question of Cooptation
-    The Importance of Dialogue in PAR
-    Implications

-    Introduction
-    The Nicaraguan Context
-    The Nicaraguan Popular Movement
-    The Need for Information Networking
-    The Research Process
-    Step 1: Characterization of Information Needs
     and Resources
-    Step 2: Analysis and Evaluation
-    Step 3: Feedback and Follow-up
-    Some of the Results
-    Comments on the Process

I. Introduction

For the past two decades, a series of fundamental changes have taken place in the way that theoreticians and practitioners of Third World development have characterized their field. While the dust has not yet entirely settled, it is clear that ideas about and approaches to development have changed significantly from those first advanced. The notion of a more participatory view of development, and its theoretical counterpart, participatory action research, have been proposed and discussed at some length, as a critical response to the dominant development paradigm. Critics generally agree that the models utilized in the past failed on a number of grounds: the lack of attention to indigenous social and political structures; a belief in models which failed to promote self-reliance and (in some cases) fostered further dependency and inequality; and the unquestioned assumption that techniques and criteria that served in the developed world could be unproblematically transplanted to the Third World. This has led to a critical re-examination of the field, implicating the epistemology, theoretical assumptions and tools and methods which the old models assumed.

Development communications has become an issue within this larger shift, and it too has emerged from a period of self-analysis, in a somewhat different, if not more enlightened form. Viewed as a subset of development

research and practice, communication has run through a broad range of functions: as a theme, a method, a tool and a motivator. The old model of development communications promoted the use of mass media technologies to transmit innovative and innovat*ing* messages to a passive population.

Communication fits into this emerging paradigm in terms of the processes related to a "horizontal" conception of communications in development. This idea has been developed by a number of authors such as Jan Servaes (1989), Tom Jacobson (1985, 1989), and Luis Beltran (1980). One of the most significant aspects of these emerging views is the examination of Third World development according to the ideas of participatory action research. In fact, here it can be demonstrated that the resonance of notions such as dialogue and interaction <u>guides</u> participatory action research. It is this aspect in particular that indicates that the role of communication in development has become more important.

Participatory action research, as a theoretical basis for the emergence of new models of development, has given us a discourse constructed fundamentally of ideas related to communication. Examples of such notions are: conscientization, social learning, dialogical research and interactive forms of knowledge. PAR has further alerted us to the importance of examining our views of the interplay between theory and practice in development, and of research

in the social sciences in general. These ideas are particularly important in the relationship between the "researcher" and the "researched", and in practical aspects related to the process of development. This discussion argues that all of these notions are key to an emerging model of development which is able to inform, and be informed by, communication research and practice. The basis upon which this argument will be constructed is the suggestion that if we adhere to the tenets of participatory action research in development, communications can be defined most effectively as a condition.

PAR can be characterized most basically as research which unites inquiry with action to effect change. It involves research undertaken by the people into their own reality and means of changing it. Advocates of this approach underline its sensitivity to the context and realities faced by peoples in Third World communities. This sensitivity, they explain, rests on the condition that the researcher work to identify the research act with the priorities, patterns and capabilities of the people involved. Participatory action research can also be located within a larger process involving the shift away from the notion of objectivity in traditional social science research. PAR recognizes that no research in development can be value-free, nor can it be undertaken without a commitment to social change on the part of the researcher.

The ideas which are central to PAR, such as "people's knowledge" as a tool for development, and "people's praxis" as a research-guiding interest, indicate the centrality of communication in the processes of PAR. Orlando Fals Borda (1991), for example, explains that the process requires a "reconstruction of knowledge" into actions which foster social change, taking "dialogue as its point of insertion in the social process".[1] He further states that it is "dialogical research", in which self-constructed modes of interaction among participants generate a normativity which activates this knowledge. In other words, in PAR, the process of defining the priorities and objectives in research emerges through dialogue. And this dialogue provides a normative basis for action. Insofar as it is recognized that these are processes constructed around concepts which have been elaborated and discussed in a wide array of contexts in the field of communication studies, the PAR framework in general can only be enhanced by further interchange with communications theory. Similarly, the theorists in development communication have only begun to initiate a conceptual dialogue between the two areas; the net result being a visible disparity between theory and practice.

That this disparity has become problematic is clear in the writing of several scholars concerned with development communications. For example, Everett Rogers' 1976 essay

"Communication and Development: The Passing of the Dominant Paradigm", synthesized the growing critiques of the old models and brought a more critical view into the mainstream. But in 1989, Rogers himself questioned just how far ahead the theory had moved from that point, stating that although the dominant paradigm was no longer prevalent in most Third World countries, the paradigm lived on.[2] Jo Ellen Fair's study (1989) questioned the impact of the dominant paradigm's "passing", and concluded that research in development communication had not been radically altered. Similarly, Kishore Saint (1981) suggested that "academic blinkers" have prevented the development of theoretical constructs which are appropriate to Third World realities:

> A pre-requisite of correct understanding is the designing of suitable instruments of observation, description and understanding; in other words, preparing analytical tools and a language of discourse pertinent to the particular reality. This difficult work has not been done, at least not in the academies which have continued to replicate and refine redundant and irrelevant theories and methodologies.[3]

Saint is one of only a handful of theorists who have recognized the relevance of "liberative communication" in participatory research, and concurrently, the urgency of breaching the disparity between theory and practice.

It is proposed here that a clearer emphasis on the communicational aspects of PAR may provide one way to link theory and practice in Third World development. By focusing on the concept of dialogue that has emerged theoretically in

the PAR framework, it may be possible to enhance development practice. Similarly, if we approach the process of theory-building from the ground up, as PAR postulates, this practice should feed back into theory to provide further clarification. The main point made in this discussion is that it is necessary to view communication as a key component in the overall process of development. When interpreted in this way, it becomes clear that development is <u>conditional</u> on the type of open and democratic dialogue espoused in PAR.

This line of argument requires that we examine the implications of this conception of communication and development in terms of three basic elements: first, in the theory related to development and communications, second, in the practice of "doing" development, and third, in the link between the two.

In the area of <u>theory</u>, writers concerned with Third World development have paid surprisingly little attention to issues surrounding communication theory and practice. Luis Beltran (1980) points out the importance of various efforts to re-conceptualize communications in a "horizontal" or democratic way. He writes, "Almost invariably throughout these and similar works, dialogue was highlighted as the crucial agent of democratic communication, although its nature was not always dealt with in great detail".[4] Further, he indicates that the lion's share of this research

has gone into discussions of the mass media in developing nations and related to dependency. Despite his efforts to address this issue, over a decade later there appears to have been few significant advances made in promoting a conceptual basis for the idea of dialogue which takes into account the practical considerations dear to participatory development. Much can be taken from the history of the field of communication and introduced into the discourse surrounding participatory action research. It is suggested here that the notion of dialogue is of particular relevance to PAR. The concept of dialogue within PAR is unclear insofar as the literature rarely attempts to define it, either theoretically or practically. This includes how it is effected, its role in both micro-level projects and planning, as well as macro-level considerations such as institutional change and power structures. Furthermore, the assertion that a participatory model of development should be engaged in a multi-disciplinary "dialogue" with other fields and points of view needs to be clarified.

Moreover, in practice, it can be demonstrated that, regardless of the methods or approaches employed, communication must take place and fits in at all stages of development undertakings. Firstly, then, theory must inform practice. But secondly, practice must nourish theory, here, by broadening or refining what is meant by dialogue and how it might be effected. This requires attention at a number

of levels, for example in inter-personal relationships, in use of technologies, and in connection with institutional and structural change. This illustrates the urgency in the _praxis_ or theory-practice link which is postulated on all sides in participatory development. Here it is clear that a dialogue can be nothing else if not practically useful.

Finally, questions have been raised in the literature concerning the motivations for doing "activist" research. This is a key point as it relates to the theoretical justification of PAR as well as to the importance of the concept of dialogue. It is recognized that to undertake research, the researcher must know the reality and the context and that this must take place through interaction with the players involved. However, the subjectivity of the researcher has been viewed as problematic within the larger theoretical discourse of the social sciences. According to Jacobson (1985), for example, social science is no longer primarily concerned with generating universal laws regarding human behaviour. He argues that there is a role for "value-laden" choices in the social sciences. In this sense, research aims to generate theories and concepts which work as analytical tools for the people, which can be used to transform the process of doing research into processes of social change. This again implies that the researcher should be sensitive to the needs of the community in which she works, and remain aware of the purpose for involving

herself in the research. The starting point is to determine these goals, and the key process in the methodology, is dialogue.

To summarize then, it can be made evident that it is dialogue which constructs the democratic relationship between the researcher and the researched espoused in PAR. Engaging in dialogue engages the researcher in the reality of the community in which she works. This is where it becomes clear that the research is not being undertaken for the sake of generating theory or "scientific knowledge", but rather, for social change. The relationship constructed by the researcher and the people must, by definition, proceed from interaction. Keeping this in mind moves us closer to resolving the issue of how we may propose a theory-practice link. This last issue has, so far, eluded most thinking in development communications, yet has continually been addressed as the crucial element in the re-formulation of development communications theory.

This study begins with a brief history of the relationship between development and communication. The manner in which development communication has become as issue within the re-formulation of development theory does not require much elaboration, as this has been addressed elsewhere by a number of authors such as Everett Rogers, Tom Jacobson, Jan Servaes and Juan Diaz Bordenave. However, this discussion will attempt to synthesize these arguments

and demonstrate that these critiques have led to a clear emphasis on the function of <u>dialogue</u>. This study will also attempt to incorporate the critical discourse in development communication into larger debates in development, by casting participatory action research as an approach to development. The theoretical implications of this shall be considered, as will the corresponding practical ones. Finally, in an effort to provide some inroad into the theory-practice relationship, a case study shall be described and examined. This experience shall be used to demonstrate where a twofold approach of theoretical interpretation and practical experience can be used to generate suggestions for advancing the view of communications in development.

NOTES:

1. Orlando Fals Borda and Mohammed Anisur Rahman, <u>Action and Knowledge: Breaking the Monopoly with Participatory Action Research</u>. New York: Apex Press, 1991. p. 149.

2. Everett M. Rogers, "Inquiry in Development Communication", in Molefi Kete Asante and William B. Gudykunst, <u>Handbook of International and Intercultural Communication</u>. Beverley Hills: Sage, 1989. p. 69.

3. Kishore Saint, "Liberative Communication for True Participation", in Walter Fernandes and Rajesh Tandon, eds., <u>Participatory Research and Evaluation: Experiments in Research as a Process of Liberation</u>. New Delhi: Indian Social Institute, 1981. p. 84.

4. Luis Ramiro Beltran R., "Farewell to Aristotle: 'Horizontal Communications' ". <u>Communication 5</u>. 1980. p. 15.

II. Communication and Development: A History of the Relationship

Introduction

Current conceptions of development, and of the roles communication may play, are still under consideration. Contemporary thought in this area aligns itself with a notion of development which is defined in very different terms than orthodox approaches. The latter were grounded largely in western conceptions of modernization and growth brought about by economic and technological development. The most significant shift is the movement away from describing development in economic terms. The implications of this are significant in terms of redefining processes which collectively constitute development and how these processes may occur. Basically, development has come to be regarded less as a series of measurable changes and more as a series of processes related to peoples' own capabilities to define and satisfy their needs. In his discussion of development as social learning, David Korten (1989) offers a good description of this:

> It is more to the point to define development as a process by which a society transforms its institutions -- through a process of social learning -- in ways that enhance its ability to mobilize and manage resources to produce an enhanced sustainable output of benefits consistent with the aspirations of its members.[1]

Clearly then, a fundamental component of this is the participation of the people in these processes.

Correspondingly, the undertaking of research in development has changed, as has the role of the researcher or development practitioner.

Much of the critical examination of the notion of development is related to a failure to perceive differences between the frameworks of the First and Third World nations. Traditional approaches to development research were based on western models, grounded in the experiences of the developed world, and were paralleled in terms of analytical structure, by the notion of objectivity in research. In the search for universally valid laws "explaining" development, objectivist research subscribed to a fundamental separation of the researcher from the community being studied. Furthermore, it viewed peoples within these communities as "objects" to be studied and as passive recipients of development. A critical error in reasoning occurred, concludes Carmen (1988) in which "the major flaw was the failure to ask the elementary question as to whether or not the classical protocols of the physical sciences . . . apply to this most creative and 'human' branch of the social sciences."[2] One ramification of this was the failure to initiate a dialogue between the researcher and the people in developing nations, which led to a failure to identify real problems and appropriate strategies for addressing them.

As a general response to this situation, the notion of participation was proposed in a variety of scholarly works

in development as well as development communications, and

emerged in the late 1980s and early 1990s as the over-

arching theme in the field. The significance of this is

twofold. Firstly, based on the failure of traditional

models of development, it is now recognized that a people's

right to assert itself by defining and participating in its

own processes is part of that category of rights which have

come to define development.[3] Crucial here is the

recognition by a number of scholars (many from the Third

World), that the term "development" is expressed most

meaningfully when it is not reduced to quantifiable

indicators of economic growth and material production.

Secondly, is the area of participatory action research (PAR)

which emerged during the 1970s in reaction to the perceived

and obvious failures of the dominant paradigm. As Thomas

Jacobson (1985) explains:

> Participatory research arose during the
> realization that the subjects of development had
> been abused by "expert" approaches imported from
> the North and that development efforts must for
> many reasons focus more on the interests of the
> peoples with development needs.[4]

The following review of the history of development

communications research indicates that the situation

Jacobson refers to was particularly evident in the early

approaches to communication and development. In the

emergence and subsequent failures of the "dominant

paradigm", the role ascribed to communications can clearly

be shown to be one problematic aspect leading to the

re-definition of development.

The Rise and Fall of the Dominant Paradigm

The earliest notions of development were grounded in specifically western phenomena of economic growth and progress, referred to by some as the "growth paradigm". Couched within these terms, development became a descriptor of processes such as industrialization, modernization and urbanization. Jan Servaes (1989) has noted the "organic, immanent, directional, cumulative, irreversible and purposive" nature of this view, and traces its roots to the likes of Comte, Durkheim, Spencer and Marx.[5] In its emergence in the 1950s and 1960s, development was a term tied to post-war conceptions of foreign aid, and was often placed within policy and planning concerns such as the American Marshall Plan-type programs. Related to these process, conceptions of development were explained and justified with the support of quantifiable indicators.

If the aim of development projects was to foster economic growth in Third World nations, then progress was gauged by research which measured per capita income, GNP and production and consumption of goods. Development research during this period was generally concerned with measuring these phenomena as well as providing insights into how to increase the rate of change (see, for example, Lerner, 1958; Schramm, 1964; and Rostow, 1960). Rogers (1976) notes:

> Although there was a certain amount of
> intellectual discomfort with per capita income as
> the main index of development, especially among
> noneconomists, alternative measures and
> definitions of development had relatively few
> proponents.[6]

The dominant paradigm of development was built on knowledge claims which were used to explain the way that underdeveloped nations would make the transition from traditional to modern society. This was conceived as a linear process, describing a series of stages through which nations of the Third World had not yet passed. W. W. Rostow's The Stages of Economic Growth (1960), and D. D. McLelland's The Achieving Society (1961) exemplified this view. The former work in particular illustrated this, as it defined development as a series of five separate stages: (a) traditional society (b) establishment of preconditions for takeoff (c) take-off into self-sustained growth (d) drive to maturity (e) high levels of mass consumption.

In an attempt to broaden the range of factors in the modernization paradigm, the role of communication in development emerged as a major theme in the 1950s. In this context, the most widely held views of communication were related to the use of the mass media in motivating change and modernization. Communication began to be viewed as "a necessary factor for economic development and growth" and an independent variable in the development process.[7] For example, it was felt that a goal for developing nations was the implementation of advanced communication systems, like

those found in the First World. But more importantly, it
was also considered to be important to make these types of
changes desirable to peoples in developing nations. Thus,
it was proposed that exposure to "modernizing messages" or
images of development would be a force powerful enough to
generate development in traditional societies. As Servaes
points out, this view emerged as part of the "theoretical
substructure" of American election campaigning, and was
connected conceptually with Lasswell's linear transmission
model of communication.[8] This is exemplified by the
research of Lerner and Schramm, and particularly, by the
"diffusion of innovation" paradigm led by Rogers and
Schoemaker (1973). Concurrently, research in the area
during the 1950s and 1960s was generally concerned with
proving the hypothesis that strong correlations existed
between the use of mass media and patterns of development.[9]

The Traditional Model of Development Communications

Lerner's The Passing of Traditional Society:
Modernizing the Middle East (1958), is considered the
classic work in orthodox development communications theory.
Holding to a Rostowian notion of development as a series of
stages, Lerner proposed that the extension of mass media
would fit into a sequence of development processes leading
to modernization. Under the assumptions of this model,
Lerner postulated a "psychosociological" perspective, where

individual behaviour was central to development through attitudinal change towards tendencies related to modernization. This conception revolved around the term "empathy", or the capacity to project oneself into the role of the individual in a developed society. Gibbons (1985) argued that for Lerner, and for Rostow before him, "underdevelopment signalled paralysis of the human condition that could not be motivated even in its own self-interest and hence, a worthy object of contempt".[10]

Lerner's research on communities in Turkey, prompted him to conclude that the stimulation of the individual to change was "indispensable" for people to move out of traditional patterns. Along with this, he suggested, very much in the spirit of Rostow, that the following chain of events would signal that "development" was occurring:

> Once a country has managed to reach 10 percent urbanization, literacy and mass media grow with urbanization, to about 25 percent. After this, literacy continues to rise independently of urban growth. This whole process subsequently leads to an increased GNP/capita, and increased participation in elections (voting).[11]

Following this, Lerner concluded that societies which had undergone urbanization, literacy and democratization processes, were ultimately capable of "incorporating continuing social change into existing institutions". In this, communications media would "supplement and complement" as "mobility multipliers", the oral channels of traditional society.[12]

Lerner's work can be seen as archetypical of research which sought to prove a causal relationship between communication and development.[13] His argument revolved around several fundamental ideas which dominated much of the subsequent research in the area. Supposedly, development occurred through processes of modernization -- defined according to western models. Secondly, the individual's ability to empathise and change, was viewed the starting point. Finally, the media acted to facilitate this by providing motivational images. These notions were picked up by Schramm (1964) who concentrated on institutional factors rather than sociopsychological formulations for explaining communication and modernization. Schramm's research explained how the mass media acted to motivate change while interpersonal channels simultaneously served to circulate ideas of modernization throughout societies. Others, such as Hagen and McLelland (1961), while continuing to maintain the causal or stage model of modernization, suggested further study of individual change, including achievement motivation and socialization processes.

The key areas of convergence between all of these "liberal-capitalist" approaches (Mowlana and Wilson 1990) were: a focus on economic growth, the use of capital-intensive technological innovation as a stimulus for and as indices of change, and a fundamental belief that western models of development were preordained. Critiques of these

views are myriad, based on the intrinsic ethnocentrism of this view. However, the most significant outcry against these modernization-based approaches to development communications were aimed at the tradition of diffusion of innovation research led by Everett Rogers.[14] The critiques which led to the fall of diffusionism are of particular significance as they underline the difficulties in the approaches and definitions of development which had dominated the field. The fall of diffusionism indicates where development communications shifted in its paradigmatic formulation, and in addition, illustrates a still-occurring segueway into a more participatory concept of development.

Diffusion of Innovations Theory

Concurring with Lerner's conclusions that the autonomous behaviour of the peasant was the determining variable in development, Rogers and Shoemaker (1973) proposed the notion that it is persuasion or diffusion of information which supposedly enables the peasantry in developing nations to change. This approach postulated the provision of stimuli to empathise or change, via the systematic introduction, diffusion and adoption of innovative ideas. Carmen (1988) notes that it was Rogers' work that gave us the discourse of "opinion-leaders", "change-agents", "adaptor and resistors", "innovators and laggards". These were the communication-related concepts

which formulated diffusion of innovations theory[15], and
which related specifically to the disposition of a peasantry
to accept development. The most important tenet in
diffusion theory was the belief that innovation, when
introduced to certain members of a community, would "diffuse
autonomously, from those in direct contact with external
sources of information to other members of a community".[16]
The assumption here was that the knowledge of tools,
techniques and attitudes would be defined as innovative, and
passed on by external agents to specific groups. This
process supposedly produced a "magic-multiplier" effect, and
spread independently to generate development. The implied
role for the external agent was to address only a small
fraction of the community -- essentially, that community's
opinion leaders.

The role of communication in this model concentrated on
the first two of four steps in the process of diffusion of
innovation: (a) information/knowledge about the innovation;
(b) communication or persuasion about the innovation;
(c) adoption or rejection of the innovation; and
(d) confirmation of the innovation. Development was
evaluated by measuring changes in levels of knowledge, and
the extent to which innovations were adopted. In this
research, these phenomena were defined as the extent to
which the community displayed "diffusion behaviour". Roy,
Waisanen and Rogers' work in Costa Rica (1969), for example,

involved the measurement of the level of knowledge and adoption of 23 innovations in agriculture, health, and social education through radio treatments.[17] From their data, these researchers extracted the conclusion that the communication channels of opinion leaders in a community were more "cosmopolite" than those of non-leaders in their study villages. The opinion leaders, they argued, "play an important role in the diffusion process; they act to mediate or link the village system via cosmopolite channels to the larger and more modern society".[18]

The role of communication developed here was characterized as a vertical or transmissional one, in the handing-down of ideas -- first from the mass media to people and then in the persuasion process. The key question in the diffusion approach was how communication could increase the frequency and extent to which a new developmental technique or idea would be adopted. This demonstrates, furthermore, that it was necessary for the external agent to communicate *to* rather than *with* the people.

The promise of diffusion to raise levels of development in areas of the Third World where it was implemented has been empirically shown to have gone unfulfilled. This, however, is only one of a series of criticisms levelled against the diffusion approach. Confronted with the realities of the developing nations, as well as the perceived problematics of the dominant models of

development, a number of Third World scholars brought to the forefront the significant intellectual trepidation which ultimately altered views of communication and development (for examples of these, see Beltran, 1980; Juan Diaz Bordenave, 1977; Paulo Freire, 1970). Furthermore, the research undertaken into diffusion phenomena was itself attacked, raising questions about western intellectual traditions, their reliance on objectivity and the inherent dangers in formulating research questions outside of the Third World context. This simultaneously shifted attention to Third World thought and inquiry as a _source_, rather than an _object_ of research.

Critiques of the Dominant Paradigm

Critics have pointed out that in stage theories of development, as well as in the communicational models derived from them, there was an intrinsic ethnocentrism which conditioned the terms of reference. This ethnocentrism limited both their analytical power as approaches to research and their appropriateness in practical applications in the Third World. The main arguments alluded to the fact that the growth paradigm and stage theory of modernization were based only on the experiences of the developed Western nations, and made assumptions about the potential development of other areas that were not necessarily appropriate or realistic.

It was suggested that the type of thinking which guided research and policy decisions attempted to "force" or transplant development, and impeded what may have evolved through endemic patterns. Another critical point of contention was the lack of systematic historical analysis of causes of underdevelopment beyond those which discussed the "backwardness" of traditional man, or the "subculture of the peasantry". Finally, it was argued that the terms of analysis used in the dominant model were narrowly conceived in economic terms, and inadequate to deal with issues of development and underdevelopment in the Third World.[19] Servaes notes that "critics argue that the modernization concept is a veiled synonym for 'westernization', namely the copying or implantation of western mechanisms and institutions in a Third World context".[20]

It was recognized that diffusion theory in particular displayed all of these tendencies. Roling, Ascroft and Chege's study (1976), for example, argued that diffusion strategies produced an effect of "imperfect equalization". They, however, also argued for the value of diffusion research for future strategies, citing it as exemplary of what should not be done. They mentioned a number of problems with the diffusion approach to both research and practice. First, they contended that the diffusion process itself is gradual and requires a substantially longer time period to adequately measure than was normally given. They

also pointed out that only "progressive" farmers with the means and inclination to adopt First World innovations were included in these studies. They felt that the findings were therefore often biassed, and worse, that the needs of those whose situations were the most acute were frequently overlooked. Finally, they questioned the assumption of diffusion research that "innovation itself was the message" and concurred with the view that it was not simply First World technology and innovation being diffused, but a foreign ideology as well.[21] In the words of Herman Felstehausen:

> The stress has been on finding ways to stimulate, induce and coerce traditional people with words and language, as well as guns and butter, to change their attitudes and actions so they will begin to behave more nearly like entrepreneurs in the industrialized nations.[22]

There were various aspects of the debates on development and communications which led to the formulation of another model. These can be characterized generally as: inadequate or non-existent attempts to incorporate communications within a more systematic structural analysis of societies, including cultural, political, historical and social factors; inconsistencies in the way communication itself was defined; and inappropriate design of research methods and formulation of research questions.

The first of these aspects concerns the attempt made on the part of critical scholars of development to demonstrate the reliance of the orthodox view on inappropriate

formulations of communications in social, economic and political systems. It was suggested that these were operationalized in ways which left the issues of "how communication and development interact" unresolved.[23] As Rogers suggested, it was more effective to use as a starting point, the application of structural analyses to these societies. S. T. Kwame Boafo (1985) echoes this, citing Grunig's research with peasants in Colombia as an example:

> Unless we consider the structural situation in which communication takes place, we are merely engaging in a vicious cycle of relating characteristics of development, while ignoring the reasons which brought them into existence. [24]

Similarly, the role of communication itself was highly problematic. Felstehausen noted the failure to differentiate between "information and communication" in the traditional approaches, and suggested the former refers to message content and the latter to the "processes which describe information flows as well as their effects", and the processes by which meanings are transformed.[25] He further described several difficulties with models of communication which had been borrowed from the First World. Western views of development and communications, he felt, were more often than not, "misapplied" and "inadequate", and thus, lacked the basis required to fully explore problems in the Third World. He also criticized the use of untested theoretical models of communication, and he felt that as a result, the role of communications as part of a larger

social and political setting was often distorted.[26]

A particularly salient aspect of Felstehausen's contribution to this debate was the suggestion that communication be viewed as part of a more general "social interaction theory". Here, communication would "be viewed as a process which unveils and transforms reality in the exchange of information among persons."[27] This represented a fairly radical break from the linear transmission model which had previously dominated conceptual discussions of development and communication. His discussion added the production and exchange of meaning as functions of communications and also suggested the importance of the relationship of these processes to social, economic and political structures. In this, he included elements such as, "rules, sanctions, status, power, economic motives, customs, beliefs, values and rituals".[28] Finally, he proposed the notion of "community", as a "framework for social and intellectual interaction where information processing is observed".[29] He concluded that progress towards development could only be defined in terms of changes in all of these components within a community -- which amounts to an early version of a more participatory model.

The ethnocentric principles guiding research into development and communications did not escape criticism either. Beltran (1976) lead the intellectual revolt against

research traditions which guided this inquiry, citing
diffusion research in particular, as displaying "blindness
to social structure". He further provided a critique of
"alien conceptual models, stemming chiefly from the United
States of America".[30] Felstehausen also questioned the main
assumption of diffusion theory -- specifically that
communications can play a role in effecting social change,
independently of related variables, either in developing
nations, or elsewhere.[31] Hornik (1984) noted the
inattention of researchers to the peasant farmers, whose
conditions were largely overlooked in favour of those of the
upper members of stratified rural communities. He commented
that an inherent bias toward the commercial farmers "guided
the activities of the research centres", and that this
research was generally inappropriate for the subsistence
farmers[32], whose needs, paradoxically, were most urgent.
Other researchers suggested that measurements of change, in
general, and of living standards in particular, were guided
by arbitrarily determined research instruments. Further,
the research questions themselves were felt to be irrelevant
or misguided in view of the realities of Third World
nations.[33]

Moreover, the theoretical framework in which diffusion
research was housed was almost entirely unrelated to the
divergent cultures into which it was thrust. The diffusion
approach most markedly demonstrated that generalizations

premised on advanced nations' models of development, when
submitted to "the acid test of usefulness" in the Third
World, were not appropriate. Again, this was connected to
ethnocentric presuppositions about what constituted
development:

> [T]he straightforward transference of research
> results originating in the environment of the
> affluent American industrial farmer was taken for
> granted. They did bring with them a wealth of
> expertise, but as was confirmed by the paltry
> outcomes as compared to the expected effectiveness
> of the communication-techniques (in terms of
> development and growth) they were merely dealing
> with symptoms, not core issues.[34]

These critiques share an affinity with the principles which
motivated the development of participatory models generally,
and participatory action research, specifically. These
issues help us to locate an emerging role for communications
in the new models, and will be examined in further detail in
this discussion. It is useful at this point, however, to
briefly summarize the relationship between development and
communications as it was described by the dominant paradigm.

Initially, the role ascribed to communication can best
be described as a building block in the road to development
-- in terms of mass media systems -- and as a tool to be
used to provide the motivation for underdeveloped nations to
attempt to proceed down this road. This, of course, refers
to the media-as-motivators thesis in the diffusion approach.
A related factor is the measurement of the adoption of ideas
intrinsic to pre-conceived processes of development. This

suggested, first, that it was not only possible, but useful to measure mass media effects. More crucially, this defined the role of the researcher as an outsider, concerned with processes of social change in the Third World only insofar as they yielded research results. These results were then transported back to the developed societies in order to make predictions regarding development, and to construct laws explaining the behaviour of the peasantry vis. a vis. mass communications. This precluded the researchers' active participation in the processes themselves, as well as diverted attention from any thoughts that the peasantry might have had on the subject.

But, by the 1970s, it had become apparent that the initial zeal and confidence which had been incited by these models of development had been significantly stifled. In fact, by 1976, the intellectual movement, combined with a series of world events and patterns, led Rogers to declare the "passing of the dominant paradigm".[35] Simultaneously, alternative views on development itself, and on the role of communications within it, began to be heard, particularly from within the Third World itself. This was given voice in the emergence of participatory action research as a means of countering the "development abuses" which had been facilitated by the early approaches.

Toward a New Model of Development Communication: Dependency and Participation

With the passing of the old paradigm and the growing number of voices being heard from the Third World, the perceived failings of the orthodox models of development communications quickly gave way to a lively debate in the literature. This debate concerned not only the nature of development communications, but the very foundations of development itself. Whether this debate has today been resolved in a satisfactory way is a question that only people in the Third World can address. An important step forward was taken, however, when it was recognized that researchers' agendas should be subordinated to the priorities of the peoples in the developing world. This is one of the main arguments in a more participatory approach which was developed as an alternative to the dominant model.

Writers such as Felstehausen, Gustavo Gutierrez, Paulo Freire and Denis Goulet, were among the first to elaborate the normative dimensions of development. In their attempt to introduce questions of ethics and local values into this discourse, they underscored the relevance of participation. Concurrently, the role that was proposed for communication as part of these processes came to replace the view that the communications media could independently cause modernity.

Dependency Theory

While the emphasis here will be on strategies of

communication focusing on interaction and dialogue in participation, it is important to recognize that these views did not entirely dominate the emergence of alternative views of development. Developing alongside the call for more participatory forms of development, was the work of "dependency" theorists such as Andre Gunder Frank, Paul Baran, and a number of Latin American writers usually referred to as the "dependista" school. The main argument here was that the dominant models ignored the more complex national and international dimensions of Third World development. Dependency theory provided a means of gaining entry into the political and economic analyses of the international system which might explain these complexities. This approach also attempted to address tendencies towards contradictions and inequalities at the national level which resulted from the international socio-economic and political system. The dependency tradition was further expanded in the tenets of cultural imperialism and communication dependency by figures such as Herbert Schiller, Kaarle Nordenstreng and Armand Mattelart.

There were two main foci of dependency theory: first, neo-colonial expansion by the First World through inequitable economic and political relationships; and second, the relationship of dependency which this created between the developed and lesser-developed nations (which Frank referred to, respectively, as "core" and

"periphery"). Baran (1957, 1966) contributed to this
discourse the thesis that development and underdevelopment
were inter-related and continuous processes -- or, "two
sides of a single coin". Immanuel Wallerstein (1974) used
these as the foundations for analysis of the international
dimension of the dependency relationship, while
Nordenstreng, Tapio Varis and others, broadened this by
considering the cultural dimensions (Varis and Nordenstreng,
1973; Varis, 1975; Schiller, 1969). Emile McAnany, although
not generally identified as a dependency theorist, focused
on the notion of "marginality" which grew out of dependency
theory.[36] This argued that large sections of a nation's
population were restricted from participating in social,
cultural and economic systems and attempted to relate this
conceptually to the international economic system.

The various expressions of the dependency tradition can
be seen to be antithetical to those of modernization in
several ways. First, while the focus of their analysis
paralleled modernization theory, (i.e. first economic
aspects, then, cultural ones), dependency theory proposed
ways of looking at the concepts of development and
underdevelopment from the vantage point of the Third World.
International industrial and capital competition were held
responsible for underdevelopment and domination through
dependence. Moreover, dependency argued that inequalities
within nations should be considered, which shifted attention

away from the individual and towards social and economic structure. Further, while modernization theory attempted to "treat" symptoms, dependency theory tried to explain the causes of development. And while the diffusion of innovations approach maintained that progress in the Third World occurred through the large-scale transference and implementation of First World technologies, dependency theory argued that foreign penetration, through technology and capital transfer, <u>created</u> underdevelopment. Some dependency writers recommended the total withdrawal of the lesser-developed nations from the world economic system, while others called for revolutionary action.[37]

It has been recognized that within this fairly diverse school of thought, a series of fundamental difficulties leave it somewhat tenuous, both conceptually and practically. Rogers (1989) notes that dependency is generally empirically unverifiable, and questions its relevance to pragmatic considerations. Mowlana (1990) points out that the research itself is characterized by vaguely defined terminology, while Servaes (1989) feels that a continuing reliance on quantifiable indicators diverts attention from larger issues related to qualitative change in the Third World.[38] Dependency writing also tends towards determinism, particularly in its neo-Marxist elements. An example of this would be Frank's <u>Lumpenbourgeoisie, Lumpendevelopment: Development, Class and Politics in Latin</u>

<u>America</u> (1971), which proposes disengagement from the global system or world revolution.

Notwithstanding these criticisms, the dependency school contributed to the debate by proposing another view of development. It is significant that this view was developed primarily in response to the realities of the nations affected, particularly Latin America. Further, in arguments regarding cultural dependency or cultural imperialism, a further dimension was added to speculation about media and social change. This arm of the dependency school directed itself at proving that an unequal flow of information reinforced situations of dependence as well as established an ideological presence (usually capitalist) in the regions studied. It is generally accepted that dependency offered little in the way of practical solutions to the situations it described. It is important, however, to mention the contribution of the dependency school to illustrate the kind of significant challenges which have been posed to conventional thinking about development.

The Emergence of Participation

In the passing of the dominant paradigm, the emphasis on macro-level conceptions, such as industrialization and First World technology, gave way to a micro-level or local emphasis. One of the factors contributing to this was the rapid increase of problems faced in the Third World related

to processes associated with the transition to
modernization. Urbanization, for example, brought on
economic stagnation, food shortages, poor living conditions,
high unemployment and marked increases in levels of poverty
in many cases. More fundamentally, this shift can also be
attributed to a failure on the part of the dominant
approaches to adequately comprehend institutional structures
in the societies in question. For example, as Beltran
argued, one important negative implication of transplanting
western conceptions of development, was the failure of
benefits to "trickle down" to peoples who were in need of
them. He noted: "Technological improvements in agriculture
and in other productive sectors not only do not lead
necessarily to achieving such development, but may even
impede it by further strengthening the dominant elites."[39]

Another theme in the critiques of the orthodox models
was a call for the prioritization of locally-defined goals
and strategies. Here, emphasis was placed on regional
initiatives, which supplanted the technological-economic
imperative in favour of appropriateness. Further, locally
developed initiatives were proposed which would ideally
originate in the real needs of the peasantry. In the
overall increased emphasis on quality of life and ethics in
development, the need to respect local values and local
needs was underscored, as were models which would foster
self-reliance.[40] It was argued that in the process of

identifying these local values and needs, the participation of the community should be paramount. The United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), for example, stated: "Our programme is based on the assumption that the vigourous pursuit of people's participation is an important instrument for reversing this trend towards the increased dependence and marginalization of the masses. It is to be a research programme with social aims".[41] The goal of self-reliance is similarly fundamental here, in terms of it taking the place of previously identified development objectives, such as increased GNP.

The process of development rather than simply the product was the emphasis in Denis Goulet's works, "'Development' . . . Or Liberation" (1971a), and The Cruel Choice: A New Concept in the Theory of Development (1971b). Basing his ideas in the writings of theorists Gustavo Gutierrez and Paulo Freire, Goulet suggested the idea of "development ethics". This point of view was rooted in Freire's notion that "liberation" implied the process by which power inequities and change were effected, while "development" referred to the effects themselves. Goulet wrote, "For liberationists, therefore, success is not measured by the quantity of benefits gained, but above all by the way in which change processes take place".[42] He felt that the most important tests of development were popular autonomy, social creativity and control over forces of

change, within the frameworks of existing social organizations. Goulet further stressed the importance of "normative referents", as regulative principles of development. Thus, he advanced a "theory of needs", distinguishing between needs of first necessity (food, clothing and shelter), enhancement needs (related to the way societies and individuals express, create and bring about their own capacities), and luxury needs. Of these, he argued, enhancement needs are the most important in meaningful processes of development. Accordingly he called for cultural expression and quality of life based in higher standards of living, and "higher standards of thinking".[43] Liberation, therefore, is the freedom to proceed in these processes in a given political and social setting. Goulet did not offer any practical models of development, yet his work indicated where alternative processes of development might exist for the Third World.

It was also recognized that local movements and forms of organization were continuously engaged in their own forms of development. It was perceived that fostering these was another possible form of development research. An example of this is found in Saint's discussion of local cultural expression in India. Here, he stressed the need to "rediscover and reactivate" indigenous forms of communication as liberative:

> The independence movement in India was in every
> sense a multidimensional 'cultural action for
> freedom', to use the more topical phrase of Paulo
> Freire, which evolved highly original modes of
> communication specific to the Indian rural
> situation. The prayer meetings, the *padayatra*,
> the non-violent *satyagraha*, the fast, the spinning
> sessions are peculiarly Indian forms of
> contemporary social and political communication
> and participation.[44]

What Goulet, Saint and other writers in this vein had to offer to the theoretical debate about communications in development processes was a general awareness of the different aspects of communicational processes in society in general, and in developing nations in particular. Furthermore, it was felt that an understanding of how societies and communities undergo change relative to structural aspects and power differentials should be a starting point for this type of research.[45] It is notable that in a number of related studies attempting to do this during this period, practical experience was a key element.[46] These works are characterized by their emphasis on the transformatory aspects of development, i.e. interactive learning and knowledge empowerment.

One important concept describing development as a learning process was Paulo Freire's concept of conscientization, where people can collectively "name the world in order to transform it". Here, Freire refers to a method of popular education based on the contention that people who become perceptive of their local social and cultural structures, and take action to change oppressive

formulations are, in fact, engaging in self-reliant and transformatory expressions of their capacity to develop. This conception was crucial to Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1970) and has had a significant impact on the overall discourse surrounding development. In reference to Freire, Richard Shaull explains:

> every human being, no matter how 'ignorant' or submerged in the 'culture of silence' he may be, is capable of looking critically at his world in a dialogical encounter with others. Provided with the proper tools for such encounter, he can gradually perceive his personal and social reality as well as the contradictions in it, become conscious of his own perception of that reality, and deal critically with it. In this process, the old, paternalistic teacher-student relationship is overcome.[47]

Freire's approach was based on the development of a Third World pedagogy, which is grounded in the local conceptualization of social, economic, historical and political conditions. Its main tenet was the need for sensitivity to the way that marginalized classes in the developing world deal with their environment. Freire's work is crucial in that it suggested research as a local and ongoing process, undertaken by the oppressed for their own transformation.

Luis Beltran dealt with some of these same notions within the scope of communications theory. Beltran conceived of communication in situations of dependence as "vertical", illustrated by one-way flows of information from "active sources" (that is, policy-makers and

administrations), to "passive receivers", or the oppressed.
He argued that First World principles of research, when
applied to developing nations, tended to solidify inequality
and maintain the status quo. Recognizing the inherent right
of the people to do their own research, he proposed the
ideal of "horizontal communication". This model integrated
the rights and needs of the peasantry to communicate among
themselves through dialogue and participation. Development
planning efforts, he concluded, should include "access,
dialogue and participation", between and within groups at
the grassroots levels. Jacobson has noted that Beltran's
ideas have had considerable influence in forums such as
UNESCO, where his notion of horizontal communication has
become a key term in discussions relating participation to
development communications.[48]

Felstehausen's arguments deserve further mention here,
because in their reference to communication, they illustrate
the direction that thinking in development was taking during
this period. The study of communication theoretically, he
felt, required elaboration because of its functions within a
matrix of social structure. Following the work of Hugh
Daniel Duncan in the social theory of communication, and Lee
Thayer's work in communication and organization,
Felstehausen proposed that communication be conceptualized
as the study of "social interactions, and conceptual forces
which link ideas together".[49] A theoretically interesting

aspect of his argument was the suggestion that rather than keeping research isolated by attempting to generate conceptual explanations of the dynamics of development, these be brought to bear in the processes that take place in reality. This might allow us to make inferences regarding the generation of new theory using the processes within which we are participating as a basis.

The participation of local people in the generation and use of knowledge, pointed these suggestions towards ways of using information. In his concept of social interaction as well as his view that development was transformation, Felstehausen can be aligned with figures such as Freire and Beltran. Here, communication is perceived as the means by which the way that people perceive and act upon their environment is made clear to them (via the exchange of information). Felstehausen's (1973) research in Colombia with locally initiated road building projects lent considerable practical credence to his argument. He observed ways that local communities were able to use information to effect change within the constraints imposed by rules and sanctions of their social organizations. A brief but important article by Lewis Donohew and Edward R. Springer (1977) discussed the distinction between the functions of information-seeking and information-diffusion as the main aspect in an alternative development communication. As a starting point for a new approach, they

recommended a development model "growing out of
conceptualizations of human systems as information seekers
and problem solvers".[50]

This distinction between the functions of communication
helped to locate communications issues within an approach to
development which is capable of taking local systems and
processes into account. The key question regarding
communication here was how it helped individuals and
communities cope with their environment. Furthermore,
Donohew and Springer's article is among the first works in
the alternative school to specifically link development
communications to the field of action research. In doing
so, they added a further dimension to the thesis regarding
"alien models" of research in the Third World. By
suggesting a role for the external agent or researcher as
facilitating and catalysing information-seeking activities,
this point of view illustrated the pertinence of
communications issues in local systems as well as the
researcher or practitioner's involvement. In this sense,
the participatory paradigm they argued for would truly work
"from the bottom up".

All of the above writers characterize the important
shifts taking place in the theorizing about communication
and development. First, the impact of writers from the
Third World demonstrated that it was somewhat counter-
productive to continually address issues of national

development from outside the regions concerned. Further,

they broadened the range of concepts which could be related

to both communications and development. As Fair explains:

> As researchers expanded their attention from the
> study of individuals' attitudes and behaviours as
> primary agents to societal-level or structural
> changes, it was clear that the media could not
> have the same impact on development -- more than
> just the media and their messages were needed for
> national development.[51]

Finally, they recognized the importance of how local people

see their reality and work together to change it. This

simultaneously acknowledged the need to rediscover endemic

forms of communication and to search for ways to put them to

work in liberative action.

The Impact of the Passing of the Dominant Paradigm

In 1986, the Canadian International Development Agency

lamented the painfully slow progress being made in local

adoption of communication technologies in communities in

India, Costa Rica, Papua New Guinea and Sri Lanka,

particularly in terms of "improving productivity," and

efficiency of rural agriculture, industry, and "enhancing

quality of life".[52] This unhappy circumstance illustrated

that well into the 1980s, development communication read

well on paper, yet lagged behind somewhat in practice. Two

years later, in the same publication, Karim H. Karim wrote,

> In development, communication cannot ignore the
> social structures and cultural traditions of the
> communities it seeks to change. This is the
> consensus of development communicators, following

> the failure of many information campaigns that
> neither effectively reached people targeted for
> development, nor allowed them to answer.[53]

Karim goes on to cite Felstehausen and Freire's views

regarding local development, some two decades after their

works were produced. In addition, she mentions

participatory research projects undertaken in community film

experiments in Newfoundland in the 1960s. It should be noted

that CIDA is a funding body and an administrative and policy

decision-maker. Thus, the suggestion that participation and

self-reliance and contextual and structural analyses have

become more than theoretical discourse seems more promising.

More importantly, however, it must be noted that,

regardless of the intellectual impact that these works had,

the practical side of communications and development has

failed to keep up. Jo Ellen Fair's 1989 study of the impact

of the dominant paradigm on research in development and

communications concluded that, although researchers appeared

to be more aware of the problems associated with the

methodologies and theories of western, or First World

origin, the actual carrying out of the research had not

changed.[54] Fair looked at development communication studies

undertaken in the period 1958 - 1986, and examined variables

such as theoretical framework, assumptions made about media

as an independent variable, content, and micro or macro-

level analyses. She concluded that regardless of the

intellectual shift, theory and practice remain unconnected.

In her study, for example, Fair chose 43 studies according to criteria of being "qualitative" or critical, and examined these in terms of levels of analysis. Contrary to the expectation that there would be an increase in studies utilizing structural or macro-level analysis, she found that from 1976-1988, the number actually dropped.[55] She found similar trends in attention to content in development media, and with studies utilizing "one-shot" data collection methods.[56] The study concluded that scholars stated their sensitivity to the complexity of the relationship between communication and development, but actual field research methods and objectives had not been altered. Similarly, Agunga (1990) concurred with Narula and Pierce's observation, that while scholars generally agree that "participation is the characteristic of the new paradigm", research which addresses how it can be defined or operationalized in practical settings is scarce.[57] This echoes Mowlana and Wilson's assertion that a real epistemological break has not occurred in development communications theory. The latter cite a number of projects undertaken which display similar tendencies to those in Fair's study. For example, the Tarahumera Radio School Project was designed to increase social and employment opportunities for the Tarahumera Indians in Mexico. The programme, however, utilized Spanish in its instruction,

which only a very small proportion of the population spoke.
The project's lack of attention to this very crucial detail
dictated its failure.[58]

It is clear that at the forefront of the debate
surrounding alternative formulations of development and
communications, was a general agreement that a "new" role
for communication had been suggested. This role derived its
character conceptually as horizontal, liberative, and
participatory. Further, diffusion and like-minded
approaches had supported a dichotomy between research and
development, through the objectivized distance cultivated in
the study of development "behaviour" related to variables
such as exposure to mass media, and the "individual blame"
thesis. This was broken down in the generation of these new
models, because research was proposed in a way which
required that it be engaged in processes of social change in
the Third World.

While an approach emphasizing participation was clearly
in the works, it cannot be said that one clearly articulated
paradigm has been generated. But, as Jacobson explains, the
commonness which characterized the alternatives was
significant because of, "a shared desire for research
approaches capable of directly addressing the value-laden
processes of social change experienced by developing
countries".[59] Only recently have scholars such as Jacobson
and Servaes turned their attention to the possible link

between participatory action research and development

communications as a way of allowing development practice to

inform theory-generating. So, if the field has not arrived

at a well-defined role for communications in development, it

has moved closer, and done so in a far less problematic way

than that which we had seen before.

NOTES:

1.   David Korten, "Social Science in the Service of Social
      Transformation", in Cynthia Veneracion, ed., A Decade of
      Process Documentation Research. Quezon City, Philippines:
      Institute of Philippine Culture. p. 12. In reference to
      this idea, Korten also cites, Edgar S. Dunn Jr., "The Nature
      of Social Learning", and John Friedmann, "Planning as Social
      Learning", articles appearing in Korten and Rudi Klauss,
      eds., People-Centred Development: Contributions Toward
      Theory and Planning Frameworks. West Hartford, Connecticut:
      Kumarian Press, 1984.

2.   R.E.R.M. Carmen, "Development Communication: The Search for
      a Participatory Paradigm". Community Development Journal.
      24 (4), 1988. pp. 264-265.

3.   This is discussed by a number of authors, notably, Denis
      Goulet, "'Development' . . . Or Liberation?" International
      Development Review. XIII (3), 1971; Goulet, The Cruel
      Choice: A New Concept in the Theory of Development. New
      York: Atheneum, 1971; Herman Felstehausen, "Conceptual
      Limits of Development Communications Theory". Sociologia
      Ruralis. XIII (1), 1973; Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the
      Oppressed. New York: Herder and Herder, 1970.

4.   Thomas Jacobson, "Participatory Communication Research and
      the Social Sciences", Paper presented to the International
      Association for Mass Communication Research. Bled,
      Yugoslavia, 1990. p. 2.

5.   Jan Servaes, "Shifts in Development Communication Theory:
      With a Brief Discussion of its Policy and Planning
      Consequences". Dervin and Voight, eds., Progress in
      Communication Sciences. Vol. 9, 1989. pp. 212-213.

6.   Everett Rogers, "Communication and Development: The Passing
      of the Dominant Paradigm", Communication Research. Vol. 3,
      (2), 1976. p. 214.

7.   Hamid Mowlana and Laurie Wilson, The Passing of Modernity.
      New York: Longman, 1990. p. 52.

8.   Jan Servaes, 1989: 213-214. Laswell's model set out the
      general "who says what, to whom, by what channel, with what

effect" process, which was predominant in communications research, particularly in North America during the 1940s and 1950s.

9. See, for example, A. Inkeles and D. H. Smith, _Individual Change in Six Developing Countries_. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974.

10. Arnold Gibbons, _Information, Ideology and Communications: The New Nations' Perspectives on an Intellectual Revolution_. Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1985. p. 29.

11. In Goran Hedebro, _Communication and Social Change in Developing Nations: A Critical View._ Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1982. p. 21.

12. Servaes, 1989. p. 214.

13. Mowlana and Wilson, 1990. p. 52. They characterize the different models of development and communication research as (a) liberal/capitalist; (b) marxist/socialist; (c) monistic/emancipatory.

14. It is important to note that the work of Rogers over the past twenty-five years is particularly useful, as his research practically illustrates a field in transition. Besides being one of the pioneering scholars in the area, Rogers' later works have served to describe in great detail, the problems associated with the early approaches, and have further framed the recent shift in thinking in development communications.

15. Carmen, 1988. p. 265

16. Niels B. Roling, Joseph Ascroft and Fred W. A. Chege, "The Diffusions of Innovations and the Issue of Equity in Rural Development", in Everett Rogers, ed., _Communication and Development: Critical Perspectives_. Beverley Hills: Sage, 1976. p. 66.

17. Prodipto Roy, Frederick Waisanen and Everett Rogers. _The Impact of Communication on Rural Development: An Investigation in Costa Rica and India_. Paris: UNESCO, 1969. p. 5.

18. Waisanen and Durlak, in Rogers, Roy and Waisanen, 1969. p. 64.

19. See Goulet, 1971a; 1971b.

20. Servaes, 1989. pp. 212-213.

21. Roling, Ascroft and Chege, in Rogers, ed., 1976. pp. 68-72.

22. Herman Felstehausen, "Conceptual Limits of Development Communication Theory", _Sociologia Ruralis_. XIII 1), 1973. p. 40.

23. Felstehausen, 1973. p. 39.

24. S. T. Kwame Boafo, "Utilizing Development Communication Strategies in African Studies in African Societies: A Critical Perspective", _Gazette_. 35 (2), 1985. p. 86.

25. Felstehausen, 1973. p. 41.

26. Felstehausen, 1973. p. 43.

27. Felstehausen, 1973. p. 52.

28. Felstehausen, 1973. p. 45.

29. Felstehausen, 1973. p. 44.

30. Luis Ramiro Beltran, "Alien Promises, Objects and Methods in Latin American Communication Research", in Everett Rogers, ed., _Communication and Development: Critical Perspectives_. Beverley Hills: Sage, 1976.

31. Felstehausen, 1973. pp. 39-52.

32. Robert Hornik, "Communication as Complement to Development", in G. Gerbner and M. Siefert, eds., _World Communications: A Handbook_. New York: Longman, 1984. p. 343.

33. Juan Diaz Bordenave, "The Communication of Agricultural Innovation in Latin America", in Rogers, ed., 1976.

34. Carmen, 1988. p. 265.

35. Rogers, 1976. p. 222. He mentions, among these events which led to the sense that the dominant definitions of development were inadequate: the growing concern over ecology and the environment, the world oil crisis, the emergence of the People's Republic of China and the lack of verified support for the objectives of the "development decades" in forums such as UNESCO.

36. Emile McAnany. _Communications in the Rural Third World_. New York: Praeger, 1980. pp. 75-76.

37. See the work of Immanuel Wallerstein, for an example of this view.

38. Mowlana and Wilson, 1990. p. 27; Servaes, 1989. pp. 218-219.

39. Beltran, 1981. p. 19.

40. Goulet (1971b), advances this notion of "development ethics".

41. UNRISD, "Inquiry into Participation -- A Research Approach". Popular Participation Programme. Geneva, May, 1979. pp. 3-4.

42. Goulet, 1971a. p. 8.

43. Goulet, 1971b. See chapters 2 and 3.

44. Saint, 1981. p. 90.

45. Jo Ellen Fair, "29 Years of Theory and Research on Media and
     Development: The Dominant Paradigm Impact". _Gazette_. 44
     (2), 1989.

46. Felstehausen also cites the work of Drake (1971) and Haney
     (1969) in Colombia as examples of this, and Freire's own
     work in Colombia in general indicates the significance of
     this.

47. In Paulo Freire, _The Pedagogy of the Oppressed_. New York:
     Herder and Herder, 1970. p. 13.

48. Jacobson, 1990. p. 91.

49. Jacobson, 1990. p. 47.

50. Lewis Donohew and Edward R. Springer, "Information Seeking
     versus Information Diffusion: Implications for the Change
     Agent of an Alternative Paradigm". _Community Development
     Journal_. 15 (3), 1977. pp. 210-212.

51. Fair, 1989. p. 134.

52. Heather Hudson, "Telecommunications for Rural Development".
     Development. Canadian International Development Agency,
     1986. p. 41.

53. Karim H. Karim. "Communication for Change". _Development_.
     Canadian International Development Agency, 1988. p. 42.

54. Fair, 1989.

55. Fair, 1989. p. 139.

56. Fair, 1989. pp. 141-143.

57. Robert Agunga, "Development Support Communication and
     Popular Participation in Development Projects". _Gazette_.
     45 (3), 1990. p. 138.

58. Mowlana and Wilson, 1990. p. 32.

59. Jacobson, 1985. p. 82.

III. Development Communication and Participatory Action Research: Creating Conditions for Development

Introduction

The preceding section suggested that a participatory and liberative view of communication has come to replace the transmissional, effects-dominated model of the orthodox paradigm. In the elaboration of a "new" way of looking at development there are several basic ideas: the importance of normativity and interactive processes; the need to employ strategies of structural as well as socio-political and historical analysis; and the view that each community must delineate and participate in its own route to development. As we have seen, the role of communication in this kind of research takes on a different meaning, particularly in the emphasis placed on dialogue.

These ideas have been developed through further examination of development and communications in the framework of participatory action research (PAR). Scholars such as Tom Jacobson (1985, 1989) have given us a good idea of the significance of this relationship in terms of providing theoretical linkages between communications and PAR within the schema of social science research in general. What remains to be developed is an explicit elaboration of how these ideas -- as they are related to communications -- may inform the relationship in participatory action research between theory and practice.

The area of participatory action research provides the starting point for an examination of the shift in the role set out for communications in alternative models of development. By looking at the main tenets of PAR within an alternative view of development, it is possible to clarify some of the pragmatic and normative aspects which provide a more explicit basis for inquiry and practice. These aspects of PAR include: its approach to problems within undertaking development projects; its view of participants in development processes (i.e. outside researchers or collaborants and local communities); and its criteria for choices of technologies and methods.

The notion of dialogue shall be a focus of this discussion; first in an overall view of social change set out by PAR; and second, in the processes of interaction by which priorities and strategies are defined by the people in their own development. The argument that shall be advanced is that development communications should be viewed not simply as a term referring to development projects that focus on communications. Rather, it refers more generally to a process within participatory development, and more specifically, to a condition of it. This will become clear when we examine the communicational elements in the ideas of collective learning, the interactive aspects of participation, the researcher/researched relationship and the concept of knowledge empowerment.

Theoretical Bases of Participatory Action Research

It is generally recognized that there is no single convergent theoretical position or paradigm of PAR. In fact, the attempt to generate such a paradigm has been of significant interest to scholars concerned with the potential for PAR to provide new insights into the study of social change, as well as to practitioners intending to operationalize the concepts found in PAR.[1] The divergence which characterizes PAR has also created difficulties for the development of theoretical constructs which are capable of fostering social change in addition to allowing practice to nurture the generation of theory. This is owed in part to the various traditions of social science inquiry which PAR is based on, and also in part to a paucity in the PAR literature of attempts to systematically examine the frames of meaning which mediate the PAR process.

However, finding a resolution to the paradigm debate is not necessarily an objective for PAR researchers. In fact, given that PAR is essentially a context-driven form of action and inquiry, the quest for a single theory or paradigm may be problematic. As Max Elden and Morton Levin (1991) note, "We have our doubts about the possibility and utility of general, abstract theory in solving real problems in a specific context or situation".[2] Others have suggested that the adherence to paradigms in social science research can circumscribe processes of inquiry by "permeating and

dictating choices".[3] However, recent efforts by a number of scholars indicate that there is practical worth in further refining the conceptual aspects of PAR at a metatheoretical level, particularly those aspects which may foster a dialogue between theory and practice.[4] Given these difficulties, this discussion will adhere to the perspective of PAR as a social science "movement". This will permit examination of the values implicit in undertaking this kind of research, the ideological positions which guide it and the methodological similarities which can be identified. Moreover, this alludes to the partisan nature of PAR because the power of PAR as a process is key.

Participatory research finds its roots in what Kurt Lewin termed the field of action research. Lewin proposed the term in referring to a form of research which could "marry the experimental approach of social science with programmes of social action in response to the major social problems of the day".[5] He felt that it was crucial to achieve a simultaneity in research where ideas could be generated and action effected at the same time. With this proposition came two main ideas: first, that actions and responses of actors should be viewed within their normal contexts, and second, that such actors should be part of efforts directed at change. The key stimulus to doing research, therefore, came from actual experiences and problems, within a group, community or organization. The

main point made here was that theory and practice could proceed together from the _approach_, not from the application of research findings.

While Lewin was the first to propose a definition for action research, the pragmatist viewpoint of John Dewey was the first to inquire _why_ we want to know more about the world in this way. The main interest in this approach was in asking "'How will the world look if we know something in a certain way?' The focus is on the effects of knowing on acting, and in turn on the effects of acting on the world".[6] Further, pragmatism brought to bear the idea that knowledge and actions are shaped by "intrinsic or instrumental values". So, action research was developed, epistemologically, as an alternative to the objectivist, value-free nature of traditional social science research, and practically, as an approach which included both the researcher and the researched in the process. Accordingly, Chein, Cook and Harding (1948), wrote that a motive for "doing science is practicality", and that "the desire that results of one's labours, search and inquiry should be useful and significant."[7] They further proposed that problem solving and evaluation did not begin from the researcher but from the way that the community itself defined and interpreted its problems, through processes of critical self-reflection, and collective evaluation. Applications and further refinements of the theory are

numerous, and can be found in a variety of social settings. These include organizational behaviour and change, adult education, "diagnostic" research, "participant action research" in intergroup relations and "experimental" action research in community dynamics and change.[8]

Notwithstanding the theoretical and practical divergences which characterize the field, it is possible to use the elements which unify these ideas to describe in general what is meant by action research. Action research is geared mostly toward applied problem solving and evaluation, and is typified by the notion of direct application of research. It postulates a research process in which all members of the community or group become involved in the formulation and execution of a strategy or a plan, which is then put to a test in social action. Finally, when we speak of subjects in action research we refer to the local collaborants, as well as the professional researcher, or "outside" agent. Susman offers a good description of these processes:

> I come to terms with the conditions described through "action research," a general mode of inquiry that seeks to contribute to the practical concerns of people in a problematic situation *and* to the goals of social science within a mutually acceptable ethical framework (Rapoport, 1970). I come to understand the concrete setting in which there is a problem by making a conceptual representation of it (Lewin, 1938) from which by both observation and reasoning I reach a solution to the problem and test the solution through action.[9]

It should be pointed out however, that the action research

tradition might be more aptly described here as steps that "we" would go through, rather than the "I" Susman uses.

It is important here to note that the description of the "interests" which guide research and inquiry are of particular concern in action research. As Stephen Kemmis points out, this stands in the same space as the intent of critical social theory where the interests which bind social actors in the pursuit of emancipatory social change, "embody participatory democratic processes for social and intellectual reconstruction".[10] Particularly congruent is the proposition advanced by Jurgen Habermas that, in addition to technical and practical interests, (i.e. work), human beings are guided by an interest in emancipation. This interest, he argued, is guided by the maintenance of intersubjectivity through communication.

In works such as <u>Knowledge and Human Interests</u> (1971) and later, in <u>Communication and the Evolution of Society</u> (1979) and <u>The Theory of Communicative Action</u> (1984; 1987), Habermas sets out a theory of social evolution based on the development of normative structures. The context for this exercise is the uniting of theory and practice, or achieving <u>praxis</u>, as a means of securing a reflexivity in social science. The notion of praxis is what unites these traditions, given a basic and fundamental concern with research processes which involve the transformation of knowledge into action. Further, such action is intended to

nurture both the promise of emancipation in the social setting, as well as an understanding of the emancipatory power of the knowledge or theory itself.

Another aspect of Habermas' work worth investigating is his proposition that a critical social theory should be based on structures of *dialogue*. Here he proposes a theory of <u>communicative action</u>, seeking to explain dominance and oppression rooted in a critique of ideology, which can be accessed through "dialogical discourse and mutual accord". Habermas' idea of discourse, wherein members of a society put claims in question into the public realm for clarification and debate, can be seen to be in line with the area of action research. There is an inherent congruence based on a focus on normative social structure and the self-reflexive examination of structure as the motivation for change.[11] But at a more fundamental level, Habermas has developed, through the idea of the "ideal speech situation", a normatively based theory which has particular relevance to the notion of consensual dialogue which pervades the area of participatory action research.

The first conceptions of a critical social theory based on communication can be seen in Habermas' early works on theories of knowledge. Habermas argues, against the reductionist view of human knowledge taken by Marx, that society develops not only according to the reproduction of material existence -- that is, via technical and economic

knowledge -- but also according to interaction. It is in this latter realm that processes of social and cultural reproduction take place according to the structure of everyday communication:

> Grammatical rules establish the ground of an open intersubjectivity among socialized individuals. And we can only tread this ground to the extent that we internalize these rules -- as socialized participants and not as impartial observors. Reality is constituted in a framework that is the form of life of communicating groups and is organized through ordinary language. What is real is that which can be experienced according to the interpretations of a prevailing symbolic system.[12]

Habermas insists on the analysis of ordinary language based on two assumptions: first, that there are general structures which appear in every possible speech situation; and second, that these are produced intersubjectively as part of a cultural system. He argues that this is the framework that "determines the scope and structure of corresponding world views".[13]

There are two central notions which form the epistemological framework of Habermas' views on communication. The first is that all participants in a linguistic communication situation implicitly assume validity claims of truth, veracity and normative appropriateness of the communicative act. In turn, any or all of these validity claims can be called into question at any time and settled consensually. The second is that an "ideal speech situation", approaching purely rational discourse, is anticipated in all language usage. For

Habermas, the anticipation of the ideal speech situation assumed in the pragmatic functioning of everyday communication describes a theory of normal communication. Following the linguistic structures of rational communication, normal communication presupposes: that participants are free and equal to assume dialogue roles; that they are truthful and sincere; and that they interact according to normative structures. Insofar as this is true, according to Habermas, it is possible to propose a theory of systematically distorted communication, whereby, "it follows that the ideal speech situation provides a critical measure of the insufficiencies of currently existing forms of interaction and social institutions".[14] The distinction between the two provides the means by which Habermas is able to describe consensus based on domination or power as deviant, and further enables the ideal speech situation, or normal communication to provide an "objectively given basis for critical theory".[15]

It is beyond the scope of this discussion to fully explicate Habermas' ideas, or that of the work of the critical theorists in general. Habermas however, offers some useful suggestions in terms of the content of dialogue. First, as this comes into play in the normative elements in how people relate to and recount their social world, and second, in how they engage in critical dialogue with others. Habermas' extensive project of providing a theory of social

change with a communicative base, does not, however, offer much in the way of practical guidance. Further, Habermas' work focuses on structures or tendencies related to advanced capitalism, and does not necessarily extend itself to analysis of the Third World. But, as Servaes suggests, this work bears further examination where it "envisions a number of new, collective decision-making forms", or as a "directive for a new political praxis".[16] This latter point is of some significance, as Habermas' description of consensus in the ideal speech situation provides a theoretical structure from within which the idea of dialogical decision-making in the action research framework may be more tenably apprehended.

Other traditions in social theory have similarly presented conceptual constructs which seek to account for the creation and recreation of social action through language. One such tradition is ethnomethodology, characterized by the work of Harold Garfinkel. Garfinkel's approach was to explore the ways in which everyday activities are analyzed and understood intersubjectively by social actors. He emphasized the contextual character of understanding, and attempted to provide a means of analyzing the extent to which people share an understanding of their circumstances through language. Grounded in the concept of accountability, Garfinkel examined the production of "accounts" of social actions, as well as the attempt to

relate these to others, as actions which are undertaken intersubjectively. John Heritage (1987) explains that in ethnomethodology: "Each social action is a recognizable commentary on, and intervention in, the setting of activity in which it occurs. Its specific character as commentary and intervention (i.e. its public accountability) has a procedural basis".[17] Paralleling this aspect of the critical theory of Habermas, the significance of ethnomethodology is that it proposed alternative ways of looking at the role of language in social action.

Another stream within contemporary social science which warrants examination in terms of its potential relevance to PAR, is the work of Anthony Giddens (1984, 1987). There are several theoretical affinities between Giddens' work and the main ideas of PAR. The former's critique of objectivism and his theory of structuration can be located, along with PAR, within a larger discourse rooted in a denial of positivism in the social sciences.[18] A more specific affinity relates to Gidden's concern with the primacy of the social agent in producing and reproducing society and social change. This is the main assertion made by structuration theory. Here, Giddens links a more subjective understanding of social processes via social and historical circumstances to social theory seeking to explain and predict human behavior. Giddens' stance against positivist strategies of theory building based on empirical observation is clear. For

example, he places the potential for change based in actions
and decisions of human agents against the assumption that,
given certain circumstances and situations, social actors
will choose to act in an expected or "regular way".
According to Cohen: "In principle, any given pattern of
social conduct may be altered by the actors who are engaged
in its production. This is not to deny that much of social
life is comprised of regularities in conduct . . . but it
does prohibit conceiving these regularities as elements of a
trans-historical order of uniformities". [19] Similarly, the
action research approach suggests that to legitimately grasp
the complexities of social life and reproduction, it is
fundamental that the researcher (or in Giddens' terms, the
social analyst), be directly involved in them. This is
justified by Giddens in the following way:

> In very many instances, the 'findings' of
> sociologists are such only to those not in the
> contexts of activity of the actors studied. Since
> actors do what they do for reasons, they are
> naturally likely to be disconcerted if told by
> sociological observers that what they do derives
> from factors that somehow act externally to them.
> Lay objections to such 'findings' may thus have a
> very sound basis.[20]

Essentially, the basis for this critique is the same as
that adhered to by proponents of alternative schemes for
development research (see Beltran, 1981; Goulet, 1971a,
1971b; Fernandes and Tandon, 1981). And where the latter
are theoretically and practically connected to the emergence
of PAR as a methodological framework for examining and

effecting social change, the parallel between Giddens and
PAR is apparent.

Furthermore, via his explanation of exactly <u>how</u> social
practices are created and recreated, Giddens attempts to
promote a better understanding of how social practices, and
the rules that guide them, are both recursive and
discursive. Following Schutz's notion of "stocks of
knowledge" which permit social actors to "go on within the
routines of social life", Giddens proposes that the
recursive nature of human activities lies in the fact that
social practices are continually reproduced by the very act
of doing them. The stocks of knowledge which allow for this
are practical and procedural and are "ordered across space
and time".[21] However, human beings also engage in efforts
to codify these rules of behavior and their efforts to do so
fall into the category of "intepretative schemes." This is
the discursive nature of social action. Giddens proposes
that the same stocks of knowledge allow social actors to
account for or explain their actions to others and
therefore, that these interpretative schemes make
communication possible. The nature of these activities
suggests a role for the social scientist: "Analysing the
structuration of social systems means studying the modes in
which such systems, grounded in the knowledgeable activities
of situated actors who draw upon rules and resources in the
diversity of action contexts, are produced and reproduced in

interaction".[22]

It is important to point out, however, that the
processes Giddens describes in reference to the discursive
nature of social practice have only a very limited relevance
to the analysis of social change. For example, the efforts
of social actors to interpret and codify their patterns of
behaviour do not <u>always</u> occur. Further, when these
processes <u>do</u> occur, they take place over an undetermined
period of time, and are not necessarily easily observed.
The implications for analysis of and participation in social
change detract somewhat from the analytical relevance of
structuration to PAR. Simply, Giddens' approach is not
easily translated into grounds for practical action. His
account of social practices offers no basis for effecting
social change. Yet, it would be misleading to conclude that
Giddens' approach is incompatible with PAR. His work stems
from a comprehensive critique of traditional models of
social science research, helping to create a space for the
kind of approach set out in areas such as PAR. In turn,
this demonstrates the legitimacy of processes of research
which are built on the interplay between values, opinions
and practice. In the context of the role of PAR within
social theory, Giddens calls attention to the importance of
the kind of interpretive theory which has paved the way for
the emergence of ground-up approaches to social science.

This brief review of some of Giddens' main ideas is

meant to be illustrative rather than comprehensive. In
fact, the scope of his work makes it impossible, within the
confines of this discussion, to fully explicate either his
comments on social theory in general and more specifically
his theory of structuration. But as Gildart (1992) has
recently pointed out, Gidden's work calls attention to a
different approach to critical social theory. On one hand,
this type of second-order approach clearly indicates the
inadequacies of earlier variations of objectivistic,
naturalistic and positivistic social science research. On
the other, this helps establish criteria for the
construction of <u>specific</u> social theories which take into
account the knowledgeability of the social actor. This is
crucial when we examine any type of social research which
postulates the building of theory from practice. The
tendency to evaluate approaches to research according to
guidelines specific to deductive or technical forms of
research has marginalized inductive or ground-up forms, such
as ethnomethodology and PAR. Giddens' work has helped to
locate these traditions, and to remove them from the fringes
of social science.

We have seen how the ideas of these three theorists are
congruent with some of the main ideas in the action research
framework. One such convergence is in a call for better
ways to take into consideration the practical and subjective
elements in social inquiry. Another is that such inquiry

should be sufficiently reflexive to work towards fostering an interplay between inquiry and practice -- in particular, where theoretical insights may be garnered from practice. However, as action research (and specifically PAR) remind us, the issues in critical social science theory and in ethnomethdology are not relevant until they are examined methodologically in the context of social change. It is suggested here that in addition to epistemological issues related to subjectivism versus objectivism, a unifying element in these theoretical streams is the importance afforded to communicational aspects.

The significance of these streams of thought, in the context of PAR as well as alternatives for Third World development, lies in the recognition that neither social inquiry or social change is possible without building in some means of taking interaction or communication into account. The argument that shall be advanced here is that the PAR framework for studying and bringing about social change is conditional upon communication (specifically, dialogue). By focusing inquiry as well as practical efforts on structures of dialogue, PAR illustrates where methodological schemas may be derived. Further, through practice, these schemas may provide us a site from which to allow the communication-related aspects of practice to foster a more systematic development of theoretical constructs.

Participatory Action Research

The emergence of PAR within the context of Third World development adds another voice to the critique of traditional classical social science research. One aspect of this new voice is that PAR searches for context-specific modes of action rather than laws. Another is that PAR challenges the objectivity and value-neutrality of traditional social research on the grounds of its practical utility and commitment to social change. The general definition of participatory research is "partisan" research: "The research of involvement . . . for liberation. It is not only research with the people -- it is people's research".[23]

In participatory action research, the local conceptions of reality or the people's way of seeing their life is the most important aspect to be taken into consideration. This is a guiding assumption for all parties involved in PAR processes, and the frame of meaning within which any action must be guided. An aspect of such action for the researcher therefore must be a sense of solidarity between herself and the needs and objectives of the local community. In contrast to traditional approaches, this requires that the researcher or PAR collaborator work to "insert" herself into the local processes. As Fals Borda stipulates: "the researcher would fully identify with the people in contact, for the purpose of obtaining truthful information and

contributing to the achievement of the goals for social

indigenous change".[24] Accordingly, another of the central

elements in participatory research is a commitment to social

change, both on the part of the researcher and the community

involved. In PAR, the rationale is action -- not a search

for objective commonalities which may be branded "laws" --

but instead, an experiential methodology. Fernandes and

Tandon explain how this affects the researcher's role:

> The foremost implication for participatory social
> research is its clear attempt at power
> equalisation, by eliminating the distinction
> between the researcher and the people. This power
> equalisation assumes that research becomes an
> action-reflection-action process of interaction
> between the outsider who functions no more as a
> scholar but as a catalyst, and the local people.[25]

Others have explained this by referring to all players in

the PAR process as "co-learners".

The differences between participatory research and

traditional approaches to research in development are clear

from these basic characteristics. Traditional social

science methodology was quantitative in character, and this

orientation was particularly evident in development projects

designed to instill and measure changes occurring in

economic sectors. But, the social research described by PAR

is inherently qualitative and emphasizes changes related to

how people perceive and respond to their environment. This

questions the universality of traditional social research in

various ways. First, it questions the extension of western

(or northern), social principles such as democracy. PAR

recognizes that change is not necessarily progressive or sustainable if it simply involves the adoption of principles imported from outside. Rather, the effort to recognize and value local ideas is suggested. Second, PAR views development in a more holistic manner than the traditional approach which derived its highly linear nature from the principles of natural science. Another difference is in forms of knowledge or expertise. PAR postulates an attempt to develop or re-capture local knowledge, relative to local social, political and cultural patterns. Similarly it acknowledges the importance of a community's history in these patterns. Finally, the view of the communities in development contexts as objects versus subjects has been a common element in much discussion about participatory action research.

This has important implications for the role of the researcher in the participatory research situation. In all of its formulations, PAR maintains that peoples in the setting are not merely objects of someone else's study, but are part of the processes of knowledge generation and application. In fact, the process itself is said to belong to the collaborators:

> PAR implies the acquisition of experience and
> valid data for the construction of a special kind
> of power -- people's power -- which belongs to the
> oppressed and exploited classes and groups and
> their organizations, and the defence of their just
> interests to enable them to advance towards shared
> goals of social change within a participatory
> political system. People's power is expressed

through external and internal mechanisms that
monitor and supervise these processes of change[26]

The tradition of doing research which is partisan or
participatory is clearly distinguishable from conventional
social science. But, there are also important differences
within this tradition. One such difference is related to
the framework from which the various approaches emerged.
While much of the writing about PAR has surfaced in the
context of Third World development, the field did not
develop solely as a response to development issues, nor is
its analytical framework limited to the developing world.
As Fals Borda (1990) and others have pointed out, people had
been "doing" PAR, in various forms long before its insertion
into the development framework became commonplace. Figures
such as John Gaventa, Stephen Kemmis, Elden and Levin and
Chris Argyris, have further, illustrated where the tradition
has been bolstered in research undertaken in a number of
contexts normally considered First World, particularly
organizational behaviour and adult education.

While there are fundamental similarities in these
approaches, the differences related to context indicate
important divergences within the action research tradition
as well. The action research discussed by figures such as
William Foote Whyte and Chris Argyris for example, is often
carried out in corporate or organizational contexts. Here,
the approach is directed more towards applied research and
problem-solving, in which the researcher's commitment is

directed towards the finding of solutions and applied approaches. The commitment to change in this area, therefore, is related more to the PAR facilitator's role as a professional researcher. Solidarity with a particular group, community or cause often found in PAR in the context of development is not as prevalent here, nor is the commitment to social or structural change. In the Third World, the works of figures such as Freire, Fals Borda and Muhamed Anisur Rahman are most often cited as "turning back the ethnocentric tide" in development and development research. Due to its emergence in this context, this tradition of PAR tends to employ a more critical approach. The focus is generally on structures of political, economic and social power, and the objective of inquiry is directly related to the eradication of inequalities through transformatory and liberative processes.

The various frames of meaning around which PAR is generally constructed are important to recognize. As we have seen, these have implications for the focus of inquiry in the research practice, as well as the relationship or guideline for action for the PAR collaborator. It has recently been pointed out that a lack of communication between and among these traditions has prevented the development of more lucid accounts of the relationship between theory and practice in the PAR framework. The focus here shall be on the more critical tradition of PAR as an

alternative response to the "crisis" of development. The
contribution of PAR to the development framework has been
important, and its relevance here owes, in no small part, to
the urgency of the situation faced by the peoples in the
Third World. Moreover, the place of PAR within development
offers a valuable setting within which to further elaborate
the theoretical considerations related to the role of
communication in the practice of doing PAR.

Parenthetically, it is important to note here that
there has been some disagreement among scholars regarding
the terminology of this kind of research. Participatory
action research, as opposed to simply participatory
research, has been described having a more explicit
ideological character -- notably in the Marxist concept of
historical materialism.[27] This has been brought up by
Rahman in the context of PAR as a means of explaining
development as a "dual transformation", that is, societal
transformation in both economic and knowledge ownership
patterns. Given that PAR emerged in the Third World as a
means of bringing about social and political emancipation in
oppressive contexts, PAR is often viewed as a political
activity, rooted in transformation through organization and
solidarity. This is seen in the Freirean approach to
popular education, Third World liberation theology, and neo-
Marxist views of development and dependency. Because these
approaches emphasize structural change and empowerment of

the oppressed classes, they are often referred to as
revolutionary or militant.[28]

Yet, it seems that the distinction between
participatory action research and participatory research is
a problem in semantics only. With respect to the question of
PAR's relationship to historical materialism, for example,
Rahman has observed: "Historical materialism . . . has
passed through many hands, in theory as well as application,
and there seems no longer to be any broad consensus to its
operational meaning".[29]   Further, it is imperative to refer
to this type of research method including the "action"
aspect, as this is emphasized when referring to research
that is participation and which "unites with action for
transforming reality".[30]

PAR in Third World Development

A main rationale for participatory approaches in
development relates to the sense of "hubris" experienced by
early researchers. This has been attributed to the over-
abundance of specialised technical knowledge. The most
crucial problem here was a scarcity of the types of local
knowledge which were produced and used by peoples in their
own communities. The overcoming of this is a particularly
vital aspect of PAR. Its methodology entails a process
whereby local peoples generate their own knowledge with a
view to changing their conditions on the basis of what they

have learned and how they have learned it.

The key process within this is the coordination and exchange of information or "knowledge empowerment". This relates to the view that knowledge held by peoples at the community level is an intrinsically valid resource for development efforts. In the sharing and cooperation of efforts and views, an endogenous grassroots development is promoted. The process is said to be empowering because, informed by their own values and experiences, people can learn from their situation as well as the realities of others. Writers in PAR generally agree that while the aim is praxis, the starting point for PAR processes is also a praxis, involving the bringing together of like-minded individuals and groups, who work together for social change. This organizational-educational aspect is a significantly different one than the technical-economic orientation of the traditional models, and is the basis for an action-reflection-action cycle which characterizes the PAR dialectical method described in the work of Fals Borda and Freire.

If we recognize that the researcher must work with the community within this process, then it follows that her role should be defined through an open and genuine relationship with the community, and a commitment to "accompaniment" rather than management of the learning process. However, researchers and local peoples engaged in PAR in a given

community often come from different societies, different

contexts and different frames of meaning. This can have

significant implications:

> Especially during the early years, external
> activists tended to slow down this process at
> inappropriate times or to accelerate it beyond
> what objective or subjective conditions of the
> struggle could support. The fact that the
> external agents did not share the experiential
> problems of the people, since they belonged to
> other social classes and lived in different
> environments, made them incapable of devising
> appropriate strategies or to promote or sustain
> the people's struggle.[31]

For the external researcher, this makes PAR particularly

demanding. As Fals Borda has pointed out, the onus is on

the external researcher to learn to "recognise oneself"

within the sphere in which action is taking place. To the

extent that the researcher's commitment is to facilitating

the process, this recognition must come from a genuine

dialogue. In this way, it is possible to reach the kind of

educational process upon which PAR is based. That is, one

which generates a new understanding, and which is reflective

of the reality, as it is produced through and by this

interaction.

An additional desideratum of PAR is that it be carried

out in an ongoing manner. It has been demonstrated that the

insights afforded by one-shot research methods do not

adequately reflect the dynamics of development processes.

Here, PAR fits into a more holistic view (i.e. one including

social, cultural and historical aspects rather than simply

economic) promoted by proponents of alternative development. PAR postulates the necessity for researchers and local participants to continuously evaluate processes while they are occurring. It has been demonstrated that the starting point for PAR is the cooperative self-evaluation of problems and goals from within the community. Identification of problems may lead to identification of possible solutions and techniques. The mobilization of these ideas and methods, moreover, may be introduced well in advance of the actual implementation of "solutions", as they are part of the continuous dynamic of action and reflection.

The extent to which communications can be part of strategies attempting to bring about cooperative methods of decision-making is indicated in planning and evaluation stages, as well as in the actual development strategies. This also indicates the shift away from the outcome of development projects, and emphasizes the significance of the process, rather than the product. The process of transformation through participatory research is observable when members of the community, as well as the researcher, are armed with the information necessary to find solutions to problems and needs.

Finally, as a component of this reflexive search for solutions, the relevance of methodological questions is clear. A common critique of orthodox social science methods relates to an inclination to "measure" change. This has

been a pervasive theme throughout the literature discussing
alternative models of development. Accordingly there has
been a tendency to discount empirical research methods --
notably survey research and the use of numerical data in
general. But PAR reminds us that summarily dismissing any
mode of research denies the fact that knowledge must be
built upon and generated according to the context. Although
social change is inherently qualitative in nature, as is the
type of research set out by PAR, it has been recognized that
to learn about the reality, it can be useful to employ
quantitative methods. This relates to the question of
criteria for inductive forms of research which has been
raised as an issue in the area of critical social science.
With reference to fieldwork methods, Paul Willis summarizes
this issue:

> The 'object' of our inquiry is in fact, of course,
> a subject and has to be understood and presented
> in the same mode as the researcher's own
> subjectivity -- this is the true meaning of
> 'validity' in the qualitative zone. The
> recognition of this truism is not, however, to
> declare against all forms of 'objectivity'. We
> are still in need of a method which respects
> evidence, seeks corroboration and minimizes
> distortion, *but which is without rationalist
> natural science-like pretence.*[32]

PAR clearly appears to be one such method which Willis feels
we are in need of in this statement.

The main point here is that knowledge of the context
itself is both subjective and objective. Therefore, because
the purpose is to fully comprehend this reality, the methods

employed must be related directly to all of its elements. This indicates that the "ad hoc" nature of normative participation must be a source of knowledge for the researcher. In addition, raising questions about methods acknowledges the potential value of locally-generated forms of research such as folk theory and indigenous methodologies. The key is to maintain an awareness of the reality and to relate this to methods and concepts based on practical utility. Jacobson makes reference to this in his discussion of pragmatism which views knowledge as "conditional upon our aims and values". Without allowing the interplay of distinct and varied voices, PAR is subject to falling into the same traps that have led to failures in other forms of development research.

The Question of Cooptation

Is PAR maturing as a research tradition and a practical methodology for development -- or is it being coopted by academic abuse and institutional dilution? These questions were recently posed in Fals Borda and Rahman's 1991 book, Action and Knowledge: Breaking the Monopoly with Participatory Action Research, some 20 years after the advent of PAR in the Third World. In his 1990 article, Majid Rahnema characterizes participation as the "last temptation of saint development". The concern here seems to be with the attenuating effects that too much attention to PAR can

have on development. As would be the case with any type of
"alternative" social, political or theoretical movement, the
danger of the "establishment" taking over and corrupting the
process is a valid issue. With respect to this, Fals Borda
directs his attention particularly to the academic community
and development agencies, explaining that "defense
responses" including sharpening the conceptualization of
PAR, have had to be taken against the established
institutions. "Leaving aside justifiable claims of victory
over certain dominant systems of thought and policy, there
are dangers for the survival of original PAR ideals, even
certain feelings of betrayal".[33]

These concerns are manifest in a number of ways,
notably, in the motivation or rationale for doing PAR. One
issue is related to the area of academic research and
particularly, to the question of academic publishing. It is
recognized that the process should be a learning experience
for both the researcher and the community. Moreover, the
tasks are defined as communal ones, wherein the knowledge
that is produced as well as control of the process, is owned
by the community involved. This would seem to discourage
the doing of the research for purely academic purposes, and
reminds us that the primary goals are rooted in the needs of
the community. Yet, it is fundamental that the information
and experience be shared with others concerned with seeing a
more liberative and equitable form of development. As PAR

continually advises us, learning from the experiences of others is a means of creating new knowledge. In fact, the lack of reporting about PAR projects and experiences is perceived to be highly problematic. Ulf Himmelstrand writes: "One dilemma of discourse-oriented action research is that its very motivation often implies less priority to reporting research than to providing people with 'their own voice', and with a broader understanding of their own action".[34] The simple response to the query then, would be that in the commitment or decision to "do" PAR, the researcher places the needs of the group first, and behind this, her own agenda.

With respect to the the issue of agendas, Rahnema suggests that in some contexts, PAR theorists attempt to engage the "less-conscientized" in a participatory dialogue in order to sway them towards acceptance of their own beliefs and ideologies. Indeed, it is problematic to assume that a judgement can be made regarding who is conscientized and who is not, according to the criteria of a researcher coming from outside the community in question. Rahnema further questions whether the type of thought and action processes that PAR promotes can truly lead to radical change on the societal level. Practical issues related to the outside agent's participation in Third World development may also be problematic. It is, for example, unavoidable that researchers must count on some kind of academic and material

support for their efforts. And yet to secure this kind of support, the ideas and the eventual outcomes must be made attractive to the funding agencies, development organizations, and in many cases, government bodies. And as Fals Borda notes, these are the "established institutions", the same entities who pose a clear danger to the ideals of PAR.

The issues are more complex than they appear here, and basically lead to the question of whether participation is simply a newer version of the "church of development" or an ideological construct imposed on the Third World to bring them around to "our" way of thinking. As Rahnema observes, "It serves no one to make a new fetish out of participation, only because non-participatory development has failed in every way. To do so will be to create yet another illusion".[35] This is a pertinent statement, and should be kept in mind to keep the researcher alert and sensitive to the motives and values which guide the undertaking of PAR. Further, as Fals Borda points out, in the process of continuously refining conceptual constructs through what we see in practice, the reflexive nature of the field should, in theory, keep the repressive elements in check. This suggests that both the researcher as well as funding agencies bear in mind their responsibilities, the former in genuinely committing themselves to the collective learning afforded by the PAR process, the latter in exercising

judgement and caution. The ethical questions raised by doing PAR, as well as the issues which suggest its cooptation are important ones, and in the interest of brevity, cannot be exhaustively examined here. They are necessary, however, in illustrating where the field is today. More importantly, these questions emphasize the necessity of reflexivity, both as an aspect of the PAR process itself, as well as among the researchers and development practitioners who are engaged in it.

The Importance of Dialogue in PAR

From the foregoing review of the main ideas of PAR, it is evident that a community or a people's knowledge, generated through sharing normative experiences of day-to-day living within social structures, is paramount. Within the experiential framework, and through the dialectic method of action and reflection, a process of learning which fosters social change is generated. This process is often referred to as "knowledge empowerment". Elden and Levin, in their discussion of "cogenerative learning", describe how PAR is an empowering process in three main ways. First, in the coming together and engaging in dialogue, participants gain new understandings and possibilities. Secondly, they refer to Argyris and Schön's application of Bateson's concept of "deutero-learning", wherein participants "learn how to learn". Finally, PAR empowers because it itself is

inherently liberative, that is, "participants learn how to create new possibilities for action".[36]

It is proposed in this discussion that the PAR framework is essentially one based on communications in the sense that the participation is conceived as ongoing dialogue. The process described as empowerment, for example, is based on the assumption that increasing access to information initiates an education process through learning and acting. Pablo Latapí defines the following characteristic of popular education as a basis for PAR: "As a social process incorporating reflection and action among people with common interests and expectations, it can develop only in the context of dialogue".[37] It is necessary to explore this idea within the framework of the PAR approach to development with a view to practical considerations. This will allow us to delineate more clearly how the link between theory and practice may be assessed.

A number of valuable experiences which illustrate how the function of communication comes into play in development contexts have been described in discussions relating PAR to alternative development. One of the most significant examples of these is the *Bhoomi Sena* project started in India in the 1970s. This programme is often cited as an exemplary for PAR work, in the way that it delineates the potential role of the external researcher.[38] The project

was started by oppressed tribal peoples in the region in response to "questionable" land ownership patterns. A starting point for these communities involved sharing experiences between people and groups, and collective discussions, leading to a gradual "appreciation of the structure of their environment".[39] Eventually, as processes of collective organization and reflection were developed, the people engaged in their own decision-making processes and a number of popular organizations formed to deal with a variety of social and economic issues in their communities. Later, these groups branched out into other communities and encouraged their local peoples to form collectives in the same way. The role of the researcher in these processes was to help disseminate information in and between villages, and to organize periodic meetings for collective analysis.

Another example is The Sri Lanka Change Agents Program. This is discussed by Rahman as an example of a local people conducting PAR with the aim of evolving, "a methodology for catalytic intervention in the rural sector to stimulate self-reliant mobilization of the rural poor", eventually leading to the generation of their own change agents.[40] A similar example is the PAR approach of groups undertaking research into their situation with a view to effecting change. Gustavo I. de Roux's (1991) description of the formation of a Public Users Committee in Southwest Colombia illustrates this. Here, a locally formed committee of

electricity users gathered and utilized information to
negotiate with the public energy company to improve their
electricity service. He notes where this type of experience
can be particularly rich:

> Collectively producing knowledge meant that
> actors, coming from their own individuality, at
> different times and in different situations, and
> based on their own perceptions and ways of
> communicating them, contributed to a variety of
> experiences to what became a common vision of the
> situation. These meetings, wherein everyone was
> given the floor, were a context for bringing forth
> their everyday experience, their significant
> images and common sense, all of which yielded a
> collective reading of reality, not from the
> confines of academic disciplines but from a
> holistic perspective.[41]

It is increasingly clear, then, that for development to
take place according to the framework proposed by PAR, an
open, frank process of communication must take place and
guide the activities along the "action-reflection-action"
spiral. In this way, it is possible to develop the type of
mutual learning and self-reflection on a collective level
posited by PAR. This, as we have seen, is a point of
departure, as well as a condition in all activities
described in PAR. A way of interpreting this collectivity
is through feedback and interaction. By definition, in PAR
all participants must be free to engage in dialogue. This
applies both to interaction with other players, as well as
to the building of new knowledge based on new information.
This aspect defines for us the conditions through which the
subject/object relationship is precluded. It also suggests

how different frames of meaning, values and backgrounds can be brought into collective processes where, according to Jacobson, "dialog itself assumes community".[42]

While the concept of dialogue is constructive in a general understanding of the approach, there are additional methodological components which help to clarify how PAR defines communication as a condition in undertaking participatory development. There must be, for example, a distinction between communication and information in PAR which allows the learning function to move forward. This distinction refers to the way information is used to help collaborants understand their reality and investigate ways to change it.

Information itself is neither inherently useful or educative without some means of accessing it, analyzing it and relating it to the environment. We can view the mobilisation or "democratisation" of information as the process by which information becomes socially useful in a PAR context. This relates to the questions brought up by John Gaventa in terms of how "people begin to view themselves as researchers".[43] He refers here to the social formulations which allow entry and access to various forms of knowledge. But the question of access is only the starting point. From this it follows that where information exists, it must be made legitimate in the particular context or process. This requires the generation of a local

knowledge, contingent upon a type of dialogue which allows

for the "re-codification" of information. By viewing

information as a form of "raw material", we recognize that

information or knowledge itself is practically useless until

it is made meaningful -- through expression in the voice

which emerges from the interactive processes of PAR.

The function of representing the process as it is

experienced in PAR is a further component of PAR which is

contingent on the handling of information. Information

generated in the PAR process is the focus of David Korten's

(1989) recent contribution to the area of Process

Documentation Research (PDR). Korten discusses process

documentation research as a tool to help development

practitioners apprehend the notion of interactive social

learning, whereby participants "capture, process and put to

use the data" of their own experiences, "that is to generate

and use feedback".[44] Korten deals with the issue of how to

legitimately represent processes as they take place. PDR is

a method which allows participants to tell their story

through the use of means such as fieldnotes, logs, diaries

and records of meetings. It is discussed as a way of

recording relevant data and fostering interpretation of "the

why questions" in planning for future action. Quoting Karl

Weick, Korten points out where the immediacy of onsite

documentation is superior to retrospective analysis because

the latter tends to gloss over difficulties and restricts

description of the actual processes and the environment. The significance of process documentation research is its potential to contribute to ongoing reflection and evaluation. The continuous vigilance of PDR fosters a more systematic understanding of the process itself rather than the final outcome. It reveals what Korten refers to as the "intervention context" which includes the values and characteristics of community which, along with dialogue, are the elements suggested by Jacobson as comprising a praxis.

The type of knowledge generated by participants through dialogue is of concern to PAR as well. Elden and Levin's explanation of "cogenerative dialogue" recognizes the "insider/outsider" dichotomy inherent in PAR. They propose that while not every individual involved in a community or organization participates to the same extent, the key to a cogenerative learning process is that all viewpoints and frames of reference are fully represented in the production of a local theory. This echoes the indigenous Australian *Ganma* metaphor. According to this idea, the meeting of frameworks of knowledge can be viewed as two rivers meeting and producing a "foam", representing a new kind of knowledge. Similarly, in Elden and Levin's idea of cogenerative dialogue, participants "operate outside of their initial frames of reference but communicate at a level where frames can be changed and new frames generated".[45] They suggest that this is a type of communication which

demands much more than a mere exchange of information, and following Gustavsen's (1985) conditions for democratic dialogue, suggest how the particular rigours of communicating in this way might be confronted. Part of this challenge is that it is crucial for the content of the dialogue to be reflective of the frames of reference and the motivations brought into the process by each participant. And further, for each participant, a "personal action theory" is a concurrent outcome of involvement in this dialogue, where one "develops the ability to minimize the gap between what one says and what one does".[46]

The significance of these discussions, both theoretically and practically can be located in the salience of the reflexive nature of the dialogue which guides PAR, and the development process in general. We have suggested that it is impossible to generate a fixed set of theoretical constructs to direct the PAR process given the specificity of each setting in which we participate. Yet, we can allow for the interplay between ideas generated to inform the theory, and in a self-reflective manner, examine how well they have served us in practice. The notions of reflexivity and dialogue are two such ideas. Indeed, these are ideas which must be brought into the arena of practice if, as we have seen, development work is to be truly participatory. This much we can recognize by looking at the literature. We can also continue to examine what is meant by meant by the

term dialogue, through a more exhaustive review of the
theoretical streams relating to it.

Implications

These discussions clearly suggest that the area of PAR
needs further examination within a communications-based
context. This point is relevant to viewing PAR as not only
a schema for an alternative development strategy, but also
as a general strategy for marginalized peoples to effect
their own efforts toward change. This is confirmed through
the way that the notion of dialogue emerges in the PAR
framework as a way of describing and building the
relationship which characterizes democratic participation.
Dialogue provides us with a means of grounding the
theoretical constructs of participatory action research in
the role it plays in practical strategies.

A number of aspects of the relevance of dialogue to PAR
can be suggested. First, dialogical interaction is the
route by which a community or group comes to define issues,
alternatives and solutions with regard to a particular
problem. This describes a process of collective knowledge
production as a starting point for the action sequence
which, in turn, leads to collective evaluation of approaches
taken. Second, the bringing together of different
frameworks, opinions and readings of reality is intrinsic to
the PAR process, and cannot take place without open

interaction and exchanges of points of view. This suggests that by engaging in these activities, participants are drawn into this dynamic. Further, through sustained interaction, the reflexivity of the process allows for continued self-evaluation as stipulated in the action-reflection mechanism.

Third, by entering into a dialogue with the group or community, the researcher contributes her own ideals and values. This secures her role as co-learner or participant as well as facilitator or catalyzing agent. This is linked concurrently to her commitment to accompanying an endemic social change, as well as fits into the process of production of a "local theory". Finally, through discussion and collective evaluation of information available to the community, this dialogue provides the means by which a group codifies information according to the codes and norms intrinsic to their own reality. These activities should be undertaken reflexively, with a constant view to how the processes actually unfold.

Sketching out the PAR process in this way then, illustrates that all types of development efforts rely on the type of open and productive communication set out by PAR. Whether these are specifically designed to be projects traditionally defined as "development communications" or not becomes irrelevant. This paper proposes, therefore, that the term "development communications" is more effective when viewed in relation to the the overall process of

development. In this sense, communication becomes a
condition or necessary element in the emerging participatory
view to development, rather than a descriptive idea related
to development projects utilizing forms of communication --
even those carried out in the PAR tradition.

This view of communications in development is not
necessarily a unique one, as many of the authors concerned
with ideas such as "co-generative learning" and "dialogical
research" have demonstrated. But, for this idea to be
useful we must first, examine its implications for the
methodology of PAR. Second, it is important to explore how
these methodological implications might contribute to
efforts to generate theoretical formulations useful to the
development practitioner. Essentially this brings us back
to the questions Beltran earlier raised regarding dialogue.
It also leads to some new issues. For example, what are the
components of dialogue that make it an empowering process?
What are the characteristics of communication as a social
practice which tell us that we are actually part of a
participatory communication? Which streams within
communication theory provide components which are capable of
sustaining and fostering practice in development projects?
And, finally, where has the notion of reflexivity emerged in
socal science in a way which allows it to be effectively
carried into practice in the PAR framework? It is apparent
that these are suggestions for further inquiry.

Here, we shall proceed from the idea that dialogue can be fundamentally defined in this context, as a _reflexive_ form of communication. This would describe patterns of communication that are undertaken with an awareness of the process, as it emerges according to the contribution of new ideas and information. Further, it requires that participants in the PAR process recognize that the basis upon which inquiry and action is constructed is an open and equitable dialogue. It is useful here, therefore, to refer back to ideas raised in this discussion which help to clarify the nature of dialogue.

We have seen how Habermas, and the critical theory framework in general are relevant to PAR, and in turn, to Third World development in terms of their place within a more interpretive, subjective view of social theory. Yet Habermas also offers several guidelines for dialogue which may be placed in this context and further, translated into practical action -- in the PAR framework. His conditions of the ideal speech situation argue that in normal communication, participants assume that they are truthful, that they make statements which can be verified or supported, and that they are normatively appropriate. Further, when one or more of these claims is not evident, they can be examined discursively through dialogue. Essentially, this presupposes that each participant takes part in interaction according to these guidelines. The

actual content of the dialogue, therefore, is determined
only at the moment in which it takes place. However, the
reflexive nature of this particular process, i.e. that each
participant is aware of and willing to adhere to these
criteria, dictates that communication should be open,
democratic and horizontal.

It is this reflexivity which define guidelines for the
act of taking part in a dialogue which leads to action --
the crux of the PAR process. Building on Habermas' general
framework, Gustavsen's notion of "democratic dialogue" helps
to make the link between Habermas' ideals and practice in a
PAR setting. His additions include the propositions that:
the previous experience of each participant be considered
legitimate; real possibilities for gaining understanding of
the issues of concern must exist; all arguments pertaining
to these issues warrant examination; and the dialogue should
produce agreements which can be carried into practice.[47]
The reflexivity is located in the point where questions
about this information-generating process emerge and are
answered.

NOTES:

1. See for example Edith Gildart, "Innovations for
    Participatory Research". Prepared for presentation at the
    Canadian Communications Association Annual Conference,
    Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, June, 1992; Thomas
    Jacobson, "A Pragmatist Account of Participatory
    Communication Research for National Development". Prepared
    for the International Communication.Association Annual
    Conference, International and Development Communications
    Division, Chicago, 1991.

2. Max Elden and Morton Levin, "Cogenerative Learning: Bringing Participation into Action Research", in William Foote Whyte, ed., <u>Participatory Action Research</u>. Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications, 1991. p. 128.

3. Cited in Gildart, 1992. p. 7.

4. Edna F. Einsiedel, "Action Research: Theoretical and Methodological Considerations for Development Communications". Prepared for presentation to the International Association for Mass Communication Research, Sao Paulo Brazil, 1992. Also see Gildart, 1992; Jacobson, 1991.

5. Stephen Kemmis, in Kemmis and Wilfred Carr, eds., <u>Becoming Critical: Education, Knowledge and Action Research</u>. London: Deakin University Press: 1986. p. 29.

6. Jacobson, 1990. p. 6.

7. Isidor Chein, Stuart W. Cook and John Harding, "The Field of Action Research", 1948. Reprinted in Kemmis, ed., <u>The Action Research Reader</u>. Victoria: Deakin University Press, 1988. p. 57.

8. Chein, Cook and Harding, 1948. pp. 59-71.

9. Gerald Susman, "Action Research: A Sociotechnical Systems Perspective", in Gareth Morgan, ed., <u>Beyond Method: Strategies for Social Research</u>. Beverley Hills: Sage. p. 95.

10. Kemmis, 1986. p. 36.

11. Hernando Gonzalez proposed this is his article, "Interactivity and Feedback in Third World Development Campaigns", in <u>Critical Studies in Mass Communication</u>. 6 (3), 1989. The key idea here is the notion of interactivity as a means of gauging and evaluating Third World development campaigns utilizing mass media; for example the "super limonada" radio spots used in Nicaragua and other countries in efforts to combat diarrhea in infants.

12. Jurgen Habermas, <u>Knowledge and Human Interests</u>. Boston: Beacon Press, 1971. Translated by J. Shapiro. p. 192.

13. Jurgen Habermas, "Toward a Theory of Communicative Competence", <u>Inquiry</u>. 13 (1970). p. 373.

14. Anthony Giddens, "Jurgen Habermas", in Quentin Skinner, ed. <u>The Return of Grand Theory in the Human Sciences</u>. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985. p. 131.

15. Giddens, 1985. p. 132.

16. Servaes, 1989. p. 226.

17. John C. Heritage, "Ethnomethodology", in Anthony Giddens and Jonathon Turner eds., <u>Social Theory Today</u>. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987. p. 266.

18. Cohen, in Giddens and Turner, eds., 1987. p. 289.

19. Cohen, in Giddens and Turner, eds., 1987. p. 285.

20. Anthony Giddens, <u>The Constitution of Society</u>. Berkeley, California: The University of California Press, 1984. p. 289.

21. Giddens, 1984. p. 2.

22. Giddens, 1984. p. 25.

23. Jacobson, 1990. p. 3.

24. Orlando Fals Borda, "Investigating Reality in Order to Transform it: The Colombian Experience", in Kemmis, ed., 1986. p. 294.

25. Fernandes and Tandon, 1981. p. 11.

26. Orlando Fals Borda. <u>The Challenge of Social Change</u>. London: Sage, 1985. p. 3.

27. Jacobson, 1990. p. 3. Jacobson extracts this from Rahman's 1985 article, "The Theory and Practice of Participatory Action Research", in Fals Borda, ed., <u>The Challenge of Social Change</u>. London: Sage, 1985. See also, Latapí, 1988.

28. Pablo Latapí, "Participatory Research: A New Research Paradigm?" <u>The Alberta Journal of Educational Research</u>. 34 (3), 1988. p. 311.

29. Rahman, 1985. pp. 118-119.

30. Rahman, 1985. p. 6.

31. Fals Borda, 1985. p. 115.

32. Paul Willis, "Notes on Method", in Morgan, ed., 1983.

33. Fals Borda and Rahman, 1991. p. 29.

34. Ulf Himmelstrand, "Innovative Processes in Social Change: Theory, Method and Social Practice", in T. Bottomore, S. Nowak and M. Sokolowka, eds., <u>Sociology: State of the Art</u>. London: Sage, 1982. p. 232.

35. Majid Rahnema, "Participatory Action Research: The 'Last Temptation of Saint' Development", in <u>Alternatives</u>. XV, 1990. p. 222.

36. Elden and Levin, 1991. p. 131.

37. Latapí, 1988. p. 311.

38. See Rahman, 1985; Rahnema, 1990.

39. Rahman, 1985. pp. 109-110.

40. Rahman, 1985. pp. 110-111.

41. Gustavo I. de Roux, "Together Against the Computer: PAR and the Struggle of Afro-Colombians for Public Services", in Fals Borda and Rahman, eds., 1991. p. 45.

42. Jacobson, 1990. p. 7.

43. John Gaventa, "Toward a Knowledge Democracy: Viewpoints on Participatory Research in North America", in Fals Borda and Rahman, eds., 1991. p. 125.

44. Korten, in Veneracion, ed., 1989. p. 12.

45. Elden and Levin, 1991. p. 134.

46. Elden and Levin, 1991. p. 136.

47. In Elden and Levin, 1991. pp. 135-136.

IV. Case Study: Participatory Information Networking in Nicaragua

Introduction

It is fundamental to recognize that the foregoing arguments regarding the role of communications within participatory development in this discussion were developed through two parallel processes. The first relates to the preceding review of the literature in which my aim was to explain how these ideas are guided theoretically. The second process is based on my participation in practical project work. The field research was undertaken as a case study, with the assumption that active involvement in a project involving an "alternative" conception of development communications would help to generate a better understanding of what is meant by participatory communication in development. Yet, the process of undertaking the research itself provided a much firmer basis from which to advance the idea that communication be considered a condition of development projects in the PAR framework.

It is difficult to avoid the tendency to attempt to "prove" the experience was a participatory one. The intent and the guiding principles behind the project were that it be undertaken in a participatory way, and one of its main objectives was to foster the further development of local PAR initiatives. It is not my intention here, however, to assess this experience according to criteria related to

whether or not the process was truly participatory. The undertaking described in the section that follows is intended to broach some of the issues raised in the theoretical discussion, as well as demonstrate how these concepts and ideas came into play in actual practice.

This section describes a PAR initiative in Nicaragua aimed at collectively investigating and designing a cooperative social information network. This project grew out of a need, expressed by people working in the social welfare and development sector, to find ways to make information accessible and useful in the planning and carrying out of their activities. The initiative was based in the Escuela de Trabajo Social (School of Social Work) at the Universidad Centroamericana (UCA), with the collaboration of a number of Nicaraguan organizations and groups working in community and social development. It also included the participation of a Canadian non-governmental organization (the Canadian Council on Social Development), and a collaborative social development project between the UCA and the University of Calgary. The project was proposed with the intention of completing a feasibility study of a cooperative social information network, and if appropriate, developing a proposal for its implementation. However, the process of collectively designing and carrying out the research, as well as evaluation of the results, led to further unanticipated phases.

The undertaking of this project, and indeed any development venture in Nicaragua, was made particularly rich by the context. During their ten years in power, the revolutionary Sandinista government attempted to introduce a series of social, political and economic policies designed at implementing and institutionalizing broad base popular participation. In Nicaragua, the method of implementing participatory democracy "from the bottom-up" was official government policy. Thus, the attempt at constructing a new society based on these principles offered the promise of an alternative model for the Third World in general. This entailed the active and conscious participation of the people in processes aimed at shaping a new reality. Many of the successes of the Sandinista project have been lost following their 1990 electoral defeat, however, a significant amount of these processes still continue.

This project was conceived as a way of fostering participation and self-reliance in community development by attempting to define ways that information could be put to use in local development efforts. While the importance of issues such as knowledge empowerment and collective learning have been recognized in Nicaragua, it has also been acknowledged that the mobilization of information resources is a key aspect, and one which has not yet been developed. Further, while there are abundant research and information resources in Nicaragua, a structure or social organization

necessary to systematically coordinate this information has not been put into place. It was proposed that one way to respond to this need was a social information network, conceived as a cooperative.

Our task then was, first, to investigate and characterize: the context, (i.e. what information existed, and where); who "owned" this information and who needed it; and how to initiate the opening up of cooperative channels which would foster access and utility of existing information resources. Our second main objective was to suggest a strategy to allow the existing information and research to provide support for groups working in grassroots and community development efforts. The ownership and undertaking of the research itself was also interpreted as collective. That is, the views and priorities of all groups, organizations or participants involved would be represented. Secondly, these same groups would be responsible for the undertaking of the various stages of the research, where appropriate. Finally, these groups would participate in the production of a piece of research that would ideally be the property of all participants.

The Nicaraguan Context

Nicaraguan history has been marked by periods of extreme unrest and instability, characterized by colonial domination, foreign interventionism and national class and

political division. Probably the most significant event in
its history was the 1979 overthrow of the Somoza
dictatorship by the Sandinista popular revolution.
Following the insurrection, the country was virtually in
ruins, with a highly dependent, export-based economy; an
almost complete reliance on foreign energy; and a devastated
economic and physical infrastructure.

The new government defined immediately a commitment to
promoting national autonomy, sustainable economic
development and implementing social policies based on
popular participation. In the course of constructing the
new Nicaraguan society, the revolutionary government
identified access to healthcare, land and education as
priorities. A massive literacy campaign, undertaken
according to principles of popular education, saw a
reduction in the rate of illiteracy from 57% of the
population in 1978, to below 12.5% by 1990. Health care was
made universal, staple food crop production was increased,
and a widescale agrarian land reform project implemented to
meet the urgent needs of the people living in the
countryside. The gains of the Nicaraguan revolution, as
well as the problems faced by the Sandinista government in
their attempt to build a new society and economy based on
principles of popular hegemony have been extensively
documented.[1]

The 1990 electoral defeat of the Sandinistas modified

substantially the character of political power in Nicaragua. The ruling coalition government has continued to implement a series of policies representing a radical departure from those defined by the revolutionary government. Most notable has been their adoption of a neo-liberal program of widespread structural adjustment, aimed at stabilizing the Nicaraguan economy through re-stimulation of foreign investment. This package of programs, implemented in March of 1991, was developed by a new Nicaraguan elite representing the interests of the capitalist sectors in efforts to maintain the support of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. The main objective of these measures is the alleviation of a massive government deficit, which in Nicaragua, translates to lower government spending in social programs and higher taxes. The former is clearly visible in massive cuts to state agencies (i.e. services that comprise the public social "safety net") and price subsidies. The main burden, then, of this adjustment, has fallen on the most vulnerable sectors who now face higher prices for basic necessities, and much-decreased access to public services such as health care, education and social welfare. In May 1992, the unemployment rate had risen to over 58%, with 83% of the population considered unable to meet basic needs. Illiteracy has risen to 40% and 70% of the country's population is reported to be living under the poverty line, up from 50% in 1988.[2]

These figures offer only a partial view of the current
context in Nicaragua. In their role as the official
opposition, the Sandinistas have faced internal dissension
and public disapproval of their attempts to balance the
interests of the popular sectors with agreements to work to
maintain stability with the government. Increasing
frustration with the country's continued struggle with a
massive foreign debt, widespread and increasing poverty and
political instability, have lead many to speak of an
impending "social explosion". Former *contra* fighters have
joined together with former members of the recently-reduced
Sandinista Popular Army and have re-armed in a struggle to
force the government to comply with commitments made for
jobs and land. Labour unrest, strikes and work shutdowns
appear daily in the country's media while political in-
fighting between conservative and centrist elements in the
UNO government have lead the United States Agency for
International Development to withhold recently promised aid
monies. However, the government continues to maintain that,
following a "painful" transition period, Nicaragua is on the
brink of an "economic takeoff". This view is obviously
questionable, given the levels of poverty and unemployment
in the country. More likely, the relevance of a forecasted
"takeoff" will have little to do with the country's poor
(which is the majority of the country's population), in
terms of benefits, economic or otherwise:

. . . the country's economic and social situation
reflects the government's neoliberal ideology,
which is based on the belief that monetary
stabilization and market deregulation will resolve
the problem of poverty over the long term. This
is the "modern" version of the classic 'trickle-
down' theory, which claims that, as the large
capitalist sector is able to reactivate and
accumulate, wealth will filter little by little to
the rest of society.[3]

Faced with this new reality, many Nicaraguans believe
that the gains achieved through the ten years of widespread
popular mobilization have largely been eradicated and that
the people cannot carry on with the loss of official support
of the government. Others, however, argue that the lessons
learned and the empowering processes set into motion in the
Sandinista years are just now beginning to solidify into a
movement that is truly liberative and revolutionary. In
this sense, the need to coordinate activities and resources,
and share experiences as a collective learning process is an
urgent necessity for the Nicaraguans who wish to continue
building grass-root organization. It is in recognition of
the need to do so that this project was proposed and
undertaken.

The Nicaraguan Popular Movement

In Nicaragua, non-governmental organizations
(heretofore referred to as NGOs) aimed at social change
developed more slowly than in the rest of the Central
American region. During the years of the Somoza
dictatorship, for example, there existed only seven NGOs in

the entire country. The majority of these were linked to
religious organizations, and developed their programs with a
clear conception of social actors as passive, with little or
no capacity for organization. However, given the situation
of repression and extreme poverty, particularly in the rural
sector, several of these organizations dedicated themselves
to presenting alternatives addressing social injustice and
the deteriorating living conditions of the marginal sectors.
Following the earthquake which devastated Managua in 1972,
and as a consequence of the rapidity with which the socio-
political reality was changing, a new type of social
organization emerged. These organizations developed general
objectives oriented towards the needs of the poorest sectors
and a vision of how they could take an active part in a
broad-base popular movement.

By the middle of the 1970s, the social development
movement in Nicaragua was generally characterizable by a
marked emphasis on the activities of popular education and
promotion. The basis of the Nicaraguan model was the
recognition of the necessity of creating structures which
supported the struggles of the sectors of the country most
affected by the repression and marginalization of the Somoza
government. At the time of the overthrow of the
dictatorship, the work of the majority of the NGOs and
social organizations in the country was unified with the
base sectors, directed by community leaders and dedicated to

developing capacities of self-analysis and an educative methodology of popular participation. A vision of community work was promoted which described the need to mobilize the base structures towards higher stages of organization, leading to the eventual integral transformation of Nicaraguan civil society. Generally, projects were characterized by small-scale action with local impact, and high levels of community participation. It was through this dynamic that the NGO sector in Nicaragua succeeded in securing legitimate spaces for recognition as the guiding force behind the popular movement. Given the political climate of the time, this implied assuming risks and tasks which went much further than mere charitable action and assistance.

With the triumph of the Sandinista revolution and continuing throughout the 1980s, a wider margin of action for popular initiatives was promoted. Accordingly, a number of new organizations and formations emerged in line with a popular conception of development and social change. It is also important to note that a high percentage of the officials of the early social and community organizations assumed positions in various agencies of the new revolutionary government. The Sandinista government, as one of its principal programs, called upon all sectors of the country to join together to reactivate and stabilize the economy. A main aspect of this was the incorporation of

economic and social forces around communal tasks aimed at an integrative effort to undertake the urgent tasks of reconstruction.

The method of implementing these social projects involved the active participation of hundreds of thousands of ordinary Nicaraguans, organized at the grass-roots. As has been recognized, there were considerable difficulties in implementing this model, including 9 years of low-intensity war waged by the US-backed *contra*, and its ensuing effects on an already struggling economy. However, the Nicaraguan experiment was an important one, particularly given that the principles used to describe participatory and democratic development processes were, for ten years, official policy in the country.

The current situation in Nicaragua indicates that base level organizations and efforts toward social development have an increasingly important role to play in this changed context. It is first necessary to recognize that Nicaragua arrived at the general elections in 1990 in a highly polarized state. With the cumulative results of the *contra* war, and its devastating consequences in terms of human loss, economic burdens and damage to the productive sectors, many Nicaraguans found themselves having to make a choice between the promise of peace and the loss of the revolutionary agenda. The electoral campaign of the current government stated a commitment to resolving the economic

crisis, yet this has largely been carried out by means of
eliminating subsidies, privatizing state businesses,
dismantling the social apparatus and implementing other
measures which have eroded many of the advances of the
revolutionary period. Accordingly, the number of
organizations in the social sector has grown considerably.
This is explained to a large extent by cuts in state social
agencies, coupled with the government's plan of occupational
re-conversion which has translated into the loss of jobs for
many who previously worked for state organizations.

In this context, the new NGOs and community
organizations that have emerged play an increasingly
important role in the process of supporting and maintaining
local initiatives based on the idea of a popular movement.
In the new political and social climate, the support of the
social development sector will continue to be the most
effective alternative for the majority of Nicaraguan society
in efforts to improve their situations. Given that the
strengthening of democratic and pluralist organizations
depends on wide-scale participation at the base, it is
imperative that community and grassroots interests be active
and involved.

The Need for Information Networking

In spite of the extensive advances made in the social
development sector, the area of management and coordination

of information has continually been defined in Nicaragua as a problem. While a significant amount of research and information resources have been produced through the efforts of the social organizations, state agencies and the universities, means of sharing and organizing information have never been systematically designed or developed. Several projects, including a national information network, were proposed during the years that the Sandinistas were in power, yet never implemented for a variety of reasons -- most crucially, the electoral loss.

A recurring theme among players in the social development sphere in Nicaragua is the need to find ways to network and share information and experiences. The lack of access to research, information and planning support at the grassroots levels was identified by numerous communities and development organizations as a serious limitation in development efforts in Nicaragua, as in many other Third World countries. The proposal to investigate and define a cooperative research support network was advanced and subsequently funded by the International Development Research Centre, through an existing social development project involving the University of Calgary and the Escuela de Trabajo Social of the Universidad Centroamericana in Managua -- Nicaragua's only school of social work. The School of Social Work sees support to popular participation and local community organization as an important function in

its tasks of educating and training social workers. It was also felt that the extensive experience developed through the school's community outreach and practicum programs could be mobilized in support of development efforts.

The objectives of the project were related specifically to the need to develop collectively a means of organising and optimizing existing information and research resources in support of community development initiatives. The lack of coordination in information and documentation has continued to be a factor which has limited the scope and effectiveness of individual groups and organizations working in social development. Moreover, the need to foster coordination and participation among all sectors working towards improving social and economic situations was felt to be particularly urgent, both nationally and regionally. It is important to note that the original initiatives for this project were undertaken before the 1990 election. Given current conditions, the challenge faced by the social sector is to attempt to undertake cooperative actions between those who share similar objectives. This includes optimizing scarce resources, with the goal of promoting a higher degree of self-reliance and long-term sustainability in their projects. Given that the role of information was defined as a priority prior to the 1990 elections when the popular movement was still officially supported by the government, the increased importance of such an effort was evident.

The objectives of the project, then, were as follows:

- to increase the potential use of, and access to, information by means of a cooperative social information network designed and developed to support planning, undertaking and evaluation of programs and projects in social welfare and development in Nicaragua

- to promote a horizontal movement of information between different organizations and institutions in a way which would permit an open and participatory exchange of information, experiences and expertise

- to develop a means of systematically collecting and coordinating materials and experiences of the popular organizations and academic community characterized by their support to social development

- to develop services designed to facilitate use of and access to information regarding: social conditions and problems, and initiatives taken in the county which are oriented towards improving these conditions

- to establish systematic inter-institutional channels of information which would contribute to the creation of collective strategies for social development

The Research Process

It was agreed that the research would be coordinated by a working team comprised of myself and several members of the teaching staff of the Escuela de Trabajo Social of the UCA. My point of entry in the process was at the point when funding had been secured, and the groundwork laid for the carrying out of the project. Because the project had coincidentally been developed at the time that I had developed my research questions, and given my interest in the country, the project manager and myself agreed to approach the Nicaraguans with the proposal that I work with them. My research objectives were presented to the key personnel, and the main issues and problems of the project were made familiar to me. In this way, we were able to identify areas in which our objectives could be aligned, and concluded that my participation in the project would be of use. We felt that, both in the carrying out of the project, and in the questions I had posed regarding communications and development, my agreement to work with the Nicaraguan personnel would be of benefit. Further, my stated interest in participatory research helped to define my role, and indicated to the Nicaraguan personnel that my purpose for participation was not related to directing or managing the process.

The research process was divided into three main phases: identification and characterization of groups and

their current situation of information needs and resources; evaluation and analysis of the information needs and resources profile; and feedback and follow-up. Before describing these, I wish to briefly characterize, conceptually, these processes according to the key issues which emerged as they were carried out.

First, the project was generally aimed at fostering what might be described as <u>organizational transformation</u>. Here, I refer to the process described in PAR of bringing together diverse interests or groups according to a commitment to social change, or the addressing of a particular problem or concern defined as a priority by the community. The key problem here was the coordination and utilization of information. A main objective of this research was to unite different experiences and points of view, and to collectively define and evaluate a strategy for addressing the issue.

Second, and related to the first concept, was the process of <u>collective researching/learning</u> which we attempted to generate. The organizational method we employed was aimed at allowing an interplay of voices and opinions. This was intended to engage all participants in the production of new understandings and possibilities. This can also be viewed as an example of what Elden and Levin have referred to as "cogenerative dialogue" with the eventual outcome of a "local theory". Our experience was

centred around the production of a local theory of
information exchange and networking, derived from the
Nicaraguan context. As explained above, the proposal to
undertake the project, and the definition of objectives and
priorities emerged primarily through discussions with
potential participants in the project. In this way, a
variety of viewpoints and opinions were collected, leading
to the eventual generation of a common vision of what was
required and how it ought to be realized. These were the
contextual and practical aspects, contributed through the
reflections and observations afforded by the participants'
views of their reality.

Third, the <u>mobilisation</u> or <u>democratisation</u> of
information (cf. Gaventa, 1991) was a particularly pertinent
concept in this project. The relevance of this issue in our
research was twofold. First, the primary problem which led
to the conceiving and undertaking of the project was the
lack of awareness of and access to information produced in
the social development sector in Nicaragua. In our
preliminary investigations, we learned that the lack of
basic information was a significant hindrance in the
undertaking of local initiatives. This included such types
of information as profiles or characterizations of
communities and sectors of the population, and certain
specific forms of research about socio-economic conditions
(often referred to as "baseline knowledge").

This absence often led to the duplication of efforts and the production of knowledge already in existence elsewhere. One main task, therefore, was to identify and find means of systematically cataloguing this information. Second, the issue of forms of coordination or social arrangements which would permit the flow and exchange of information also played a role in the formulation of our research questions. It was clear that while the types of information defined above often existed and were held within certain research institutions, NGOs, community groups and university departments, a means of coordinating it and making it accessible was needed. The project was referred to as a network, but it is fundamental to recognize that, given the emphasis on social organization, we viewed network as a verb, related to the process of the movement of information. Thus, this network was conceived in the following way:

> This network is conceived as forms and levels of coordination between the participant organizations with the end of making accessible information that is expedient, appropriate and up-to-date regarding defined areas. This network will permit the strengthening of contact between groups through a horizontal and cooperative movement of information, between appropriate sources and potential users. The network can also be seen as a meeting place for the sharing of experiences, resources and strategies in social development.[4]

The final issue concerned the concept of *sistematización*. This emerged as an over-arching theme in the undertaking of the project, as well as in the

objectives of the network itself. *Sistematización* is a term

widely used in Latin American social science, which can be

related to both the notions of reflexivity and praxis.

Mariluz Morgan (1991) defines the concept in the following

way:

> The activity of production of knowledge starting
> from practice, whose fundamental objective is the
> improvement or re-orientation of the same
> practice. It integrates theory and practice,
> enriching both aspects and its results serve as
> much to improve practice as to contribute to
> theory.[5]

The concept proposes a particular relationship between types

of knowledge, in which the key idea is that knowledge or

insights produced by a concrete experience have the same

particular character as that experience.

In addition to praxis, this notion finds a significant

resonance in the approach of grounded theory. Advanced by

Glazer and Strauss (1967), grounded theory emphasized the

development of theory from social data, rather than the

opposing emphasis in the social sciences on testing or

proving theory. Further, the concept of sistematización

recognizes that, between the specific (reality) and the

general (theory), there exist mediating elements, which

themselves produce knowledge about the particular reality.

These elements can generally be viewed as the data related

to context which help us to understand why events happen the

way they do. They take into account: the motivations or

knowledgeability of social actors, the relevance of social

organizations and specific cultural or historical patterns. *Sistematización* refers to the process by which these aspects are apprehended and utilized to generate conceptual constructs which may re-orient or enhance practice.

It was perceived that the processes proposed in the formulation of this network would have an important role to play in fostering sistematización. Most importantly, a main objective defined by the Nicaraguans was the use of the information networking process as a method of learning from experience. This was defined in two ways. First, it was felt that by increasing a consciousness and awareness of the potential use of information generated through practice, the same information could feed back into planning and evaluation. This would allow for definition of future strategies to be more practice-oriented. A second function would be more systematic processes of documenting and recording experiences which would allow for the sharing of information specifically related to experiences in social development.

Step 1: Characterization of Information Needs and Resources

The first step in our research was to provide a diagnostic of the current situation of information in the social development sector in Nicaragua. Because of the number and diversity of organizations working in the Nicaraguan social sector, at the outset we were required to

set boundaries related to the number and to the type of organization that would be included. We determined that it was necessary to incorporate the participation of three main sectors: groups working in the direct provision of services; groups with a research or information-producing component; and the sectors of the university with links to the community through projects or practicum work. A fourth component was comprised of groups that did not necessarily meet these criteria, but who had proven their suitability for the project through previous experience in the developmental stages, or who had a long-standing relationship with the Escuela de Trabajo Social. There were also several state organizations included in this group.

The participant organizations directly involved in the research were broken down as follows: four state organizations (included the ministries of health, social welfare, education and census and statistics); ten organizations working in social research and analysis (including university departments); and eleven non-governmental organizations or community groups defined as directly providing services (see Appendix I).

Once defined, we attempted to find some means of allowing the groups involved in the study to systematically reflect on how they themselves characterized information in their work, and on what kind of information they held or produced through their activities. The design of a research

instrument that would permit this was the first task that had to be undertaken. Because a priority was to involve the point of view of all participants, the first step was to determine how the research itself would be undertaken. As a team, we had to evaluate our objectives and define the types of information we required. And, as coordinators of the project, we had to do so collectively, incorporating the views of all other participants.

To this end, we tried (unsuccessfully, on several occasions), to call meetings which would have served as forums for bringing together and collectively evaluating all points of view. We quickly learned, however, that the current reality of the Nicaraguan social development sector dictated that neither time nor inclination to take part in planning processes were in abundance. There was widespread agreement on the part of potential member organizations regarding the need for the project and its conceivable benefits, but the majority of groups expressed to us that participation in the early stages was likely to be minimal if there were no immediate benefit. Further, in the meetings that we were able to hold, we found that the majority of time was spent with the participants utilizing the opportunity to share information with others present. Therefore, this early stage was valuable first, in indicating to us that meetings were potentially valuable for networking processes. Second, it was made very clear to us

that we would need to align our methods and objectives to
accommodate the needs and limitations of our partner
organizations. This, of course, was a primary objective in
our attempt to make the process a participatory one. But
these particular issues helped to solidify our decision-
making process by forcing us to seek alternatives.

The project team then continued to consult with these
same organizations to develop a research strategy which
would allow the highest measure of participation possible,
while at the same time avoiding making significant demands
on the time or resources of project participants. It was
suggested that a series of surveys and interviews be
undertaken to identify and characterize the current
information network infrastructure in the social development
sector. It was felt that the interviews and on-site inquiry
would allow us to observe the workings and patterns of the
groups involved, while self-administered surveys would
permit the type of reflection on the part of these same
groups that was needed to genuinely characterize the
information context. The survey was prepared collectively
by the project coordination team, with input from the
participant organizations. While it was felt that a survey
was the most efficient and appropriate means of gathering
information, it was also suggested that it should be
designed utilizing an open question format. We felt that
this would reduce the danger of our pre-determining

responses to our questions, as well as allow for a high degree of flexibility in possible responses.

Three separate surveys and/or interview agendas were prepared, and administered to three main groups: directors or heads of the organization or group, person(s) directly in charge of information or research (if appropriate), and users or representatives of target or beneficiary groups. The initial sample for the survey was comprised of 27 institutions, including socio-economic research groups, community organizations and NGOs working in social development or social welfare.

The results of these surveys and interviews were used to address five categories related to the objectives of the network: information exchange and coordination (both existing and potential); technical considerations; the social dynamic of the proposed network; sectors or areas to which the networking processes would be the most beneficial; and existing human and material resources. More importantly, however, we learned that the actual process of administering these surveys and asking these questions raised the level of consciousness of information among participants. Being asked to reflect on and self-reflexively characterize their use and opinion of the potential use of information, was itself an educative process for many of the participants. While most of the project partners appeared to have a clear conception of what

they felt an information support network would entail, they also appeared to have gained a greater understanding of the use of information itself through the process of being involved in the study.

From this first phase of the project we were able to define a number of parameters. First, we were able to identify and generally characterize who the participants were and how they themselves described their context related to information. Second, by engaging in discussions surrounding various interpretations of what the proposed network would involve, our working definitions were altered in a way which more effectively reflected the views and opinions of project partners. Third, we set into motion processes of thinking about and re-defining issues related to the use of information. It is important to recognize that we did not systematically define these as issues as they emerged. However, we were able to define them in retrospective analysis, and this played a large part in shaping further action.

Step 2: Analysis and Evaluation

It was difficult to determine precisely how we would analyze the results of our initial study. On the one hand, after administering the surveys and interviews, we possessed a large body of raw data which required analysis and evaluation. On the other, however, we had many undocumented

conversations, informal meetings, and casual comments to take into account. We felt that the latter was perhaps the most constructive information gathered during this first phase. Yet we needed to determine a method of documenting this largely anecdotal information and incorporate it into our analysis of the survey data. It was decided that we would numerically represent the frequency of responses given to questions included in the survey, and that analysis of this data would be combined with the more unsystematic information we had collected and used to generate a series of recommendations and conclusions.

The study indicated, first, that the participant groups utilized information and research resources most extensively in the undertaking of their own research and for planning and project development. Further, information was generally characterized as adequate and accessible for planning and for providing rudimentary background data. There remained, however, a need to develop a system or method for the exchange of undocumented materials, that is, information generated directly from project experience and self-produced community materials. This suggested that forms of information exchange emphasizing non-documented types of information should be one function of the information network.

Similarly, results showed that the participation of information and research users was primarily limited to the

use of books and other written materials held in documentation centres or produced by groups with publishing capabilities. This type of information use was characterized as <u>passive</u>, that is, exemplifying no direct involvement of the user in production of the material, nor contact with the producer. The need to develop other alternative forms of information exchange, (i.e. active rather than passive) was identified here. Examples of this included: inventories or bibliographies of information and research, locally produced publications such as newsletters, self-produced information "toolkits", project narratives and descriptions of methodologies, and development of audio-visual materials.

Another objective of the study was to assess infrastructural potential relative to technological capacity. It was determined that among the majority of the participants involved in the study, capabilities to utilize computerized means of information exchange existed. However, most were of the opinion that other methods of communication would be of equally high benefit and more appropriate to their needs. Methods suggested included: meetings and forums, use of community bulletin boards, and exchange of audio-visual materials such as videotaped project experiences. A widely-expressed view was that the most appropriate starting point for an information support network would be the creation of a centre or "meeting-

place", where information could be coordinated, meetings held, and information exchanged in both written and verbal form. This aspect of the study was particularly illustrative in indicating to us what forms of information, and what processes of social organization would most effectively comprise a support network.

The study also determined which areas or sectors were most in need of information support. By asking the participants to characterize the focus of their work according to target or beneficiary groups, it was possible to conclude which sectors were felt to be the most in need. Further, participants were asked to evaluate the existing information and research resources in terms of potential or current utility in serving needs which arise in activities related to these sectors. The majority of participant organizations were found to be working in socio-economic research, social and/or community development, human rights, health and education. Interestingly, it was concluded that sufficient information existed in these areas. Yet, this information seldom reached those actually working in projects of development and promotion of the rights or conditions of the sectors of most concern. These sectors were identified as: women, children, *campesinos*, workers and street children. It was the opinion of the majority of the participants that groups working with or on behalf of these sectors were most in need of support.

Finally, regarding human resources, we found that extensive experience and capabilities existed among the personnel working in the participant organizations, as well as at the community level. However, a means of coordinating contact between them was clearly lacking. Similarly lacking were ways of identifying this personnel to other groups and increasing awareness of the experience and expertise that has been developed. This was also in evidence in terms of social researchers documenting and analyzing conditions in the country. Given the years of experience in participatory development, Nicaragua's primary resource was judged to be its people, yet the processes by which these same development practitioners could learn from each other were generally non-existent.

The key problem identified in the study was the underdevelopment of information and research resources in terms of their potential to generate support to the social sectors. A situation in which the majority of the information remained isolated in documentation centres, research institutions and university departments suggested that while professional researchers were well-served by these resources, access to such information by base and community level organizations was highly limited. Therefore, ways to decentralize and increase accessibility of this information, through the generation of social information support and networking strategies, were the

focus of the follow-up stages.

Step 3: Feedback and Follow-up

In the analysis and report of our findings[6], we summarized the results of the study, and assessed the feasibility in terms of capacity and objectives proposed for the network. Based on the results of the initial study, it was apparent that the network should focus on the development of more cooperative forms of production, acquisition and diffusion of information. It was felt that development in these areas would serve to facilitate the sharing and exchange of information and reduce duplication of efforts and resources. A further objective was defined as support to local initiatives in research about basic social and economic conditions, locally-generated community profiles and project information. Fundamentally, we determined that increasing contact between organizations in a cooperative and horizontal fashion was the most important objective in the formulation of the network. Focusing on the category defined as the "social dynamic" of the network, we asked participants for their comments and feedback to permit a more collective voice in the formation of an eventual plan for implementation. We also anticipated that comments and observations regarding the results of the study would be instrumental in allowing us to evaluate the research itself, and help us to determine subsequent phases.

One example of this was the response of participants to the lack of representation of the popular sectors in discussions relating the sharing of experiences to information networking, as well as in the research itself. It was felt that, in the current period of crisis faced by the country, support for the popular sector and the need for well-organized community efforts at the base level was essential. This was pointed out to us during the evaluation phases of the study. Making information accessible to these sectors, as well as assisting them in the development of their own research initiatives, and providing a means of systematizing previous experiences in social and community development was clearly a priority. As a result of this, we decided to investigate the under-utilized resource of the information located in the Nicaraguan *Movimiento Comunal*.

The *Movimento Comunal* is a national organization characterized by its extensive mobilization of volunteer efforts to improve living conditions in urban barrios. It promotes the organized participation of the people and works for the protection of community and popular rights. However, the experiences of the community promoters working with the organization are generally not systematically documented, nor available to other groups. Based on the concept of *sistematización*, we determined that the attempt to develop this particular information resource would be one of the starting points for the network.

In this evaluation phase, we defined the dynamic of the network by devising four principal components. These were related to: first, the organizational structure; second, the creation of a network database; third, training and exchange of knowledge; and fourth, methodological documentation.

The first aspect of this entailed a cooperative organizational structure which would permit the systematic coordination and exchange of information between members of the network. Given that participants generally indicated an interest in promoting forms of information exchange characterized as horizontal, participatory and cooperative, we proposed the network be designed as a collective. This would entail the representation of each participant organization in decision-making, through a coordinating centre. Further, because of the diversity of groups involved, we proposed the designation of six focal points, representing the major areas of interest in the social development sector: social welfare, women, popular sectors, youth and children, ethnic groups and unions and labour cooperatives. Accordingly, inventories of existing information in these areas would be produced collectively by respective members, and made generally available through the network. This was proposed as a way of meeting the objective of making information accessible, and increasing awareness of the existence of information and research.

Thus, contact between groups would be fostered where the movement of information from sources to potential users would be assured through the processes of the network.

The second aspect concerned the elaboration of a database of information generated <u>by</u> and <u>for</u> the member organizations would be developed. This would include: inventories of information regarding projects and programs (i.e. those already in progress, currently in planning, or completed), profiles and diagnostic studies of local communities, and current information regarding social and economic conditions as produced or acquired by the members. This was evaluated by participants as a means of meeting the function of support to development initiatives.

The third component entailed the training and exchange of knowledge in the processing, management and utilization of information. This training would be promoted based on the experiences of the members themselves, through a series of workshops and meetings designed to bring forth a variety of experiences and views of these issues in the context of the everyday reality of the groups. This also would permit the sharing of expertise, or the promotion of a methodology specific to the Nicaraguan context.

The fourth issue concerned the development of a series of methodological documents and occasional papers. These would support projects of participatory research and community development by attempting to relate the potential

use of social information in development initiatives, based on principles of *sistematización*. Finally, the establishment of regional contacts between organizations and groups in Central America in general was proposed.

During the process of evaluation and feedback, the project team formulated a general proposal regarding the implementation of the proposed network. We attempted to incorporate comments and suggestions made during this phase, and felt that the design of the network adequately represented the views and needs of the participants. A proposal and request for funding was then prepared and submitted to the Canadian International Development Research Centre. But, more importantly, it became clear during this final phase that the lack of coordination of information and research was essentially related to a more fundamental problem. While the focus of our study was specifically on informational issues, we learned through evaluation with project participants that an <u>overall</u> lack of integration of efforts and resources was seen more generally as the real issue. This was made evident by the repeated assertion that the social sectors in the country require the development of a base from which to coordinate activities, share resources and experiences, and undertake, as well as document, projects and research in social welfare and development.

The activities related to the study of the information network seemed to sensitize project participants to the

issues regarding the lack of collectivity and integrative initiatives in social development in the country, and in the entire Central American region. Discussions stimulated in the initial research process provoked the generation of a new series of questions and issues related more generally to the reality of social development in Nicaragua. The responses to this investigation alerted us to a number of factors which indicated the need to develop a more general type of integrative initiative:

- the absence of a national strategy for social welfare and development

- the inadequate use of resources, information and expertise which had led to the duplication and dispersion of efforts in the social sector

- the loss or sub-utilization of experiences which were not collectivized nor made available among diverse institutions and organizations and a corresponding lack of awareness of potential links between groups and beneficiary sectors.

- the need to strengthen efforts towards coordination between organizations in order to increase the potential scope and effectiveness of activities and initiatives in the promotion of social welfare and development.

We attempted to organize these perceptions and views and devise a further series of objectives. From this, a second, more extensive project was born, culminating in a proposal for a Regional Coordinator for Social Welfare and Development Support (C.R.D.S). The main areas of interest

proposed for the Coordinator were the following:

a) The uniting of sectors involved in the development of the coordination of institutions and organizations from the social, economic or political sector taking initiatives in the area of social development with the view to the eventual formulation of a national and regional strategy for social welfare and development.

b) The continuation and elaboration of work developed by the Department of Social Work of the UCA in the systematic study and evaluation of social policy in the framework of structural adjustment. This includes the capacity of the social sector to offer solutions and alternative strategies for the sectors most vulnerable to economic and social policy decisions.

c) The continued development of the systematic study of poverty alleviation and means of detecting problems and limitations of the popular sectors.

d) The development of proposals fostering participatory approaches to projects and programmes aimed at sustainable community development

e) Within the popular sectors, the prioritization of efforts at a national level aimed at improving conditions for groups identified as those most vulnerable to the effects of economic adjustment: women, displaced and homeless families, youths and children and ethnic groups.

f) The strengthening of the capacity for self-reliance and leadership of the popular organizations, through training, social projection, research, and utilization of information resources.[7]

These functions were proposed to be carried out through the

development of four main aspects: research and

investigation, social projection, coordination and diffusion

of information, and training and professional development.

The profile of the Regional Coordinator for Social Welfare

and Development Support was developed as an integrative and

participatory initiative, encompassing a regional

perspective and using as a base, the experiences and

priorities of the social development community in Nicaragua.

Some of The Results

The PAR initiative described here produced results on

several levels. First, it provided the groundwork for the

groups involved to begin processes of reflection around the

issue of information and social development. The initial

discussions and meetings held to determine the main research

questions and strategies, for example, were instrumental in

allowing a collective agenda to be produced. This guided

further steps in the research, as well as provided

definitions, priorities and concepts specifically produced

through the participants' views.

Second, as these priorities emerged, a local definition

of the term "network" was produced. Initially, all

participants, including ourselves as coordinators of the

project, held to our own definition of information network.

Yet as we embarked on discussions about the information

needs and resources in the country, and formulated a

research strategy to investigate and characterize these,

this definition slowly changed and a new one emerged -- one

more reflective of, and specific to, the Nicaraguan reality.
This was most clearly demonstrated by the shift away from
"network" as a technological artefact (i.e. computerized
information exchange), to emerging views of network*ing* as a
series of processes. We began to view the term as aspects
which describe methods of linking groups, of sharing ideas
and resources, and of the mechanism of connecting potential
users with the appropriate sources. Therefore, this
particular process of collectively defining "network", was
crucial, in terms of its guiding the analysis of the
research results as well as in planning of further stages.
This also played a role in the elaboration of the more
comprehensive project which followed.

A third result of this process was that it called
attention among the participants to a fundamental difference
between information and communication. As the research
process unfolded, so did a realization that extensive
information resources existed in the country. Several
factors made it evident that where information was in
abundance, its "owners" or producers were not necessarily in
contact with each other. The implications of this included,
the under-utilization of research materials, lack of
awareness of what actually existed, and failure of
information-seeking agents to locate and put to use these
resources. Groups involved in the research often expressed
that what was needed was not more information itself, but

information *about* this information, and improved channels of communication between those who held it and those who needed it. As discussed earlier, this related fundamentally to the concept in PAR of the mobilization of information and providing access to it.

Finally, the research process itself united a variety of diverse interests and groups and illustrated to them where they shared characteristics connected to the particular issue of information. There are a number of difficulties faced by the majority of these organizations in Nicaragua -- funding, lack of resources and support for initiatives, and an increasing number of problems to be confronted. Participation in this project and the effort to collectively search for methods for the use of information helped them develop an awareness of information as a resource. Part of this was the recognition of the value of knowledge produced from experience in day-to-day action, and the potential to systematically capture and document this was highlighted. More fundamentally, the sharing of efforts and knowledge also came to be viewed as a crucial resource, in terms of increasing capacity for action. Reflection on these issues also led to a re-evaluation of the current context, and an increasing awareness of the need to counter this reality by fostering integration and collectivity. The research-evaluation cycle which led to the production of the project proposal illustrates this.

Comments on the Process

It is important to point out that the results reported here and the aspects that I have focused on are directly related to the process as I experienced it. Specifically, the process of undertaking this research, relative to the context, led me to the way I interpreted and presented the theoretical framework of the study. It is, perhaps, impossible to judge whether this process was truly one wherein theory emerged from practice. Yet it would be safe to say that it was the experience of being involved in this project which led me to present the theoretical argument in the way it appears here. Similarly, it is important to recognize that this particular interpretation of development communications in the framework of PAR is simply *my* reading based on the process in which I participated. Inherent in this study therefore, are reflections of my own biases and values which express the cumulative result of the year I spent undertaking this research. It is with this in mind that I wish to briefly comment on the experience of being a participatory researcher, before summarizing my final argument. This relates specifically to what is referred to as the "intervention context", the aspects which play a particularly large role in the process, yet are not necessarily incorporated in discussions of the final outcome.

The fact that the emphasis in this discussion is on

dialogue is not surprising. During the undertaking of this project, we found that the single most important factor affecting our successes and failures was our ability to communicate -- that is, to hear and to be heard by others. As discussed above, this played a large part in our relationships with project participants. A significant amount of time and effort was expended exploring what we meant when we discussed our idea of a network with the other groups involved in the study. It is important to note that the project coordination team had been involved in this project for a much longer period of time than the majority of project participants. There were several implications of this that are should be noted in this context.

First, we had discussed at length how the proposed network, as well as the undertaking of the research, would be defined and prioritized. So, while we had the opportunity to develop these aspects, we were also able to become familiar with each other; our views and opinions, our vocabularies, and our reasons for being involved in the project. We proceeded to approach other groups who did not have the same history. We quickly realized that these processes were necessary in order to provide the level of understanding required to engage others in the research. Second, given that we defined this research as cooperatively owned, we were required to find ways to operationalize this. This meant sensitivity to the context and reality of the

other groups. This sensitivity to the context rested on the ability to adequately comprehend what possible results would make the project useful and relevant to the community we were involved in, being constantly vigilant to ensure that all points of view were represented. In this way, we attempted to construct our research as a representation of a collective framework of meaning, expressed through the interactive methods employed while undertaking the study.

Issues related to communication played a large role in the external factors which affected our research as well. During the time the study was undertaken, for example, the Universidad Centroamericana was undergoing a series of administrative and personnel changes, which often directly influenced the project. Unfortunately, we seldom received notice of these changes, nor were we invited to participate in discussions or decisions related to them. We found, therefore, that we ourselves were given a first hand view of the process described in PAR of comprehending and responding to a repressive environment. The theoretical importance of processes of dialogue and horizontal communication has been made evident. However, in this particular PAR process, the practical importance made this point exceedingly clear.

Finally, I wish to comment on the relationship between the outside researcher and the local community which is so vital to the PAR framework. At the outset, I should clarify that this is a point which provides a certain measure of

discomfort, both as it comes into play here, and in the preceding theoretical discussion. While it is clearly useful to reflect on my year-long involvement with my colleagues in Nicaragua, any attempt to comment on the relative success or failure of this aspect of the research is entirely subjective. Further, I would suggest that this attempt to evaluate this aspect of the research is not entirely legitimate, without representing the points of view of my colleagues.

It is necessary here to again emphasize that the issues related to the relationship between the researcher and the local peoples which have been postulated in this discussion are relative to the process of which I was a part. Specifically, the assertion that the researcher and the community require the development of an open and equitable dialogue is a concept that clearly requires practical elaboration. It is possible to do so here in the context of language.

The literature in PAR often emphasizes the fact that, in the relationship between PAR researchers and local peoples, there exist differences in background, cultural barriers, diverse values and frameworks of meaning, and history. Obviously, one of the most fundamental of these differences is that of language. I refer here to linguistic issues, but also to differences in terms of the way peoples use their language and vocabularies to relate to others and

to make sense of their world. While the latter is a
somewhat nebulous issue, the former can play a decisive role
in undertaking research in the Third World.

'   During the initial phases of this project, the language
difference between myself and my colleagues was a clear
issue. This made the differences between us highly evident,
as well as limited our abilities to work as a team.
However, at the culmination of this project, I would suggest
that this had become less of a cultural barrier, and more of
an aspect related to the ability to effectively communicate.
As mentioned above, my lack of linguistic abilities at the
outset not only clearly defined me as an "outsider", but
further, checked a natural tendency on my part to
continually make comments and suggestions when working in
groups. While this was a limitation, it was also a clear
benefit insofar as this provided the time required to build
up confidence in the language, and also in allowing time to
develop a relationship with my Nicaraguan colleagues.
Moreover, this permitted me to remain sensitive to questions
related to the importation of "foreign expertise" and the
imposition of agendas from the outside.

Upon reflection (both my own and with my colleagues), I
would suggest that the development of a reasonably equitable
relationship between myself and the Nicaraguan personnel
with whom I was working had been established through this
research. This serendipitous circumstance I would relate to

this issue of language, first in terms of the question of confidence described above, as well as in allowing a familiarity and respect built upon knowing each others' vocabularies and means of expressing ourselves. A question which became exceedingly clear during this experience pertains to the difference between hearing and listening. Given the difference in backgrounds, language and general frames of reference, it was necessary for myself and my colleagues to emphasize the latter. The function of listening is often regarded as crucial in processes of recognizing our roles and in learning to respect the opinions and beliefs of others. Where this requires extra effort in the situation where a language difference exists, I would comment that these processes are furthered. Whether this is an opinion shared by my Nicaraguan colleagues is obviously a question. Yet, based on this experience, I feel comfortable making this observation, at the very least.

NOTES:

1. See for example, Carlos M. Vilas, "Troubles Everywhere: An Economic Perspective on the Sandinista Revolution", in Rose Spalding ed., The Political Economy of Revolutionary Nicaragua. Boston: Allen and Unwin, Inc., 1987; Oscar René Vargas, A Donde Va Nicaragua?: Perspectives de Una Revolución Latinoamericana. Managua: Ediciones Nicarao, 1991; Thomas W. Walker, ed., Nicaragua: The First Five Years. New York: Praeger, 1985.

2. This information has been compiled from various sources: "How Long Should the FSLN Shoulder the Government's Burden?" Envío. Vol. 11 (130) May, 1992; NITLAPAN Research Institute; IMF Survey. February 17, 1992; Plan de Desarrollo de la Coordinadora Regional Para el Desarrollo Social. Area de Trabajo Social, Universidad Centroamericana, Managua, Marzo, 1992.

3.   "A New National Accord: Another Pact Between Leaders",
      Envío.   Vol. 11 (130), May, 1992.   p. 35.

4.   RECOINSO: Red Cooperativa de Información Social.   Area de
      Trabajo Social, Universidad Centroamericana, Managua,
      Nicaragua, 1992.   pp. 10-11.

5.   Mariluz Morgan, "Memoria Sobre Enseñenza de la
      Sistematización en Escuelas de Trabajo Social", Seminario
      Latinoamericano de Trabajadores Sociales en la Actual
      Coyuntura, Noviembre, 1991, p. 5.

6.   Ana Isabel Espinoza, Martha Cecilia Palacios, Milagros
      Guerrero, Cefas Samuel Asensio, Jody Waters.   Estudio de
      Factibilidad de una Red Cooperativa de Información y Acción
      Social.   Area de Trabajo Social, Facultad de Ciencias
      Sociales, Universidad Centroamericana, Managua, Nicaragua,
      1991.

7.   Plan de Desarrollo de la Coordinadora Regional para el
      Desarrollo Social.   Area de Trabajo Social, Facultad de
      Ciencias Sociales, Universidad Centroamericana, Managua,
      Nicaragua, 1992.

V. Summary and Conclusions: Interpretation of the Process

To briefly summarize, this discussion has argued that the role of communication in development, when examined under the rubric of participatory action research, can be described as a <u>condition</u>. This assertion is advanced through a twofold review of theoretical foundations of PAR and development, as well as practical experience in development communications in a participatory context.

We have seen that, examined conceptually, PAR is an approach centred around a series of processes most fundamentally related to communications. This is clearly indicated in the sense that terms such as knowledge empowerment, interactive learning and cogenerative dialogue are ones often used to describe the process by which people investigate, come to know and act upon their reality. Further, the notion of dialogue helps us to locate some of the issues which relate the <u>doing</u> of PAR to questions regarding the general nature of research itself. Within PAR, for example, sharing viewpoints and experiences with others is a form of research, and one which often provides rich and far-reaching results. In another way, PAR collaborants make explicit their motivation and commitment to social change by engaging in forms of dialogue with others and uniting under the potential to effect meaningful processes of transformation.

Most importantly, we have seen that the notion of dialogue itself, while it seemingly guides much of the discussion of PAR, requires further elaboration. It is clear that this is an area for further research initiating a more comprehensive interchange between the PAR approach and the field of communications studies. This study has focused on how the theoretical constructs which help us to understand PAR and its practice can be generated from a systematic synthesis of theory and practical experience. It was suggested earlier that dialogue may be viewed as a reflexive communication process in the context of PAR in development. Essentially, this suggests that inquirers working in development settings attempt to feed new information, acquired through dialogue, into the inquiry process -- *as it is taking place*. Therefore, this discussion concludes with an examination of <u>where</u> precisely, this process can take place.

A number of theoretical and practical sites useful in the process of theory building emerged in the course of undertaking this particular research project. Through the process of this project, a view of dialogue has been developed which relates to three fundamental areas: its place within emerging views on development; its relevance to the approach to development postulated by PAR; and its role in the actual undertaking of a PAR project. It must be pointed out that this particular view, of communications as

a condition in development, did not take shape until the
practical component of the project was well underway.
Further, I do not suggest here that this is the only way to
view the role of communications in development. Nor do I
suggest that I have dealt comprehensively with the notion of
dialogue or with the various traditions of research in
communications studies which have examined it. Rather, my
intention here was to investigate whether real suggestions
for communications in development can be advanced by
interpretation and participation according to participatory
action research.

Before reviewing the implications for development
communications set out by the PAR approach, it is useful to
comment briefly on the process by which this interpretation
emerged. Specifically, I refer here to the process of
attempting to generate or discover theory from the ground
up. Pure theoretical analysis can lead to re-interpretation
or refining of theories and attempts to bring these to bear
in practice are useful in testing the relevance of these
theories. However the process which is afforded by the PAR
approach does not stop here. Rather, the generation of new
knowledge is fostered, which takes place through feeding
information generated by practice back into existing theory.
This process can be compared to the *Ganma* metaphor mentioned
earlier. If we view theory and practice as two separate
frameworks, and align them in a way in which a new framework

emerges, it is possible to describe this as building ground-up theory.

In the undertaking of this project, I have attempted to create a new framework. This framework can be seen to be specific to the reality within which it was derived, and in this sense reflects many of its characteristics. This is indicated through the emphasis placed on dialogue, as this notion guided the research, particularly in the practical undertaking of the project work. The presence or absence of dialogue in matters related to context in this initiative alerted us to the importance of theoretical constructs which take the concept of dialogue into account. Therefore, the theoretical framework generated here shares this concern. While the insights into development and communications here derive their nature from this specific reality and can be seen to be highly subjective, it is clear that this has helped us to identify a number of significant implications for the field in general.

The first theoretical aspect of dialogue rests in the overall process of social change which has come to guide views of Third World development. When we propose that social change may be effected utilizing learning as a starting point, then the initial setting for this learning must take place through dialogue. Earlier in this discussion, we saw how a more democratic, process-oriented view of development had come to replace the

growth/modernization paradigm.   Inherent in this view was
the suggestion that communities in the Third World be
permitted a voice in their own processes.   This
reconceptualization of development carried with it
significant implications for the role of communication.

One of these implications was the idea that reality can
be perceived and transformed via the process of exchange of
information among people. Within the notion of a democratic
exchange of information, there are a series of issues which
come to the forefront: the social structures within which
interaction takes place; the production and understanding of
meanings relative to context, (i.e. historical, political,
socio-economic and cultural); and the framework for the
bringing together of viewpoints towards the goal of reaching
of common objectives.   These issues are relevant to the
ideals proposed by figures such as Freire and Beltran when
they discuss social change rooted in a way of observing,
describing and understanding reality.   Yet more
fundamentally, the content of this interaction must be made
clear through communicating these issues in a way which is
pertinent to the particular reality.   If we recall Beltran's
point that dialogue is often highlighted, yet seldom
detailed, it is this content which helps us to detail it.

One of the most pertinent theoretical traditions which
helps to provide an account of the actual mechanism of
dialogue is found in the ideal speech situation described by

Habermas. Another is located in Gustavsen's tenet of democratic dialogue. Together, these ideas offer a more explicit description of the process which is defined as dialogue, and which here, serve as the starting point for social change. The criteria for a democratic dialogue involve, first, the validity claims of Habermas. These include the conditions of truth, veracity and normativity as assumptions held to by each participant in a communicative act. Second, are the conditions postulated by Gustavsen which allow for the possibilities inherent in the bringing together of a number of voices in a dialogue. These possibilities rest on: the relevance of previous experience, the potential for gaining a common understanding around a particular issue, the commitment to consideration of all points of view and the goal of reaching agreements leading to practice through interaction. These ideas are rooted in a view of social science which is interpretive, rather than technical. This is significant because it illustrates that, through achieving an ideal of praxis, social research can indeed play a part in social change.

Taken together, these views describe the motivations inherent in participating in a truly horizontal dialogue, as well as explain how the interpretive nature can help to foster social change. While figures such as Felstehausen and Freire initiated this discourse by proposing the function of communication in social change for development,

more careful examinations of dialogue within the communicative act itself, can ground this for us.

Examination of these ideas has further provided us with a discourse related to the function of social organization. This refers to the processes which promote collectivity by fostering open and equitable forms of communication. And this culminates in the production of a framework for inquiry that both reflects the reality and context within which the process is based, as well as guides further action. It is the mechanism of defining participants in an action-oriented dialogue, defining issues and objectives to be addressed, and actually addressing them, which comprises this social organization. This again, relies on the form of open, democratic communication described above. Insofar as it is necessary to come together and identify ourselves and our motivations for engaging in a PAR process, it is fundamental that these actions take place through dialogue. Therefore, theoretically, the content of dialogue is useful in explaining the social interaction process necessary for social change. And the context and the situation of engaging in this dialogue relates to the social organizing which much take place for these processes to emerge.

Moreover, we have seen that the differences between information and communication are crucial here, specifically as they are contingent on the dialogical aspects which make PAR a learning process. Theoretically, this issue has been

raised and addressed in the PAR literature. Yet, this idea was clarified much more effectively through the fieldwork experience. This was reflected in the key concepts identified as relevant in the case study: organizational transformation; collective learning/researching; mobilisation/democratisation of information; and *sistematización*. As we have seen, these concepts help provide some general inroads into the role of communication and information in development, particularly as they pertain to the objectives of the Nicaraguan network. But in the specific framework of this project, these issues, and specifically that of *sistematización* clearly make the case for the importance of the idea of dialogue in participatory development.

The concept of organizational transformation refers to a main objective of the project, and to the method we employed to undertake the research. While the network was proposed to be a means of linking information with potential information users, the method by which we, first, investigated who comprised these sectors and, second, characterized the information itself emerged through the dynamic of organizational transformation. Practically, this meant bringing together a number of diverse groups and organizations and addressing a problem. The organizational aspect of this lay in a process of uniting interests; and the transformative elements, in the production of a

collective viewpoint. By meeting with these groups and discussing the issues with them, we were able to generate working definitions and objectives which allowed a specific and pertinent process of research to take place.

Further, the incorporation of feedback and comments as the research evolved ensured that the process was a dynamic one. It is clear, therefore, that for this to have been effective, the interactional aspects of this process relied on a form of dialogue. Simply put, without engaging in dialogue, we would not have been able to collectively identify the criteria, objectives and methods of the research. Finally, the process can be said to have been transformative, given the way in which we modelled these elements to fit the reality.

Related to the above concept, was the second conceptual element of collective learning or researching. In this aspect, it became clear that while we acted to coordinate the project, all participants in the initiative, including ourselves, were actually co-researchers. The generation, analysis and subsequent application of data were processes developed through an ongoing interplay of views and opinions. As mentioned earlier, we were required to produce a definition of network derived from the Nicaraguan reality. Further, in this definition, it was necessary to incorporate components which would make it relevant and feasible upon implementation. Meeting these objectives made it necessary

for us to engage in a process of collective knowledge production. As described in the fieldwork section, much of this process took place through a cooperative form of gathering and analyzing information. The <u>research</u> aspect in PAR dictated this, because if action was to take place, information had to be obtained, analyzed and mobilized by bringing it into the production of a collective viewpoint. This again, rested upon a type of dialogue in which our interaction with other participants provided us the raw material comprising the research.

While we did not overtly describe it as such, the emerging definition of network as a process fits into the notion of a local theory. Again, this stemmed from our utilization of a cogenerative dialogue: we drew from the previous experiences of the participant groups, attempted to collectively reach understanding and utilized feedback and interaction to generate our action steps. Similarly, the learning process was shared and a new framework for action produced.

Given the emphasis on information in this project, the third concept of the mobilisation/democratisation of information was particularly salient. Learning requires accessing information, as well as contextualizing and re-conceptualizing it in ways which are relevant and specific to a given reality. In this particular initiative, the principal research questions dealt with this issue. Faced

with a surplus of information and a shortage of ways to make
it accessible, relevant and understandable, the key issues
identified in the field project by the Nicaraguan
participants were related to how to communicate with each
other. This was perceived as necessary in the mobilization
of this information in order to make it possible to
undertake the kind of research described by PAR and by the
final concept, of *sistematización*. By prioritizing the
issue, we attempted to generate an operational definition of
"network" as a series of processes related to the flow of
information. Practically, this required defining
alternative forms of information resources and ways of
exchanging these. And conceptually, this is related to the
attempt to define and implement ways of engaging
participants (here the social development and grassroots
sectors) in a type of dialogue.

The social processes which allow information to flow
and to be re-generated into future action are those which
are defined in PAR by dialogue. Similarly, this is the
method described in the concept of *sistematización*, which
was proposed as a general objective of the project.
Essentially the most fundamental goal of the research was to
find a way to systematically exchange and utilize
information which would inform future action in development
work. It was the interactional aspect that was the missing
link in this process. We learned from our research that

several of the basic elements existed in Nicaragua: an
abundance of information which was largely produced through
the practice of social development; technical
resources/infrastructure necessary for basic information
exchange; and a number of groups and organizations united
around this goal. Yet what was missing was a method of
learning from experience, through the utilization of this
information and research. Simply, the communication which
would allow this to happen was not taking place.

In the actual undertaking of the research, we learned
about the information-related context in Nicaragua: what
type of information existed, where it was housed, how it was
used, and where it came from. Further, we learned about the
potential for this same information to be useful in actual
development efforts. Most significantly, however, we
learned that the missing component was interaction or
processes of dialogue which would make this information
utilizable -- what might be referred to as the _social
infrastructure_. But in the process of doing this same
research, these processes were initiated, insofar as we
attempted to generate the process of data-collection and
analysis which formed the basis of the study through
interaction. By bringing these groups together and
attempting to collectively examine the issues, the research
sensitized them to the issues of information and
communication. Yet the social process of undertaking the

research in this way was the actual learning experience.

In this sense therefore, the research was an experiment in *sistematización*, or in PAR. We collectively produced a framework around the specific idea of a network; attempted to generate and incorporate feedback; and used these steps to guide further action. This can be seen for example, in the subsequent production of the more extensive project of the Regional Coordinator for Social Development. However it must be pointed out that this particular reading of the process of PAR emerged largely due to the most crucial problem faced by the social welfare and development sector in Nicaragua, which was the need for the development of collective and integrative initiatives. It is necessary therefore, to bear in mind that what is offered here is not a general, universal view of the PAR and communication in development in every setting. Rather this analysis of the project was developed in order to demonstrate its possible relevance to future examinations of communication in development.

The implications of the PAR framework in an overall view of development communications are important to consider. It has clearly been confirmed that the role of communications set out in approaches such as diffusion of innovations theory is no longer effective if we hold to a more democratic, process-oriented and locally-generated definition of development. We now know, for example, that

the mere existence of First World communication technologies in a Third World nation cannot independently promise development. Nor can the use of such technologies to broadcast developmental messages be counted on to propel a community into modernity. However, we have also learned that technologies <u>can</u> be useful -- relative to a specific context. Thus, the role for communications emphasized in this study is located in the process by which we come to apprehend this context. As we have seen, within PAR, this takes place through a relationship with the local community which is based on dialogue. In this way, it is obvious that further research into the communicative act itself, within PAR is needed. By doing so, we may be better equipped to re-draw the boundaries used to explain communications as a subset of development research and practice.

One main point made clear in this study in relation to development communications, is that the emerging literature relating PAR to the field has only shown us possible areas in which the two may be linked. Further inquiry, developed through practice, will clarify these ideas. Specifically, this will help provide us with a clearer view of the relevance of the various branches of communications studies as they pertain to development. From this study, we can conclude that two such areas are group interaction and inter-personal communication. The practice of development, as it is defined by PAR, can be seen to proceed according to

the collaborants' abilities and willingness to engage in both of these processes. Further, the PAR literature revolves around these ideas, given that the dynamic of learning is emphasized as an interactive mechanism.

Viewed in this sense then, development communications has clearly evolved from being a method of "causing" development, to a process within a series of changes. The most fundamental of these changes is rooted in the means by which people understand and act upon their reality. As this study has argued, this act of learning depends on various conditions related to social organization, the use of information/feedback, and the idea of democratic dialogue. In the approach to development generated by PAR, communicative processes are present at every turn. It is in this way that it is useful to describe communications as a condition in participatory development. Efforts to approach development projects through systematic analysis of social structure and context, as well as the actual insertion into a context itself, are two such issues which can only be enhanced by keeping this in mind. Moreover, the continued attention to communicational aspects within the processes which now come to define development via PAR will serve to enrich both theory and practice.

Finally, we have seen that, by electing to undertake PAR, with the purpose of effecting change, collaborants act upon an overt or covert commitment to social transformation.

Yet, to do so requires a form of participation, grounded specifically in entering into dialogue. This puts our own abilities to participate in interactional processes at the forefront, as we must voice our own commitment, as well as listen to others. As I have described in my own views regarding the undertaking of this experience, one cannot attempt to undertake research with others without a commitment to listening to and respecting other opinions and values. Further, the researcher must be willing to make clear her own motivations and expectations of the process and show how these fit in with those of the local community. This is perhaps the most tenuous, and the most important aspect of PAR: we cannot state a commitment to seeing social change, without taking part in the processes which effect it.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abbas, Qaisar (1988). "Development or Dependency?
     Theoretical Polemics of Development Communications
     and its Consequences for the Third World".
     Proceedings of the 16th Conference of the
     International Association for Mass Communication
     Research, Barcelona.

Aborampah, Osei-Mensha and Kwadwo Anokwa (1984).
     "Communication and Agricultural Development: Some
     Theoretical and Conceptual Considerations".
     Gazette.   45 (3).

Agunga, R. (1990).   "Development Support Communications and
     Popular Participation in Development Projects".
     Gazette. 45 (3).

"Another Pact Between Leaders?" (1992).   Envío.   11 (130).

Argyris, Chris and Donald A. Schon (1991).   "Participatory
     Action Research and Action Science Compared: A
     Commentary", in William Foote Whyte, ed.
     Participatory Action Research.   Newbury Park,
     California: Sage.

Atherton, Pauline (1978).   Manual Para Sistemas y Servicios
     de Información. Paris: UNESCO.

Baran, Paul (1957).   The Political Economy of Growth.   New
     York: Monthly Review Press.

------- and P. Sweezy (1966).   Monopoly Capital.   New York:
     Monthly Review Press.

Beltran R., Luis Ramiro (1976).   "Alien Promises, Objects
     and Methods in Latin American Communication
     Research", in Everett Rogers, ed., Communication
     and Development: Critical Perspectives.   Beverley
     Hills: Sage.

------ (1980).   "Farewell to Aristotle: 'Horizontal
     Communications'".   Communication 5.

Boafo, S. T. Kwame (1985).   "Utilizing Development
     Communication Strategies in African Studies in
     African Societies: A Critical Perspective.
     Development Communications in Africa", Gazette.
     35(2).

Bordenave, Juan Diaz (1976). "The Communication of
    Agricultural Innovation in Latin America", in
    Rogers, ed., Communication and Development:
    Critical Perspectives. Beverley Hills: Sage.

------ (1977). Communication and Rural Development. Paris:
    UNESCO.

Cardoso, F. H. (1970). Dependency and Development in Latin
    America. Berkeley: University of California
    Press.

Carmen, R.E.R.M. (1988). "Development Communication: The
    Search for a Participatory Paradigm", Community
    Development Journal. 24 (4).

Carr, Wilfred and Stephen Kemmis (1986). Becoming Critical:
    Education, Knowledge and Action Research. London:
    Deakin University Press.

Chein, Isidor, Stuart W. Cook and John Harding (1948). "The
    Field of Action Research", reprinted in Kemmis,
    ed., (1988) The Action Research Reader. Victoria:
    Deakin University Press.

de Roux, Gustavo I. (1991). "Together Against the Computer:
    PAR and the Struggle of Afro-Colombians for Public
    Service", in Fals Borda and Rahman, eds., Action
    and Knowledge: Breaking the Monopoly with
    Participatory Action Research. New York: The
    Apex Press.

Donohew, Lewis and Edward R. Springer (1977). "Information-
    Seeking versus Information Diffusion:
    Implications for the Change Agent of an
    Alternative Paradigm", Community Development
    Journal. 15 (3).

Dos Santos, Theotonio (1970). "The Structure of
    Dependency", American Economic Review. LX, May,
    1970.

Einsiedel, Edna F. (1992). "Action Research: Theoretical
    and Methodological Considerations for Development
    Communications". Presented to the International
    Association for Mass Communication Research, Sao
    Paulo, Brazil.

Elden, Max and Morten Levin (1991). "Cogenerative Learning:
    Bringing Participation into Action Research", in
    Whyte, ed. Participatory Research. Newbury Park,
    California: Sage.

Espinoza Z., Ana Isabel, Martha Cecilia Palacios, Milagros
     Guerrero L., Cefas Samuel Asensio F., Jody Waters
     (1991). Estudio de Factibilidad de Una Red
     Cooperativa de Información y Acción Social. Area
     de Trabajo Social, Facultad de Ciencias Sociales,
     Universidad Centroamericana, Managua, Nicaragua.

Fair, Jo Ellen (1989). "29 Years of Theory and Research on
     Media and Development: The Dominant Paradigm",
     Gazette. 44 (2).

Fals Borda, Orlando (1986). "Investigating Reality in order
     to Transform It: The Colombian Experience", in
     Kemmis, ed., The Action Research Reader.
     Victoria: Deakin University Press.

------ (1989). "Evolution and Convergences in Participatory
     Action Research". Calgary: The Division of
     International Development.

------ (1985) The Challenge of Social Change. London:
     Sage.

------ (1985) Knowledge and People's Power: Lessons With
     Peasants in Nicaragua, Mexico and Colombia. New
     Delhi: Indian Social Institute.

------ and Mohammad Anisur Rahman eds. (1991). Action and
     Knowledge: Breaking the Monopoly with
     Participatory Action Research. New York: The
     Apex Press.

Felstehausen, Herman (1973). "Conceptual Limits of
     Development Communication Theory". Sociologia
     Ruralis. XIII (1).

Fernandes, Walter and Rajesh Tandon, eds. (1981).
     Participatory Research and Evaluation:
     Experiences in Research as a Process of
     Liberation. New Delhi: Indian Social Institute.

Frank, Andre Gunder (1976). Capitalism and Underdevelopment
     in Latin America: Historical Studies of Chile and
     Brazil. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Freire, Paulo (1970). Pedagogy of the Oppressed. New York:
     Herder and Herder. Translated by Myra Bergman
     Ramos.

------ (1986). "Creating Alternative Research Methods: Learning to do by Doing it", in Kemmis, ed., _The Action Research Reader_. Victoria: Deakin University Press.

Gaventa, John (1991). "Toward a Knowledge Democracy: Viewpoints on Participatory Research in North America", in Fals Borda and Rahman, eds., _Action and Knowledge: Breaking the Monopoly with Participatory Action Research_. New York: The Apex Press.

Gibbons, Arnold (1985). _Information, Ideology and Communications: The New Nations' Perspectives on an Intellectual Revolution_. Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America.

Giddens, Anthony and Jonathon Turner (1989). _Social Theory Today_. Cambridge: Polity.

------ (1984). _The Constitution of Society_. Berkelely: University of California Press.

Gildart, Edith (1992). "Innovations for Participatory Research". Presented to the Annual Conference of the Canadian Communications Association, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island.

Glazer, B. and A. Strauss (1967). _The Discovery of Grounded Theory_. Chicago: Aldine Atherton.

Gómez Roledo, María Eugenia (1984). "El Papel de la Información en una Sociedad en Desarrollo". _Revista Interamericana de Bibliotecología_. 7 (1-2).

Gonzalez, Hernando (1989). "Interactivity and Feedback in Third World Development Campaigns", _Critical Studies in Mass Communication_. 6 (3).

Goulet, Denis (1971a). " 'Development' . . . Or Liberation?". _International Development Review_. XIII (3).

------ (1971b). _The Cruel Choice: A New Concept in the Theory of Development_. New York: Atheneum.

Habermas, Jurgen (1970) "Towards a Theory of Communicative Competence". _Inquiry_. 13.

------ (1971). _Knowledge and Human Interests_. Boston: Beacon Press. Translated by J. Shapiro.

------ (1979). <u>Communication and the Evolution of Society</u>.
        Boston: Beacon Press. Translated by T. McCarthy.

------ (1984). <u>Theory of Communicative Action: Vol. 1</u>
        <u>Reason and the Rationalization of Society</u>.
        Boston: Beacon Press. Translated by T. McCarthy.

Halleck Dee Dee (1985). "Nicaraguan Video: 'Live From the
        Revolution'". <u>Radical Science</u>. 16.

Hedebro, Goran (1982). <u>Communication and Social Change in</u>
        <u>Developing Nations: A Critical View</u>. Ames, Iowa:
        The Iowa State University Press.

Heritage, John C. (1989). "Ethnomethodology", in Giddens
        and Turner, eds., <u>Social Theory Today</u>. Cambridge:
        Polity Press.

Himmelstrand, Ulf (1982). "Innovative Processes in Social
        Change: Theory, Method and Social Practice", in
        T. Bottomore, S. Nowak and M. Sokolowka, eds.,
        <u>Sociology: State of the Art</u>. London: Sage.

Hornik, Robert (1984). "Communication as Complement to
        Development", in G. Gerbner and M. Siefert, eds.,
        <u>World Communications: A Handbook</u>. New York:
        Longman.

"How Long Should the FSLN Shoulder the Government's Burden?"
        (1992). <u>Envío</u>. 11 (13).

Hudson, Heather (1986). "Telecommunications for Rural
        Development". <u>Development</u>. Canadian
        International Development Agency, Spring-Summer,
        1986.

<u>IMF Survey, Feb. 17, 1992</u>. Managua: IMF.

Inayatullah (1967). "Toward a Non-western Model of
        Development", in W. Schramm and D. Lerner eds.,
        <u>Communication and Change in the Developing</u>
        <u>Countries</u>. Honolulu: East-West Centre.

Inkeles, A. and D. H. Smith (1974). <u>Individual Change in</u>
        <u>Six Developing Countries</u>. Cambridge: Harvard
        University Press.

Jacobson, Thomas (1985). "An Epistemological Shift in
        Development Communications Theory", in Dervin and
        Voight, eds., <u>Progress in Communication Sciences</u>.
        VI.

------ (1990). "Participatory Communication Research for the Social Sciences". Paper presented to the International Association of Mass Communication Research, Bled, Yugoslavia.

------ (1991) "A Pragmatist Account of Participatory Communication Research for National Development". Paper presented to the International Communication Association, Chicago.

Karim, Karim H. (1988). "Communication For Change". Development. Canadian International Development Agency, Summer-Autumn, 1988.

Korten, David C. (1989). "Social Science in the Service of Social Transformation", in Cynthia Veneracion, ed., A Decade of Process Documentation Research. Quezon City, Philippines: Institute of Philippine Culture.

Krevitt Eres, Beth and K. T. Birins Noerr (1985). "Access to Primary and Secondary Literature from Peripheral or Less Developed Countries". Journal of the American Society for Information Science. 36 (3).

Lapple-Wagenhals, Doris (1984). A New Development Model -- A New Communication Policy? On Communications In Nicaragua, Before and After July 19, 1979. Frankfurt: Peter Lang.

Latapí, Pablo (1988). "Participatory Research: A New Research Paradigm?". The Alberta Journal of Educational Research. 34 (3).

Lerner, Daniel (1958). The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East. New York: Free Press.

------ and Wilfrid Schramm, eds. (1967). Communication and Change in the Developing Countries. Honolulu: East-West Centre Press.

McAnany, E., ed. (1980). Communication in the Rural Third World. New York: Praeger.

McLelland, D. C. (1961). The Achieving Society. New York: Van Nostrand.

Morgan, Mariluz .(1991). "Memoria Sobre Enseñenza de la Sistematización en Escuelas de Trabajo Social",

Seminario Latinoamericano de Trabajadores Sociales en la Actual Coyuntura.

Mowlana, Hamid and Laurie Wilson (1990). The Passing of Modernity. New York: Longman.

Ndongko, Wilfred A. and Sunday O. Anyang (1981). "The Concept of 'Appropriate Technology': An Appraisal from the Third World". Monthly Review. 32 (9).

Ovitt, George A. (1989). "Appropriate Technology: Development and Social Change". Monthly Review. 40 (9).

Plan de Desarrollo de la Coordinadora Regional Para el Desarrollo Social. (1992). Area de Trabajo Social, Facultad de Ciencias Sociales, Universidad Centroamericana, Managua, Nicaragua, Marzo, 1992.

Rahman, Mohammad Anisur (1985). "The Theory and Practice of Participatory Action Research" in Orlando Fals Borda, ed., The Challenge of Social Change. London: Sage.

Rahnema, Majid (1990). "Participatory Action Research: The 'Last Temptation of Saint' Development". Alternatives. XV.

RECOINSO: Red Cooperativa de Información Social. Area de Trabajo Social, Facultad de Ciencias Sociales, Universidad Centroamericana, Managua, Nicaragua, 1992.

Robredo, Jaime, Tania Maria Botelho and Murilo B. de Cunha (1991). Resource Sharing and Information Networks. 6 (2).

Rogers, Everett M. (1976a). "New Perspectives in Communication and Development: Overview". Communication Research. 3 (2).

------ (1976b). "Communication and Development: The Passing of the Dominant Paradigm". Communication Research. 3 (2).

------ (1989) "Inquiry in Development Communication", in Molefi Kete Asante and William B. Gudykunst, Handbook of International and Intercultural Communication. Beverley Hills: Sage.

------ and F. Schoemaker (1973). Communication of Innovations. New York: Free Press.

Roling, Niels G., Joseph Ascroft and Fred W. A. Chege
(1976). "The Diffusion of Innovations and the
Issue of Equity in Rural Development", in Everett
Rogers, ed., Communication and Development:
Critical Perspectives. Beverley Hills: Sage.

Rostow, W. W. (1964). The Stages of Economic Growth. New
York: Cambridge University Press.

Roy, Prodipto, Frederick Waisanen and Everett Rogers (1969).
The Impact of Communication On Rural Development:
An Investigation in Costa Rica and India. Paris:
UNESCO.

Saint, Kishore (1981). "Liberative Communication for True
Participation", in Fernandes and Tandon, eds.,
Participatory Research and Evaluation:
Experiments in Research as a Process of
Liberation. New Delhi: Indian Social Institute.

Schiller Herbert I. (1969). Mass Communication and American
Empire. New York: Kelly Publishers.

Schramm, W. (1964). Mass Media and National Development.
The Role of Information in the Developing
Countries. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Servaes, Jan (1989). "Shifts in Development Communications
Theory: With a Brief Discussion of Its Policy and
Planning Consequences". Progress in Communication
Sciences. Vol. 9.

------ (1983). Communication and Development: Some
Theoretical Remarks. Leuven, Belgium: Acco.

Skinner, Quentin (1985). The Return of Grand Theory in the
Human Sciences. Cambridge: Cambridge University
Press.

Stevenson, Robert L. (1988). Communication, Development and
the Third World, New York: Longman.

Susman, Gerald I. (1983). "Action Research: A
Sociotechnical Systems Perspective", in Gareth
Morgan, ed. Beyond Method: Strategies for Social
Research. Beverley Hills: Sage.

Tandon, Rajesh and Walter Fernandes, ed. (1981).
Participatory Research and Evaluation.
Experiments in Research as a Process of
Liberation. New Delhi: Indian Social Institute.

Tehranian, Majid (1979). "Development Theory and Communication Policy: The Changing Paradigm", in M. Voight and G. Haneman eds., Progress in Communication Sciences. Vol. 1..

UNESCO (1986). Lineamientos de un Programa Regional Para el Fortalecimiento de la Cooperación Entre Redes y Sistemas Nacional de Información para el Desarrollo en América Latina y el Caribe. Santiago: UNESCO/PGI y CEPARL/CLADES.

United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (1979). Inquiry Into Participation -- A Research Approach. Geneva: Popular Participation Programme.

Universidad de Guayaquil (1988). Red Piloto de Información Universtaría: Documento Final. Guayaquil, Ecuador.

Vargas, Oscar René (1991). A Donde Va Nicaragua? Perspectives de una Revolución Latinoamericana. Managua: Ediciones Nicarao.

Varis, Tapio and Kaarle Nordenstreng (1973). Television Traffic: A One-way Street? Paris: UNESCO.

Veneracion, Cynthia (1989). A Decade of Process Documentation Research. Quezon City, Philippines: Institute of Philippine Culture.

Vilas, Carlos M. (1987). "Troubles Everywhere: An Economic Perspective on the Sandinista Revolution", in Rose Spalding, ed. The Political Economy of Revolutionary Nicaragua. Boston: Allen and Unwin, Inc.

Walker, Thomas W. ed. (1985). Nicaragua: The First Five Years. New York: Praeger.

Wallerstein, Immanuel (1974). The Modern World System: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World Economy in the 16th Century. New York: Academic Press.

Weeks, John (1986). "An Interpretation of the Central American Crisis". Latin American Research Review. XXI (3).

Appendix I: Participant Organizations

Ministry of Education
Ministry of Health
Nicaraguan Institute for Social Security and Welfare
(INSSBI)
National Institute of Census and Statistics (INEC)
Nicaraguan Institute of Social and Economic Research (INIES)
Institute of Nicaraguan Studies
Regional Coordinator of Economic and Social Research (CRIES)
Nicaraguan Institute of Human Promotion (INPHRU)
Friar Antonio Valdivieso Ecumenical Centre (CAV)
Centre for Education and Popular Communication (CANTERA)
Centre of Health Information and Support Services (CISAS)
Research Institute ITZTANI
Historical Institute - UCA
Department of Sociology - UCA
Faculty of Communications and Information Sciences - UCA
Centre of Research of the Atlantic Coast (CIDCA)
Centre for Pedagogical Studies - Universidad Nacional
Autonoma de Nicaragua (UNAN)
Centre for Health Research and Study (CIES)
The Nicaraguan Movimiento Comunal
UNESCO
UNICEF
Pan-American Health Organization
CENZONTLE (Centre for research and participation in
            sectors of women, workers, family and the
            community)
Dos Generaciones (NGO working in issues related to children
            and youth)
Puntos de Encuentro (Research and support in women's
            problems)