

21 Cultural Imperialism and Cultural Identity

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Just as cultural studies and political economy are two approaches to media studies that often seem to be pulling in opposite directions, so too, international communication frequently seems to be off on its own. This chapter offers important insights into the way culture and communication operate internationally, not just within the space of one country. In doing so, it brings together the approaches of international communication, political economy, and cultural studies.

The first reality that demands attention is that this planet's history since about 1500 is marked by the way certain countries—such as Spain, Britain, France, Russia, the United States, and Japan—have invaded and dominated other nations in pursuit of profit and power. Other empires have done the same, but not on the unprecedented scale of these countries. That is the core of today's international relations (see Hamelink, Chapter 17).

In turn, a significant part of those international relations consists of cultural and communication relations. Some critical researchers have argued that the national cultures of the Third World are virtually on the way to extinction as a result of Western, especially U.S., cultural imperialism, with media influence at the cutting edge of the process. Others have attacked this view as overly conspiratorial, as though the Western countries were plotting to sabotage the independence of these

nations, and have stressed that cheap TV series from the United States, for example, may be the only way an impoverished nation can fill its television schedules. They also accuse the critics of being too snobbish in their tastes, noting that many U.S. television series are enormously popular outside as well as inside the United States.

Mohammadi seeks to move beyond these generalized positions to identify both the influence of Western culture and the birth of its counterpart, cultural resistance and the communication of cultural identity. He does so by examining Iran. Throughout the decade of the 1980s, as Stebbins-Mohammadi shows in Chapter 25, Iran was portrayed in U.S. media as an enemy nation, as was the United States in Iranian media. In the decades before that, ironically, the governments and media of both nations were extremely positive about each other. These stereotypes have left many Americans confused and bitter, with no understanding of the seemingly sudden switch in Iranian attitudes from 1979.

Mohammadi explains the effect on Iranians of many decades of systematic Western cultural influence, a process actively supported by the shah's government up until 1979. In turn, he underlines the active cultural resistance this process provoked among many Iranians. He also analyzes the colossal impact of alternative media in developing this cultural resistance, while at the same time acknowledging how for some groups this resistance fused with religious fundamentalism, which tragically left Iranians in general subjected to the obscurantist version of Islamic belief of the Khomeini regime. This outcome was specific to Iran, but in other ways Iran serves as a very clear case study for the cultural dynamics in many other Third World nations.

International Powers and National Cultures: An Uneven Contest

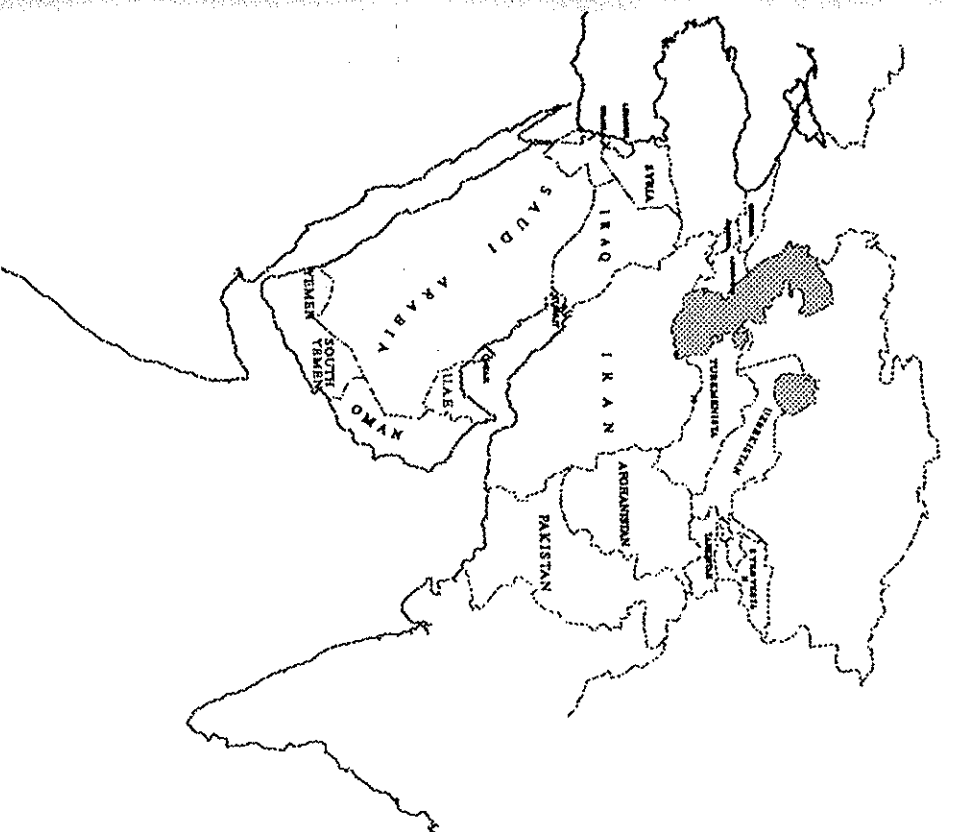
One description of the world we live in is "postimperialist." Much of world history from 1945 has centered on the struggles of subjugated peoples to extricate themselves from the European empires of the nineteenth century and to create the newly independent nations of Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. But despite the demise of political imperialism, the economic dominance of the West has meant that many nations of the Third World find themselves still tied in very

complex ways to the dynamics of Western industrial societies. Hence these Third World nations find it very difficult to pursue their own definitions of, and paths to, independent development. These new ties are different from the older ties of imperialism. The new kinds of ties are often referred to as ties of *dependency*, and "cultural imperialism" has been analyzed as one major form of dependency. The purpose of this chapter is to analyze this new cultural imperialism and to show the vitally important role that communications technologies and flows of cultural products have in keeping planetary ties of dependency alive. This process will be illustrated through a detailed examination of one Third World country, Iran. Although at the turn of the twentieth century the British and the Russians competed for influence in Iran, and the United States played a major role in Iranian affairs, helping to reinstate the shah in 1953, Iran was never directly colonized. Iran tried very deliberately to use communications for a particular development strategy, one strongly supported by the West, but found that the costs were greater than the benefits. This is a case study with powerful implications for other Third World nations and for mainstream—noncritical—communications analysis.

What Is Imperialism?

The essence of imperialism is domination by one nation over another. That relationship might be direct or indirect, and might be based on a mixture of military, political, and economic controls. There have been many different forms of imperial relations throughout world history, from the Greek and Roman empires to the Persian, Moghul, Chinese, Ottoman, and many others. But the forms of empire that have had the greatest impact on our contemporary world are the European, American, and Japanese forms of empire that prevailed through the nineteenth century into the twentieth century. Even European domination went through various stages. There were relationships that were more purely economic or "mercantilist," as in the early Portuguese empire, where the European power essentially extracted the resources it required, whether gold or ivory or slaves, from the dominated territory. Often such relations required military conquest at the outset and a continued military presence to enforce the economic exploitation.

By the end of the nineteenth century, a new form of relation had been developed that was based on the formal conquest, annexation,



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and administration of territories by the imperial powers. As Hobsbawm (1989) summarizes the process:

Between 1880 and 1914 . . . most of the world outside Europe and the Americas was formally partitioned into territories under the formal rule or informal political domination of one or the other of a handful of states: mainly Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, the USA and Japan. (p. 57)

About one-quarter of the globe's land surface was distributed or redistributed among a half dozen states, ushering in the age of imperialism based on colonial rule. This form of direct political and administrative domination helped to create a truly planetary capitalist economy in which economic transactions and flows of goods, capital, and people now penetrated into the most remote regions. The world was fundamentally divided into strong and weak, advanced and backward areas (Hobsbawm, 1989).

There were many different reactions to and consequences of imperialism, both within the "mother" power, such as movements for democracy, for socialism, and for women's rights, and also within the Third World, where revolution—as in Mexico between 1910 and 1920 or in China toward the end of the nineteenth century—or growing anticolonial movements for liberation—as in India—began to develop. Since 1945, the "postwar world" has been defined by these struggles against imperial domination and the success of independence movements in the creation of "new," independent political nations in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. Thus, for example, India freed itself from the British in 1947, Indonesia liberated itself from the Dutch in 1960, Zaire was freed from Belgian domination in 1960, and Algeria became independent from the French in 1962 (Harris, 1987).

This process of political independence might appear to be the end of the story, but in fact it is only the start of a new global dynamic that we might label the process of *cultural imperialism* or *cultural dependency*. When the colonial powers packed their bags and removed their nationals from administrative positions directly running the government and the economy, that was not the end of their influence. Often they left behind a European language, as the "lingua franca" of the country's new governing classes. They left behind European values and attitudes, including religion, ways of organizing public life, styles of politics, forms of education, and professional training, clothing styles, and many other cultural habits, none of which had existed prior to colonial domination. All of these phenomena continued to have effects long after the formal, direct, political rule of the colonies was ended, and have created a new kind of model of domination called *neocolonialism*. In turn, neocolonialism has sparked new kinds of struggles to eradicate this enduring cultural influence in the Third World. Let us look at the constitution of this Third World and then examine how cultural issues came to be such a central focus in current international politics.

Where Is the Third World?

The term *Third World* is also a phenomenon of the divisions in the world since World War II. The United States and the Soviet Union were allies against Fascism during the war, but immediately after its conclusion the realignment of "democratic countries" versus "communist countries" took place. Then the Cold War, which is still in a process of thawing, divided the world into two camps, the First World and the Second World, each of which had its own sphere of economic relations, political influence, and military arrangements (NATO versus Warsaw Pact). Rivalry and competition between the two superpowers have brought the whole world to the edge of war on certain occasions, as in the 1950-1953 Korean War, the 1962 Cuban missile crisis, and the 1973 Arab-Israeli war.

Third World is a label applied to the new independent countries of the South, many of which are among the *nonaligned* nations, countries that were not interested in supporting either of the superpowers in their regional or international conflicts. The nonaligned movement was started at a huge international convention of the nations of the South in Bandung, Indonesia, in 1955 and is a formal organization of independent nation-states. *Third World* is a much looser term, and actually covers over a great deal of difference in levels of economic development and political outlooks among the nations of the South. With the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991, the Second World has disappeared, and with the rise of the rapidly developing countries of Southeast Asia, for example, some have seen the growth of a "fourth world." With the increasing globalization of markets, technology, and information, the end of the twentieth century may witness the emergence of new, more regional alliances, such as the economic groupings of the EEC, NAFTA, and ASEAN. Thus our terminology is currently in some confusion. However, *Third World* for now remains a useful shorthand, and we will continue to use it here (Harris, 1987).

Cultural Identity in the Third World

It was the independence movements in the developing world that made many people aware of the cultural dimensions of colonial domination. Many leaders in the Third World have paid serious and

continuing attention to the issue of cultural freedom. For example, one of Gandhi's major concerns while he led India's independence movement was how to create an independent national identity that could unite the Indian people, who were scattered over 750,000 villages and spoke many different languages. Concerned about how to foster national unity in the face of the legacy of British cultural domination, Gandhi once proclaimed:

I do not want my house to be walled on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the culture of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible but I refuse to be blown off my feet by any one of them. (quoted in Hamelink, 1983, p. 26)

In a major echo of Gandhi's concern, at a key 1973 meeting of the heads of states of the nonaligned nations there was a formal joint declaration that the activities of imperialism were not limited to the economic and political domains, but encompassed social and cultural areas as well, imposing a foreign ideological domination on the peoples of the developing world. Many Third World nations were becoming aware of the superiority of the advanced world, in communications technologies but also in communications software, the news, entertainment, and other cultural products that the technologies transmitted, and that, as a result, their own national cultures and identities had become threatened (Harris, 1987).

It is not very hard to recognize that the continuance of Western dominance over Third World nations, even after their formal independence, was based partly on advanced technologies, including communication technologies. But it was also based on an ideology, accepted in many parts of the Third World, that there was only one path to economic development, which was to emulate the process of development of Western industrial capitalist societies.

In the 1960s, when certain Third World nations did not appear to be developing economically as fast as they had been expected to, Western analysts began to develop models and theories of development and to explain the "blockages" to development that they thought prevented Third World countries from developing like Western ones. One of their arguments was that Third World countries lacked investment capital, so the World Bank was established. Some argued that Third World countries lacked skilled entrepreneurs and professionals,

so various educational scholarships, exchanges, and training programs were established to bring the necessary expertise to developing countries. But one of the most powerful models, widely adopted in Third World societies, dealt with the role of communications in development, as propounded by U.S. theorists Daniel Lerner and Wilbur Schramm (see, e.g., their chapters in Pye, 1963).

Modernization Theory: Development as Westernization

"Modernization" theory held that underdeveloped nations had not yet experienced an industrial revolution, but through proper savings and investment a "takeoff" into industrial growth could take place. For this investment process to work, the right attitudes were very important, for the right attitudes to develop, there needed to be the same mix of political and economic structures that had worked in Western industrialization. Prominent among these structures were said to be mass media (Mohammadi, 1976).

In the early 1950s, Daniel Lerner conducted a study in various Middle Eastern countries, including Turkey, Lebanon, and Iran. He argued that the growth of literacy and the operation of electronic media both played decisive roles in the modernization process. The media were multipliers of the "mobile personality," a frame of mind that was no longer mired in village traditions but was open to new influences and insights—even, without specifying the matter, to U.S. influences and perspectives. He recommended a basic minimum media infrastructure for all developing countries. Media would convey the appropriate contents to promote economic consumption and political participation among hitherto static and traditionalist peoples in supposedly stagnant and disconnected rural communities (Lerner, 1958).

The changes in attitudes, expectations, and values proposed would create a welcoming rather than a suspicious response to U.S. and other Western encroachments on traditional cultures. Investment in development, including communications infrastructure, would have to include external as well as internal sources, and that investment required the right kind of political and cultural climate, with a welcoming government, welcoming businessmen, and congenial cultural forms.

What was valuable in the traditional culture was defined, effectively, as anything that did not impede the growth of Western capitalist endeavors; what had to change culturally was anything that interfered with this process. Clearly, Lerner never defined the issue as cultural imperialism sabotaging cultural identity. For him, mass media were automatically progressive. We, however, have to stand back from his policy-oriented studies and face that very question.

To begin to draw attention to some of these issues, it is instructive to examine a major Middle Eastern nation at the heart of the U.S. and Western oil-related strategy in the region, namely, Iran. Despite or perhaps even because of its contentious relations with the United States since 1979, Iran particularly merits study—not least because Lerner's theories were put into practice there in a more thorough way than perhaps in any other Third World nation, as part and parcel of the last shah's strategy of pro-Western modernization. Iran is also an instructive case study because it was never directly colonized, so an examination of the impact of Western culture in Iran shows vividly how neocolonial subordination and cultural inferiority can be fostered from a distance, without the elaborate machinery of colonial rule.

The Case of Iran

Iran is located on the southern border of Central Asia and stretches south to the Persian Gulf. It borders Turkey to the northwest and Afghanistan and Pakistan to the east. In 1994 it had a population of more than 60 million. From a geopolitical viewpoint, the strategic location of Iran between East and West is very crucial. Iran's political system up to 1979 was monarchical dictatorship, but then 2,500 years of kingship were terminated by the Iranian revolution under the leadership of the Ayatollah Khomeini (see also Sreberny-Mohammadi, Chapter 25).

MEDIA AND DEVELOPMENT IN IRAN

Through a close look at the process of development in Iran we can see a clear pattern of dependent economic development that was centrally based on the export of crude oil and raw materials, with expansion linked to foreign investment. This economic dependence

provided the basis for political and military dependence in both technological and human expertise. In the 1970s businessmen from all over the world waited in Tehran hotels to clinch multimillion-dollar deals of all kinds. Slowly, too, the media in Iran tried to convince people of the benefits of modernity and created new needs that consumer durables could satisfy.

Prior to World War II, Iran did not have a national broadcasting system. Iran's first radio transmitter went on the air in 1940. Radio programs were limited to evening broadcasts that consisted of the national anthem, major messages from government, news, and some Persian and Western music. In the early days of radio, loudspeakers and radio receivers were hooked up in various parts of Tehran, the capital, and people were very excited by this unprecedented form of communication. When the national anthem was played, people would rise and stand still. This was one of the first modern symbols of Iranian nationhood, broadcast over electronic media imported from the advanced world. Slowly, radio was used to maintain political control, to spread the ideological rhetoric of modernization, and to prepare Iranians for the neocolonial relationship that would strengthen after World War II.

In 1959, the last shah of Iran was persuaded by an imaginative urban entrepreneur to allow the establishment of commercial television. The entrepreneur was the son of a rich businessman whose wealth was based on importing Pepsi Cola from the United States. This first television station was allowed to operate tax free for five years while it developed commercial television and promoted the expansion of a consumer market, as in the United States. The family who controlled the television monopoly also controlled the importation of most television receivers, possessing the franchise for RCA products in Iran.

Television became a multiplier of Western and consumption values. These were overtly displayed in advertisements for new consumer products and were also embedded in the depiction of Western lifestyles carried by American films and television series such as *I Love Lucy* and *Bonanza*. Private television supported the monarchy's strategy of capitalist development. After some studies were undertaken, and worried that the Baha'i religious sect was monopolizing television, the shah decided to take over private television and transform it into a government-financed and -operated service. In 1966 National Iranian

Television started broadcasting (its first message was from the shah, of course), and among the first test week's programming was the broadcast of the shah's birthday celebration. Soon radio was amalgamated with television to create National Iranian Radio and Television (NIRT). Consumerism was still encouraged through advertising, but, more important, NIRT tried to foster support for the regime through the glorification of the monarchy and support for modernization, maintaining the state ideology. Every royal activity was broadcast, and the glorious history of 2,500 years of Persian monarchy was celebrated wherever possible, but the media also propagated the idea that the shah's major concern was to modernize Iran along the lines of the countries of Western Europe; television nightly news began with images of dams and new buildings, the physical symbols of development.

Radio and television were given substantial government budgets, so that coverage expanded rapidly. From 2 television transmitters in 1966, the number rose to 88 by 1974, and coverage increased from 2.1 million people to 15 million of both urban and rural populations, more than half the country; radio coverage was almost universal (Mohammadi, 1976). By the mid-1970s, NIRT had become the second-largest broadcasting network in Asia, after NHK of Japan. Thus most of the nation was connected through broadcasting, linking small villages with major urban centers and creating a novel national audience.

Yet, at the same time, literacy levels remained low, particularly for women, and there were not enough primary schools to accommodate all children of school age. Publishing and the press were strictly censored, so there was little choice among the dull daily newspapers, which thus had very low circulations. One commentator noted that "if Iran continues on its present path, it will be the first nation in the world to have nationally spread television before a nationally spread press." Thus Iran seemed to leap over the stage of literacy and print development, moving almost directly from a traditional oral culture to an electronic one.

Even a brief glance at Iranian mass media in the mid-1970s would have indicated that the broadcast or published materials were not designed to preserve national culture or to raise the level of public education. Rather, they promoted the alluring manifestations of Western culture, with little consideration of the urgent needs and demands of Iranian society; they did little more than amuse and entertain their audience. One international study made in 1975 revealed that of 11

developing countries studied, NIRT had one of the highest levels of imported television programming, including Western feature films—78% of all television content—and broadcast the lowest proportion of serious programs—only 22% of total broadcast time. Typical imported programs were *Baretta*, *Star Trek*, *Marcus Welby, MD*, *Tarzan*, and the soap opera *Days of Our Lives*. When homemade programs were aired they became extremely popular, but much domestic programming was rather anemic because of actual and self-censorship. The prevailing policy seemed to disregard the cultural implications of importing so much Western media content, which carried Western lifestyles, gender roles, consumption values, and so on. And whereas, for many developing countries, the economic argument that it is much cheaper to buy foreign programming than to produce your own had some justification, NIRT's large budgets did not support such an argument. It seemed to be safer for the regime to allow a lot of Western entertainment to be imported than allow possibly critical homemade programs to appear (Motamed-Nejad, 1976).

The rapid expansion of broadcasting was a central element of the shah's ambitious development project, as he tried to use the communications media to help bring about the change from a traditional to a modern society. But it failed because the modernization process did not go far enough; indeed, the strategy has been described as "pseudo-modernization," a desire for the superficial style of modernity without the deeper structural changes that true development requires. For example, the government, through the mass media, talked about modernization but failed to provide adequate and coherent national health care or education. It spent millions in developing NIRT, but failed to electrify large areas, so many rural people ran their televisions and lighting from small portable generators. It talked about improving working conditions, but would not allow labor unions to operate. It established many universities, but would not allow the free exchange of ideas or free access to written materials. Iranian writers, artists, and broadcasters all had to fit in with the prevailing rhetoric of modernization, and no criticism was allowed. The security system of SAVAK (the shah's secret police) was waiting for any oppositional voices to be raised. Severe political repression thus blocked popular participation and discussion of social needs, the heart of political development.

Those in the educated middle class felt frustrated about the lack of political participation and the lack of cultural freedom, which allowed

importation of American television but blocked the production of good, critical, indigenous programs. They felt frustrated as the political concerns of the state interfered in the legal system, the educational system, and the broadcasting system, undermining professional practices and independence. They felt the pinch of rampant inflation in the 1970s, with house and car prices rocketing, and watched as foreign "experts" were favored over Iranians with comparable skills.

The traditional middle classes, particularly the bazaar merchants and the clergy, were threatened by this Westernized mode of development. The economic position of the bazaaris was being undermined by large multinational corporations and agribusiness, and the social authority of the clergy was threatened by secular education and the media. They were also horrified at the effects Western values were having on the fabric of Iranian society. For example, the system of dating and marriage shown in the imported Western programming was totally in contradiction with the Islamic tradition of marriage, in which parents play a very significant role in selecting a suitable spouse and dating of any sort without the presence of a relative is not allowed. Khomeini had been speaking out since the 1940s about the negative impact of Western values, and warned that the media were propaganda vehicles for Western imperialists who were trying to undermine Iran. Some religious authorities publicly denounced watching television, and others declared that having a television was a sinful act. The city of Qum, which is the equivalent of the Vatican for Iranian Shi'ite Muslims, actually banned television during the shah's reign.

From 1976, helped by Jimmy Carter's human rights policy, both the secular opposition and the religious opposition began to use a variety of small media to voice their objections to the regime. Professional groups such as lawyers and writers wrote "open letters" to the shah, demanding an end to regime intervention in the process of law and greater freedom of expression. The religious opposition also began to mobilize, and developed a communications system quite independent from the big media of the state to politicize the people. The leaders used the national network of mosques and bazaars to preach their Islamic identity against the dependent Westernization of the shah. When Khomeini left his isolated place of exile in a small village in Iraq for the outskirts of Paris in 1977, he became the focus of much Western media attention. Also, the religious network transmitted his speeches across the international telephone lines to Tehran, and

within hours thousands of audiocassettes of his voice were available on the streets of the capital and were carried to other cities and villages for all to hear—a new international electronic pulpit. In a still very oral culture, where the clergy have great social authority and are used to addressing ordinary people at the mosques, this was very powerful (Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi, 1994).

A popular movement against the shah began to grow, and when demonstrators were killed through regime violence, the Islamic mourning pattern of the seventh and fortieth days gave the demonstrations a religious rhythm. Gradually, political groups—communist, socialist, nationalist, democratic—banned by the regime resurfaced and countless photocopied leaflets began to circulate, setting out analyses, making political demands, organizing demonstrations. Thus certain small media, particularly audiocassettes and leaflets, were used very effectively in the Iranian popular mobilization, another example of alternative media use described by Downing in Chapter 14. These small media are interesting because they are so easily reproduced, making it extremely difficult for any regime to block their circulation. When the military tried to maintain order and took over NIRT in November 1978, the personnel went on strike, so for three months radio and television were run by the military while the professionals produced underground newspapers debunking the regime news.

Thus a combination of religious authority and small media mobilized some of the largest demonstrations in recent history, bringing together modern and traditional groups united in hostility to the pattern of Westernized development of the shah, combining a mixture of economic discontents, political frustrations, and cultural concerns into a single slogan, "Down with the shah." In January 1979, the shah left "on holiday," never to return, and in February, the Ayatollah Khomeini established the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Conclusion

The communication and development model failed to understand the historically different cultural contexts of Third World societies, as applied to Iran, it served to bring the West into Iranian living rooms and allowed Iranians to compare themselves with Westerners, exacerbating existing economic, political, and cultural frustrations. The

model failed to pay attention to political development or less quantifiable aspirations such as equality, justice, freedom, identity, and even happiness. In the context of Iran, the communications and development process seemed to suggest that Western patterns of life and attitudes were the only ones of value, to be imitated by Iranians, and that indigenous Iranian culture had little to offer. The process created not only great gaps of wealth between urban elites and the rural poor but also a deep sense of cultural inferiority, which the clergy effectively used to mobilize people against the regime.

Frantz Fanon (1967) presents a vivid image of the effects of Western cultural products on the people of the Third World:

Young people have at their disposition leisure occupations designed for the youth of capitalist countries: detective novels, penny-in-the-slot machines, sexy photographs, pornographic literature, films banned to those under sixteen, and above all alcohol. In the West the family circle, the effects of education and the relatively high standard of living of the working classes provide a more or less efficient protection against the harmful action of these pastimes. But in an African country, where mental development is uneven, where the violent collision of two worlds has considerably shaken old traditions and thrown the universe of the perceptions out of focus, the impressionability and sensibility of the young Africans are at the mercy of the various assaults made upon them by the very nature of Western culture. (pp. 157-158)

Although written about a different cultural context, these words could also be applied to Iran. The development strategy in Iran was undermining the very basis of cultural identity and the traditional values of Iranian society. The rapid change from small-scale self-sufficiency to commodity production for the markets, the neglect of channels for political participation, and the blocking of self-expression and indigenous cultural development undermined the harmony and tranquility of cultural life. The process of development, by definition, upsets the pattern of life that went before, but in the West that process went hand in hand with the basic values and cultural patterns of those societies. In Iran, as in much of the developing world, development was replaced by a mimetic Westernization, a copying of the superficial elements of the modern West without the fundamental political and social changes required. Economic dependency, as in the spread of montage industries, which merely assemble consumer technologies developed elsewhere (thus not helping an independent economic sector to grow), was supported by cultural

dependency, in which mass media broadcast news and cultural entertainment programs more attuned to the markets of industrial nations or regime needs than the cultural habits of the Iranian people.

Iran is a unique example of a Third World country that implemented the communication and development model to accelerate the process of modernization, and the model failed dramatically. Communications can help people find new norms and harmony in a period of transition, but in the Iranian case, the effect was totally the reverse.

The Iranian experience makes us question the powerful media/powerful effects model of communication. The shah could control all the media, but he could not produce political legitimacy. And Iranians could watch a lot of American programming and still prefer their own values. Thus both the communications and development model—which suggested that media could play such an important, positive, role in economic and political development—and the cultural imperialism model—which said that media were carriers of Western values that would swamp Third World cultures—are too one-dimensional, as the Iranian movement has shown.

The rhetoric of revolution included slogans against Westernization, consumerism, and the idea of self-determination, expressed in the slogan of "Not East, nor West, only Islam." The tragedy of Iran is that although cultural identity may be an important appeal against the forces of Westernization, it alone does not guarantee broader progressive social values such as freedom and justice, which were fundamental demands of the popular movement. Also, many felt that their religious identity was their cultural identity, not anticipating the rigid fundamentalism that ensued; currently, many Iranians are concerned that their traditional Iranian culture and its music and dance are being suppressed. Many have been killed or imprisoned, and many others have left Iran. The Islamic Republic has thus bitterly disappointed many hopes, and has inherited many of the old problems that the shah did not solve. Analyzing the global context in which Iranian modernization and then popular resistance took place helps to explain the deep dilemmas of political, economic, and cultural development that confront Third World nations.

Further Questions

1. What is it that is attractive to many Third World viewers about U.S. television programs and films? How is it that the frequent

violence in such media does not necessarily seem to give the United States a negative and unattractive image?

2. How might television help to preserve and reenergize cultural traditions? Are cultural traditions always worth preserving? How would you judge?

3. How do you evaluate the rapid growth in television exports from some Third World nations, especially Mexican and Brazilian *telenovelas* (soap operas), or the longer-established export of Indian films? How would you compare their impacts on cultural identity with the impact of U.S. media exports?

Questioning the Media

A CRITICAL INTRODUCTION

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