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RESEARCH IN INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION

Many studies have made us aware that attention to a
communication or persuasion by it is greater when the
audience is favorably predisposed to the symbols used
ot to the message contained or to the source. Much of
the most effective communication therefore tends to occur
within the confines of the in-group. International
comminication, in contrast, is communication among out-
groups and ones that are often mutually rejecting. The
message comes from a source which may be regarded as
hostile or at best alien.

Any sensible analysis of patterns of communications
response must take full account of this variable of positive
or negative identification of the audience with the commu-
nication. At one extreme is the pattern of the rally or
the pep talk where only the converted come to hear ritual-
istic re-enforcing messages. The advertiser tries to ap-
proximate this situation by asserting that his product
meets the audiences felt needs and by putting the ad
in media which provide extraneous pleasures to the audience.
He avoids any distentiation of himself as source from the
audience. The newspaper man is less bound by the formula

of giving the audience what it wants to hear and he con-
ceives his function as that of tellling the readers what
other people think and are doing, i.e. he assumes some
distance between audience and message source. Yet the
newspaper strives to achieve audience identification
with it by meeting its needs for relaxing absorbtion.
Furthermore in its sports columns, comics, and human in-
terest stories it gives the reader vicarious familiar con-
tact with characters with whom they identify. The paper
is thus on the whole a medium with which its reader iden-
tifies closely.

Only students of psychological warfare have systemati-
cally concerned themselves with the problem of communicating
to a hostile audience. Stated over-simply, their most gen-
eral conclusion has been that these communications are in-
effective until demoralization has created some mutual
goals for the propagandist and the enemy troops. There
has been some discussion in the literature of propaganda of
a terrorizing character which does not depend upon an iden-
tification between the source and the audience, but rela-
tively little. The bulk of the literature on that terroriz-
ing situation concerns totalitarian propaganda, brain-
washing and concentration camps.

The extreme situations of terroristic propaganda on
the one hand and communication within tightly-knit small
groups on the other are relatively rare. Most communication

processes operate within complex sets of positive and
negative identifications. International communication is
an example of such a complex situation, which in the
broadest sense is communication between out-groups.
However, insofar as it is not simply terrorization by one
government of another people, it involves cross-cutting
and conflict-producing identifications.

In its first year of activity the research program in
international communication at the Center for International
Studies, M.I.T., has focused much of its attention on two
related variables which peculiarly affect communication
among out-groups. These are the identification patterns
regarding the in and out-groups among whom the communication
is taking place and the phenomenon which Cooley called the
imaginary interlocutor.

The imaginary interlocutor is a member of a prospective
audience, to whom the member of the actually present audience
thinks of himself as communicating. He may think of himself
as passing on the information he is receiving and of his
being approved for doing so. In that case he has an incentive
to attend and retain the information. On the other hand, he
may think of himself as being censured for hearing or believing
such messages as those he is hearing, in which case he may
feel anxiety and perhaps suppress recollection or understanding.
There are many other possible phastasy relationships with the
imaginary interlocutor, such as causing him surprise, imagin-
ing the interlocutor in one's own position, and imagining

how the interlocutor would react in the same situation, etc.

Whatever the nature of the phantasy, it is important to note that there is a population of imaginary characters whose attitudes are consciously or unconsciously brought to bear upon the recipient to a communication. Just as the demography of the population in magazine fiction or the movies differs drastically from the population of the real world, so does this population of imaginary interlocutors. For a study of international communication, it is important to take account of its national as well as social composition.

One of the foci of the M.I.T. Studies has been to compare the responses to international communications of persons with a narrow, provincial frame of identifications and persons with a broader, or super-national one. To illustrate this point, let me refer to some of the results of our studies. We have done a study of American business communications around reciprocal trade. We have also done studies in the Middle East, Indonesia, and are beginning one in India on differences between Western-influenced and narrowly traditionalist types. In our interviews with businessmen we have found one of the striking differences between protectionists and anti-protectionists, holding economic interest constant, to be in the scope of their frame of identifications. To put it most banally, the protectionists are, as could be expected, somewhat narrow nationalists, whereas the anti-protectionists are more internationally

oriented, but the results go further than that. The protectionists are not only more narrowly nationalist, they are also more apt to frame their responses within the context of a particular town, region, or industry. On the other hand, a considerable number of those individuals in the business community who became crusaders for freer trade did so after an experience of travel abroad, which left them with a vague and often not fully clarified sense of urgency about world economic and political stability. In short, the man who while listening to a debate upon tariff policy has a manufacturer down the street figuratively perched on his shoulder is more apt to wind up with a protectionist conclusion than the businessman who listens to the debate with an anxious European perched on his.

The Middle Eastern studies at M.I.T. which are now being prepared for publication by Daniel Lerner have similarly shown that one of the most important single differentiating factors in communications behavior was the ability of a respondent to project himself beyond his narrow environment. Isolated villagers tended to reject such a question as, "Where would you like to live if you could not live in Turkey?" or, "What would you do if you were head of a radio station?" Educated urban characters, of course, responded to such questions much more readily. Though it is significant how far projectivity is systematically related to urbanism, stature, education, etc., what was striking was that even holding such social structural variables constant, the variable of

projectivity indexed by responses to such questions proved one of the most predictive of all regarding communications behavior as well as other conventional sociological varia-bles.

Starting from such field results we have recently in-augurated a more carefully controlled and partly experimental program on the mechanism of the unseen interlocutor. We have in some pre-tests taken general attitudinal questions into the field and then after receiving the responses to them, have asked the respondent what individuals came into their mind in the course of answering the question. Most res-pondents are able to identify some individuals of whom they had just thought. There are striking class differences in the replies. We also found striking differences in the frequency of approving and critical imaginary interlocutors. Academic types of persons seem to be particularly prone to carrying critics around on their shoulders and to engaging in unspoken polemics with them. We are not yet ready to say anything about the amount of anxiety which may accompany the situation.

In the actual history of the project we arrived at this order of problem first by considering the differences be-tween the behavior of tourists and other abroad from the behavior they would engage in at home. For the tourist who

can make a scene of himself on the streets of Paris, the
population physically around him is probably not a signi-
ficant part of the mental population which controls him.
His reference group during his stay abroad may be the folks
from his home town. They are the reference group with
which he identifies. In typical authoritarian fashion
he makes a sharp in-group, out-group differentiation.

It cannot be assumed, however, that everyone who
makes this dichotomy identifies positively with his in-
group and rejects the out-group. Some of the researches
carried on at M.I.T. by Howard Perlmutter have shown that
there is a xenophilic type of person who, like the xenophobe,
dichotomizes in and out-group relationships, but who tends
to reject his own in-group and to glorify the out-group. To
our surprise, we found there to be a positive correlation
between xenophilia, as measured by an attitude scale, and
authoritarianism, just as previous studies have shown a
correlation between ethnocentrism and authoritarianism.
These results obtained with groups of students in the United
States are now being replicated in Montreal, France, and
India. What they suggest is that a strong identification
with things foreign may often represent not simply a broad
scope of identification, but rather a rejection of the indi-
vidual's own group and culture. If this is so, then the
foreign out-group may tend to be a projective screen rather
than a realisitically imagined set of reference individuals.
The foreign country would tend to be viewed as a Utopia,

and first-hand experience with it would be disillusioning.
A better adjustment would be made by persons with a less
stereotyped, though less xenophilic, image.

This brings us back to the point at which we started.
International communications which is labeled as such is
affected by the stereotype of the out-group from which it
comes and is affected by the positive, or more often, nega-
tive identifications with that group. It should be emphasized,
however, that most international communication is to one
degree or another covert. A study of American business
communications on the tariff, for example, has revealed re-
markably little direct communication of foreign attitudes.
Even the American exporter typically relies upon American
trade magazines and other American sources for his written
information about foreign countries. It is only in the edi-
torial offices of these trade journals, in the State Depart-
ment and in similar highly specialized agencies that gen-
uinely foreign information is received in large quantity and
is there transformed into domestic communications. Never-
theless, much of this material is at least partially recog-
nized as foreign in origin and there is face-to-face con-
tact with a certain number of foreign individuals. In this
way, each specific communication, which would otherwise be
stereotyped in a simple fashion as foreign in source, tends
to assimilate a combination of stereotypes, including that

of the particular intermediary individual or agency. The
net reaction to the communication is to a considerable ex-
tent a function of the individual's unconscious decision
to cetegorize it in a certain way as to its possible
sources and a function of his relationship to these in-
group and out-group sources as imaginary interlocutors.