THE FUNCTIONS OF MASS MEDIA IN INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE
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Introduction

The cheapest way, by far, to get a message to millions of people is through the mass media. The press, periodicals, radio, television, and motion pictures send hundreds of billions of pieces of information to billions of people every year at pennies per message per person. Some billions of these messages provide information about foreign countries: news events in them, their policies, their culture, and their way of life. No other channel of international exchange begins to compare in the outpouring of facts it provides about the foreign world to people everywhere. In volume of information carried and in economy per exposure the mass media are the first source of international information.

Exposure, however, is not the same as effectiveness. By tests of effectiveness the mass media are sometimes first, sometimes not. We shall review below some of the limitations as well as some of the strengths of the mass media for international exchange. In some respects travel, face-to-face communications, or educational exchange are superior to or complement the mass media.

Whatever their limitations, the mass media have made a massive contribution to the making of the modern world. Their contribution via the exchange of information to producing an ever more common world culture is what we consider in the present paper.
I. The Attraction of the Mass Media

An eternal question in the social sciences is the identification of behaviors that are universal to the human animal and ones that are culturally determined. There is a third intermediate category of behaviors: those to which the human animal is predisposed whenever cultural opportunities make them available. For example it is culture which provides the learned and highly formalized conventions of poetic structure but there is something universal in their appeal. Rhythmic, patterned, conventional style seems to gratify human beings throughout the world, though the culture defines the conventions that are used to provide this gratification.

The mass media and their characteristic contents belong to this third category. Their existence is certainly not universal. For hundreds of thousands of years man lived on the face of the earth without them. They are an invention. Yet wherever they have been introduced they have spread with such speed and assumed such uniform patterns of form and content that it is hard to escape the conclusion that they are fulfilling universal human needs.

One fact of relevance is that in developing nations the growth of the mass media is almost everywhere much more rapid than the growth of the economy as a whole. Research on this point is currently underway by Messrs. Howard Rosenthal and Whitney Thompson at M.I.T. Mr. Rosenthal has examined data from 60 countries and has established that as development gets underway, the rate of introduction of radio and other such media tends to be more rapid than the rate of introduction of typical want-satisfying commodities. Mr. Thompson has made an intensive study of mass media growth in India and has again found that the growth rate is substantially above that of the
There are, of course, ceilings to media growth though the ceilings tend to be extraordinarily high. In a number of countries newspaper reading has become substantially universal and will increase now only with growth of population. In a few countries the growth of radio has reached a similar constraint. But the ceilings are high. In 1960 there were 88 radio sets per 100 people in the United States of America and the number is still growing slowly. Newsprint consumption in North America ran to 36 kilograms per person per year, or between three and four times the rate even for Western Europe and is also still growing.

One consequence of differential growth rate and of ceiling effects for international communications has been noted by Karl Deutsch. He has observed that by relative criteria, the growth of mass media generally makes communication systems more national rather than international.* Each medium tends to start out in its early development as an elite medium and is used in less developed countries to a large extent under the sponsorship of persons and interests from the more developed countries. At that stage the medium is used relatively extensively for international communication. As the medium grows both domestic and international communications increase, but domestic ones more rapidly than international. For example in the last century international mails were a larger proportion of total mail volume than they are today. The rise in the flood of domestic business and personal correspondence has far exceeded the simultaneous rise in international letter-writing.

The same trend is observable in citations in scientific journals. When

there were relatively few such journals, material was drawn freely from scientific work done in all parts of the world. As the volume of scientific publication has multiplied, each country has tended to establish its own journals in its own language. Reference to material in foreign languages as a proportion of the whole therefore declines.

Foreign travel is still in the explosive portion of the exponential growth curve. In this stage it is growing much more rapidly than domestic travel. While that international flow will continue to grow there will ultimately be ceiling effects to which electronic communications will contribute. When a man can sit at his desk and talk cheaply and conveniently by telephone or with closed circuit TV to friends and colleagues in any part of the world he will have less incentive to travel. Already elite individuals in all countries have reached the ceiling of efficient use of travel. They are abroad, away from home and office more than they would like to be. But nowhere is this yet a general population phenomenon. The explosion of the growth curve is therefore likely to continue for a long time to come. However, sooner or later improved means of communication will make it possible for people to stay home more rather than go away more. Deutsch's observation suggests that mass media growth is likely to result in more information becoming available through the media from both foreign and domestic sources, but at a faster growth rate for the latter than for the former.

The mass media are in perpetual revolution. Technological innovation changes them at ever accelerating rates. From the invention of the printing press in the 15th Century to the invention of the telegraph in the 19th there occurred a great mass media revolution. Journalism was born and with

*See article by in this volume.*
it the drive to universal literacy. Then the telegraph made a second revolution by abolishing distance and making the whole world instantaneously aware of major events. The radio and television revolution which brought entertainment into the home followed with increased rapidity. We already see close ahead new revolutions brought by satellite communication, machine translation, and magnetic tape for recording of sound and pictures.

In the short run these innovations are expensive and therefore may seem of interest primarily to the highly developed countries. But in fact these revolutionary developments may ultimately provide much cheaper communication to facilitate the job of modernization. Radio is already in many areas an economical short-cut in the establishment of educational facilities. The 350 million additional sets that a recent UNESCO study has suggested are needed to provide each family with a receiver become a conceivable goal under the kinds of plans discussed by UNESCO and ITU conferences for mass production of low-cost receivers. To a degree this is happening spontaneously with the rapid diffusion of transistor sets. It could happen to a greater degree.* There seems little reason to doubt that the universalization of the mass media will continue, whatever the problems developing countries may have in achieving general growth. The spread of mass media will probably proceed at increasing rates.

Their spread reflects the fact that while the mass media are culturally specific to modern society, they satisfy universal needs.

Mass media fulfill many different functions. Wilbur Schramm has summarized six essential functions which the means of communication perform

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in the process of development."

1) Communications contribute to the feeling of nation-ness.

"In the process of economic development the news becomes national news.... The radio and a few newspapers must carry the news and viewpoint of the nation, and they must come into the village."

2) Communication is the voice of national planning.

The media disseminate agreed-upon goals and facts about means to achieve them.

3) Communications teach skills.

4) Communications extend the effective market.

Something as simple as daily price quotations help create modern societies.

5) Communications help prepare people to play their new parts.

They present "the national heroes who are to be emulated," and they permit people to see how modern life is lived.

6) Communications prepare a people to play their role as a nation among nations.

"...the media are required to report on the rest of the world..."

The mass media serve further functions for persons living in the anomic conditions of modern life. They provide a pseudo-community.** The women's page, the obituaries, the human interest stories about movie stars, the advice on weather and styles, popular fiction, all serve as substitutes for market place gossip. The stock quotations, the reports on government edicts and party resolutions, the want-ads, all help those with responsibilities to conduct their social roles.

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And on top of all of these useful functions the entertainment contents of the media have an appeal which cannot be rivaled. Wherever in the world we look we find 60 or 70 percent of the people who have a modern entertainment medium such as TV or radio available to them turning it on on normal days. In media saturated societies one-eighth to one-quarter of all waking hours are devoted to them.*

The attraction of movies, TV and radio is well nigh universal. They generate substantially similar patterns of behavior wherever they become available, unless the law interferes. The most popular content of mass media music and drama are remarkably similar from country to country. Popular songs the world over gradually approximate to a common tenor. Traditional musical scales and modes compromise with jazz to provide a singable melody with lyrics of melancholy, passion and young love.

Those who deplore these pervasive modes of popular expression often blame the mass media for them. But the question can legitimately be raised whether the mass media are the cause of the introduction of popular kitch or whether the spread of the mass media is not rather the effect of the universal appeal of these modes of entertainment and expression.

Common accusations hold the mass media responsible for: 1) a decline in the quality of culture; 2) immorality; 3) the introduction of alien values and 4) instability in the social order.

The cultural level of the mass media is indeed often below that of

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elite media that existed with limited circulation in pre-democratic traditional societies. The theatre that played to the few was often better than movies that now play to the many. The imperial language newspapers that circulated among business and governmental elite in colonial countries may have been journalistically superior to the popular indigenous language papers that now reach ordinary people. The carefully written word of the scribe in the high form of a language avoided the vulgarity of the everyday language of the street; radio must compromise if it is to be understood. But it does not follow that culture is deteriorating. Sophisticated media continue to exist. They disappear from focus only because they are surrounded by a vast new flow of communications addressed to elements of the population who in the past had only conversation and balladry as vehicles for their unsophisticated tastes. Is the comic book usually worse than the stories told by illiterates in the market place or is the only change that the stories are now committed to writing? As mass media diffuse, the average cultural level of published matter may go down, but not necessarily by any reduction in the amount of good material appearing. Even more tenuous are the issues raised by the supposed moral consequences of mass media diffusion. To adherents of traditional values the mere fact of change is evidence of decay. Changes in moral values undoubtedly do occur in the processes of urbanization, modernization, and growth. But which of these changes do the media reflect and which do they cause?

One thing they undoubtedly do cause is the diffusion of international knowledge and cosmopolitan values. Viewed by critics, that constitutes the spread of foreign culture and a challenge to national ways. But if the media are to be the voice of international understanding must they not at the same
time introduce alien ideas? Are these not two faces of a coin?

In similar fashion we may ask if the statement that the mass media are destabilizing is not simply the statement that they are agents of change. The changes that mass media engender are changes in knowledge and desire --the revolution of rising expectations. Perhaps, as is sometimes argued, the media are less effective in producing changes which satisfy these desires. But it may also be argued that desires are the engines for change of any sort.

It would be sophistry to claim to know for certain how much change for good or evil the massive diffusion of new and alien knowledge by the mass media engenders. While paleomacists often make their accusations and claims with confidence, the scholar must confess that validated research has not yet provided firm estimates of media effects. We do not have good measures of the effectiveness of advertising, political campaigning, or of technical information programs, for example. But our knowledge is growing. Existing research does tell us some things about the potential of the mass media and what they can contribute to international exchange. Below we shall consider some of the potentials and limitations of the mass media as instruments of international exchange. First let us consider their positive values. What do we know that they can well achieve?

II. Contributions of the Mass Media to International Exchange

One thing that is perfectly clear is that there is no cheaper way to achieve large numbers of exposures to any message than via the mass media. The lowest cost per exposure is achieved by the largest circulation media. If one is concerned only with how many people will hear a message, one should put it in the most popular newspapers or on radio in the hours of maximum listening or on TV in the middle of the evening. In some countries of very low media development it is still true that there is not a truly mass audience for any single medium. There are countries where not newspaper achieves more than a few thousand readers and where radios are scarce. But wherever the media have already established themselves the audience size pattern has followed the usual social law that a few are very big and many are small. The economy of diffusion that is achieved through the massive audiences of the popular media provides a unique opportunity for whoever can be on that platform, whether he be an advertiser, an educator, or an entertainer.

But sheer number of exposures is neither the only nor the best criterion of effectiveness. One may reach people who pay no attention. One may reach people in no position to act. One may reach people who do not identify with the speaker. For many purposes, if through a specialized medium one reaches a few people who care, that may be more effective. So that as it may, one must record the extraordinary cheapness of mass diffusion of messages.

Let us consider some of the main contributions to international exchange which have been plausibly claimed for the mass media. We may list these under culture, science, and peace.

Substantial experience supports the notion that the mass media can serve to diffuse higher cultural values within and between countries. Even
if the more common assertion that mass media debase high culture has some truth, it may also be true that the final effect is the reverse. A prime example is the growth of interest in good music, thanks to the radio and phonograph. The first effect was a burst of low grade popular music. Tin pan alley became a worldwide giant business. In a few short years the film song became known to the millions as radio and records diffused it. But wherever these media have existed for a substantial period of time a second effect has become conspicuous. A new clientele has been created for good music. The second wave of record sales is in the classics. Persons who never had a chance to hear good music before developed the habit. The generation of children who grew up with a symphony orchestra at their beck and call in their homes acquired in many instances an appreciation of music that in a pre-mass media society would have been denied them.

This suggests an important caution for discussion of the cultural effects of the mass media both domestically and in international exchange. The mathematics of these consequences are complicated. A number of processes are simultaneously in operation. The net effect cannot be assessed by looking at one of them alone. Let us postulate four propositions:

1) the development of the mass media increases the audience for cultural products of all levels of quality;
2) it increases it differentially bringing into the effective audience a larger number of people of lower than of higher taste;
3) it raises the cultural level of most individuals;
4) it particularly affects the culture of young people in their formative years so that generational shifts in taste are superimposed on individual shifts.

The point can perhaps be illustrated by a diagram that may be typical of
what happens when the mass media enter a country. At time one ($t_1$) the total effective audience for a cultural medium is smaller than at time two ($t_2$). At $t_1$, however, the mode of distribution of taste may be higher than at $t_2$. But note also that in this process of change from ($t_1$) to ($t_2$), each individual is apt to have grown in cultural maturity. The increased numbers at lower levels of taste are new members of the audience drawn in by the availability of the medium.

If this is a valid description of what has happened (and it often, though clearly not always, is) then no single simple statement about the effects of the mass media on culture can catch the truth.

Mass media are a major means for the world wide diffusion not only of culture, but also of scientific and technological knowledge at the popular level. The graphic media are particularly effective for this purpose. Pictures whether in print or electronically delivered, enable people to grasp a condition of nature or the operation of a device in a way that words seldom can. It has been noted often that movies in developing countries, whatever their effect on values, have even more effect in showing people the facts and uses of modern physical objects.

Along with contributions to world culture and world science, perhaps the most significant contribution of international exchange through the mass media is in providing some preconditions for the maintenance of world peace. Once again the relationship is not simple. When international issues reflect genuine conflicts of interest, understanding (i.e., clear knowledge of the issue) may exacerbate rather than relieve tensions. Yet for all the hard-headed disenchanted observations that may be made about the looseness of the coupling between international exchange and international
peace, there is good reason to believe that a coupling exists.

As in the case of culture, the distinction between long range and immediate effect needs to be made. The immediate effect of mass media in diffusing information about international problems may occasionally be to intensify conflict by stirring up public affect. But the quick effects of the mass media in driving people to current decisions are small compared to their slow, long run effects in creating an image of the world into which current events fit. In the long run the dominant effect of the mass media regarding the outside world is simply to make it more knowable and thus more nearly one.

The homogenizing effects of the mass media in the modern world are already dramatic and with forthcoming technological changes will be even more so.

Certainly familiarity does not eliminate conflict. But the greatest danger in the world today arises from a kind of conflict that no rational person wants. Under those circumstances improved capability to communicate and to appreciate the issues that are causing conflicts can only be helpful. Improved knowledge can make people who want conflict more efficient, just as it can make people who want to avoid conflict more efficient. It seems fair to assume today that no government or people wants to permit conflict to go as far as modern weapons will permit. The diffusion of information may help establish awareness of this consensus.

Let us consider the ways in which the presence of mass media affect international relations:

1) They provide people all over the world with identification of what foreign events to consider "important".
2) The provide people all over the world with awareness of threats and opportunities that affect them.

3) They provide people all over the world with images and facts that enable them to visualize and understand processes happening elsewhere.

4) They therefore provide people all over the world with the opportunity to know of the existence outside their own communities of other individuals with whom they can identify positively or negatively. They complicate the image of "we" and "they" by creating remote identifications.

5) They provide leading strata all over the world with either their major source of current information or with a major source of information to supplement diplomatic correspondence, etc.

6) They provide leading strata all over the world with material that can be taken to represent the viewpoint of other nationalities and political groupings since the mass media from the other side are readily available. The press is usually the first and main indicator used to assess foreign public opinion.

7) They provide a major input for intelligence analysis. Foreign affairs specialists comb the world press carefully.

8) The existence of national press agencies speeds reportage from foreign countries to the leading strata. Much of what the agencies transmit does not enter the mass media but still gets circulated in bulletins to high officials.

9) The existence of a corps of foreign correspondents provides a major complement to the diplomatic corps. Also stationed abroad, they have however a different perspective and readier access to some kinds of information in the countries where they are posted.

10) The corps of foreign correspondents is also a training ground for
for international experts who may later be in governmental or other positions.

11) If the press and other mass media are free they serve as interest groups fighting the tendency of governments to monopolize the flow of international news for national purposes. Governments, aware of their need to live with a free press, may hesitate to embark upon manipulative adventures which might otherwise seem attractive.

12) The media provide shared topics for conversation among the public, some of these topics being international.

13) The propensity of the mass media to report events as dramatic conflicts, most often of good versus evil, conditions perceptions of them into that form.

14) The presence of a mass media system tends toward elimination of dialects and towards unification of languages and thus towards national unity.

At least a couple of these effects—the incentive to national unity and to reporting of foreign events in conflict terms, may tend to make a peaceful conduct of international relations more difficult. Most of the effects, however, contribute to a growing world unity of which we see the distinct but only early beginnings in our lifetime. Note, for example, a relatively trivial illustration, the role of foreign correspondents in creating an internationally educated cadre. They are not a numerous group but in a few newly developing nations which have not had the opportunity to develop a diplomatic service in the past, journalism served as a substitute path of training before independence.

One of the most significant effects on the list is the first—the identification to people of what is important. Note that we do not list as one of the main effects of the mass media the creation of international
attitudes. It seems unlikely that the news in the press significantly changes basic values except when operating in tandem with other forces but the press does play a key role in determining peoples' focus of attention. Thus when the press uses banner headlines to report foreign riots or civil war, it gives to these events their accepted significance though it does not create peoples' attitude toward violence. The press can define what issue is the issue. When that has happened national prestige, pride and popular confidence in the effectiveness of the various regimes involved all come to be at stake in that issue.

Probably the most important consequence of the growth of the mass media in new countries today is to create in the minds of billions of people an awareness of what modern life is. The mass media provide pictures of buildings, cars, streets; the movies show life in comfortable apartments; the radio tells of medical care and scientific discoveries. In the words of Daniel Lerner, the mass media create a capacity for empathy with life in other cultures which distinguishes the modern man from the man whose orbit is the traditional village.* A traditional villager knows only those things familiar to the people he speaks to. The new city dweller with a radio and newspaper may, if poor, have little more in personal experience than the villager but knows what exists in the world, and what he is missing. Lerner has documented his thesis by reference to the kinds of answers which traditional, transitional, and modern men give to interviewers. When a man is asked what he would do if he were in a remote policy making situation (a ruler), the traditional man is apt to refuse to answer, denying that he can conceive the eventuality. The modern man imbued by the mass media with a

*Daniel Lerner and Lucille W. Pevsner, The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East, (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press), 1958.
variety of images has no hesitation in putting himself in this role and answering in categories that he has learned from the news.

The process of world unification of attitudes, values and perspectives that we have been describing is only just the beginning. There are those who deplore it and argue that it implies a uniform mediocrity. There clearly are values in the diversity of cultures. But for good or evil it seems clear that geographic differentiation will be decreased in a mass media dominated world though differences will by no means disappear. There are wide differences between individuals and groups today even within single regions.

A great many factors are operating to accelerate the trend by which life in all parts of the globe begins to acquire more of the same elements. Some of these factors have nothing to do with the mass media but only with the convenience of such devices as the automobile, or electricity. The mass media play their part too and with the advance of technology will do so increasingly. We should note particularly a few current trends in the mass media. One of these is the growth of international media and media services. We are beginning to see the circulation of a few international newspapers. The rapid train and the airplane, along with the telegraph and teletype made possible the spread of national newspapers at the expense of purely local ones. In a few countries the local newspaper still dominates the scene but in most countries newspaper circulation is nationwide and increasingly so. Now we are beginning to see the international newspaper or magazine. These are found at both ends of the culture spectrum. Some of them are read internationally because they represent the best available treatment of news in their fields or because they represent the best statement of a particular viewpoint of world
importance. Others of them, like comic books, become international because they meet world-wide human cravings.

The international press service is another unifying element in the mass media. The whole world becomes aware of what any one of the major press services choose to treat as a major event. Competition makes the other press services follow suit.

Eurovision and Intervision are a foretaste of the same trend toward international identity of content in the electronic media. Even now taped television shows sold from country to country, are giving television the internationally similar character that the movies already have. Satellite television relays will contribute further to the trend.

In this connection one must also mention the great importance of international radio in those instances where countries have sought to impose censorship to keep certain news from their publics. During the last war, for example, international broadcasting was the major mode of communications to occupied countries and today to many countries that are not independent it continues to serve the same role. Research in such countries generally reveals a majority of all radio receiver owners to be regular listeners to foreign radio. In countries without news censorship, on the other hand, only a tiny minority of the public bothers to tune to foreign stations. They are satisfied with the foreign news in their domestic sources. But where these sources are distrusted listening to foreign radio becomes widespread and to a large degree defeats attempts at censorship today.
III. Limitations on International Exchange via the Mass Media

We have described the slow evolution of an ever more unified world and the contribution which the mass media are making to that. The picture, however, is not one-sided. Here and there we have noted counter-tendencies. We note now in some more detail some factors which inhibit the effectiveness of the mass media as agents of dissemination.

Some of these factors—the most obvious ones—are conscious policies by which the mass media are misused either to divide people from each other or to prevent their gaining access to information. Other factors are simply inherent limitations in the technology of the mass media or in their social character. We consider first the conscious limitations or perversions.

Among these we note the obvious examples of jamming of international radio, censorship, restrictions on visas and travel by foreign correspondents, and restrictive tariffs on communication equipment and supplies.

Freedom of speech, freedom of the press, the right to knowledge, are by now recognized principles of the international community of nations. After the International Declaration of Human Rights and the various resolutions of UNESCO and other international organizations, it can no longer be argued that it is purely a matter of national policy whether or not the citizenry of a country is give the means whereby to inform itself. This right is conceded. The issues now concern only implementation and what constitutes abuse of the right. This is not the place to review these controversies. Suffice it to note how far we have progressed when the principle of the right to know is internationally recognized. For example the jamming of broadcasts from abroad was formally condemned in 1950 by the General Assembly of the United Nations as a "denial of the rights of all"
persons to be fully informed concerning news, opinions and ideas, regardless of frontiers."

Artificial limitations on the unifying role of the mass media will presumably wane with time under the pressure of world opinion and of that very international unity of viewpoint which the mass media themselves promote. Less tractable perhaps are the inherent limitations in the technology and social structure of the mass media. Among the obvious limitations are those of distance, language, low consumer interest in foreign affairs, underdevelopment, inadequate journalist training, and finally the limited impact of impersonal communication.

1) Distance is a decreasingly significant limitation on mass media, though one by no means trivial. The economic one-day circulation range of newspapers, the line-of-sight transmission limit of television, or the cost of international cables and of long range travel by correspondents, are all factors of significance. But satellite communication systems promise to shrink many of these obstacles. Basically it costs no more to talk from ground to a satellite to the ground one hundred miles away than it costs to talk from ground to a satellite to ground five-thousand miles away. There are many problems still to be solved before it will cost no more to reach audiences around the world than it does to reach audiences in the next county, but that event is predictable.

2) Language is a barrier which technology alone will not overcome. Machine translation will certainly help but it will take the educational process of generations before language barriers cease to be a significant source of disunity. There is no implication that people who speak different languages need be hostile. There are many countries where they

*General Assembly Resolution 424 (V)
live in friendship side-by-side, loyal to a single national entity. But
where language lines correspond to other social lines they reinforce schism
and make it harder to achieve integration.

3) Another social restraint to international exchange via the mass
media is the basic preference of the audience for learning about things
close to home. The studies of the International Press Institute* have
documented how grossly inadequate much international reporting is. News-
papers typically devote only a small percentage of space to world affairs.
What is even more disturbing is that that small percentage of space is of-
ten greater than the interest of the customers would justify. In numerous
countries (but not in all) studies have shown that the foreign news re-
ceives the smallest total readership. The inclusion of foreign news often
reflects not the demand of the reader, but the moral conviction of the
editor as to his duty. It sometimes also reflects his dependence upon
foreign press services. If editors were guided solely by the current
interest of their audience there would probably be less foreign news
then there is today in most newspapers.

Exceptions can be noted where censorship restricts such news below
even the prevailing interest level. In those countries where readers
want and read foreign news more than domestic, the explanation is usually
either that the mass media have not yet diffused to the general population
and are still used primarily by a cosmopolitan elite, or because the coun-
try is under severe deprivation. Except under such circumstances the
audience for foreign news is poor. There is nothing unnatural in the fact
that people prefer to read about that which they understand and that the

foreign news is hard to understand. That is perhaps the definition of for-
eign. The foreign is that which is not part of one's own experience.

Indeed not only do the studies show low attention to foreign news, but
the IPI studies demonstrate a natural tendency for what foreign news does
appear to be in some ways more domestic than foreign. Each country is in-
terested in the attitude of foreign countries towards it. The foreign news
tends to consist not so much of balanced reporting of the political and
social issues that are agitating a foreign country that concern the country
where the report will appear. How have "our" sports-teams been received
abroad, what is the response to "our" policies, what visitors from "our"
country are in the country on which report is being made. Such items are
foreign news only in a limited sense, but they are the ones which get pub-
lished most and which get read most. The prism of biased interest is hard
to overcome.

4) Underdevelopment is another major barrier to international exchange
via the mass media. It is one we have already discussed extensively. The
villager in most of the world may be unable to read a newspaper, may have no
access to a radio, may never have seen a television in his life. UNESCO
has taken a lead in drawing attention to this issue and to setting minimum
standards of adequate media diffusion.

5) Partly associated with underdevelopment but also a problem in other
countries of the world are inadequacies of journalist training. Too often
journalists are themselves provincial and limited men without the cosmo-
politan view and world experience that could enable the media to well fulfill
their functions in international exchange.

6) Finally, attention should be given to the findings of a number of
sociological studies on the relationship between mass media and word of
mouth communication. These two kinds of message channel have quite different effects which can be mutually reinforcing. Among the immediate effects of exposure to a communication we must distinguish what it does to: 1) attention, 2) saliency, 3) information, 4) skills, 5) taste, 6) images, 7) attitudes, 8) actions. Changes in any one of these may in turn change each of the others. Changes in one's actions may change one's attitudes, just as changes in one's attitudes may change one's actions; changes in the information one has may change one's distribution of attention, or changes in what one attends to may change one's information. Yet it is possible analytically to distinguish these kinds of changes and to consider the differences in the conditions that lead to each kind of change. Both experimental and survey research suggests that the mass media operate very directly upon attention, information, taste, and images. They operate much less effectively on attitudes and least effectively on actions. Television studies for example have shown that TV has relatively little direct effect on major attitudes but it does develop taste (good or bad) and provides much image material to stock the mind of the viewer.* Studies by Harold Isaacs and others, of image formation support the notion that scratches on the mind picked up casually from the most diverse sources including literature, movies and other mass media, can have a life-long effect in how people perceive persons from other countries and other cultures.**

The effect which media have on images is also the effect on which Lerner


built his theory: empathic capacity is the ability to imagine a situation. Such effects the media produce directly.

Changes in skills and attitudes are less apt to be brought about by the mass media alone. Face-to-face relations with a human being toward whom the learner has considerable cathexis may be essential for producing changes in those variables. Lightly held attitudes may be moulded by mass media alone but not deeply entrenched ones. Deep attitudes will stand up under any media barrage. It takes the kind of personal relationship which exists in psychotherapy or in teaching to produce a significant conversion.

Finally we turn to action. That is least often produced by the mass media alone. The media may guide a person who already wants a bar of soap to pick one brand off the shelve rather than another but they rarely lead him to adopt a new pattern of cleanliness. Before a man takes such actions, he wants to confirm his plan with persons close to him whose judgment he respects. The media may instill an idea for action but it is only when face-to-face conversation supports the impulse that the action is likely to take place. This point has been well documented in numerous UNESCO studies of viewer and listener groups and of the diffusion of agricultural information.* In control situations where broadcasts were listened to by individuals in usual fashion, the radio programs had virtually no effect in producing adoption of improved practices. Where, however, listening groups were organized and discussion of the programs took place immediately after, the suggestions were often followed.

The mass media are, in short, only part of the total communication system. Before change can take place they must be coupled with organized activity. But to recognize this limitation on the mass media is not to minimize for a moment their great role in international exchange. The production of specifications is a short-run goal. The main purposes of international exchange are the diffusion of knowledge, images, and understanding. To all of these objectives the mass media contribute directly and massively.