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**Conceptualizing the role of *Social Marketing* in *Communication for Development*:
For the convergence of approaches and methods.**

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Keywords: Social Marketing; Communication for development ; modernization paradigm ; alternative paradigm ; convergent communication ; theoretical analysis

Extended abstract:

The idea to utilise the Communication explicitly for achieving the Development goals and objectives emerged in the same time as the idea of the Development Support itself, early after the Second World War in USA (Rogers & Hart, 2002). The researches on Propaganda, Mass Medias and their influence on Public Opinion highlighted the potential ability of Communication to change the social Behaviour. It got spread within the Development field, aiming to solve the post-war reconstruction problems nationally and internationally (Melkote, 2002). At that time, the evolutionary theories were used to define the only way of Development. The anthropological notion of cultural Diffusion served to prescribe the mode of communicating the technical progress advancements to the rural communities, in a vertical “Centre - Periphery” manner. The *Dominant Diffusionist paradigm* was born (Lerner, 1958; Schamm, 1964; Rogers, 1962, 1976).

However, the critical voices began to rise up from late 60's, pointing out the numerous defaults in this linear unilateral conception of Development Communication and in its ethical background. Under the influence of neo-Marxist critical school, Dependency theories and the critical pedagogy, the communication researchers started to search for

new ways of achieving the Development goals through Communication. Refusing to be the passive absorbers of the ideas that are not necessarily adapted to the local context and value-neutral, they opted for an *Alternative paradigm* for Development Communication (Beltran, 1976, 1980; Diaz Bordenave, 1976; Quербal, 1973). Within this paradigm, the conscious of structural factors and self-determining local communities are “empowered” and capable to actively participate in a dialogical elaboration of development policies, becoming a start-point of the information flows. The prescribed modes of communication in this case are the “Periphery – Centre” and the “Periphery – Periphery” (Freire, 1970; Beltran, 1980; Huesca, 2002; Dagron & Tufte, 2006).

These ideas were picked up by the mainstream Development Communication research and the Social Marketing has been integrated into the Development Communication agenda (Melkote, 2002). Constrained by the public administration sector reforming, the policy makers and the communicators have agreed to listen to the voice of the final users, aiming at improving the Development support programs efficacy. Nowadays, the audience studies are done prior to the program realisation, and the *Social Marketing* strategies and techniques are used to convince the users about the service benefits. The relationships between the Marketing and Development are theorised by the Social Marketing, the MacroMarketing & the Communication researchers (Drucker, 1958; Kotler & Zaltman, 1971; Dholakia & Sherry, 1987; McKee, 1988; McKee & al. (eds), 2000; Dholakia & Dholakia, 2001; Andreasen, 1997, 2004; Steeves, 2002; Singh, 2002; Melkote, 2002; Cabanero-Verzosa & Mitchel, 2003; Andreasen & Herzberg, 2005; Talukdar & al, 2005; Roman, 2005; Kotler & al., 2006).

However, the “Marketing” term is not as popular as it seems within the Development sector (McKee, 1988, 2000). Its techniques may be seen as “manipulative”, while the

commercialisation of the public interest goods in a “business-like” manner may appear dangerous. On the other hand, the users’ *participation* in audience studies is considered as not sufficient by the Alternative paradigm partisans. It is seen as a “*mean*” to achieve the Development goals imposed by the external agents. The self-determined Development is proclaimed, where the local community participation in the “goals setting” would be an “*end*” by itself (Huesca, 2002; Dagrón & Tufte, 2006).

What is the role of Social Marketing in Communication for Development: is it a “Good” or an “Evil”? Are the two above paradigms really incompatible? The present theoretical essay provides complementary arguments in favour of the Convergent Communication for Development (Singh, 2002; Wilkins, 2008), integrating both the “diffusion” persuasive methods and the “participative” ones. The Social Marketing for Development could play a major role in this integrative framework. Indeed, it provides the theoretical bases for the discussion and the conceptualisation of the “objects of change” (“upstream” and “downstream” factors), as well as for the “communication modes” (“push” and “pull” methods) (cf. table 1 here under).

We will first present a short overview of the Development Communication paradigms and approaches, their advantages and critics. Then, we will propose a critical analysis of the postulates that “oppose” the Persuasive Communication / Social Marketing for Development on one side and the Participative Communication on the other side. On the basis of this critical analysis, we will provide our theoretical support for the convergence of these two approaches within one integrative multi-methodological and inter-disciplinary framework (table 1).

Table1. “Push” or “Pull”? Convergence of Development Communication approaches

		Mode of communication		
		Diffusion «Top-down», horizontal « PUSH »	Participative «Bottom-up» « PULL»	« Convergent » (all modes)
O b j e c t o f C h a n g e	Individual / social Behavior (“downstream”)	(1) Change of individual & social behavior via persuasion approaches (Diffusion, Entertainment, Social Marketing)	(3) Change of individuals via participation approaches (Dialogical pedagogy (P.Freire)	(1 & 3) Individual / social behavior Change, by all modes of communication, in network
	Structural / institutional factors (« upstream»)	(2) Change of structural inequalities, critical school (Empowerment, UNESCO & al; Media advocacy; ‘upstream’ Social Marketing)	(4) Structural / institutional Change, initiated by local community (Social Mobilization; Media Advocacy; Social Movements)	(2 & 4) Structural / institutional factors Change, by all modes of communication, in network

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