

25. D. Hislop, UNESCO Report *op. cit.*, p. 20.  
 26. G. K. Helleiner, *op. cit.*, pp. 307, 314.

## Mass media, opinion-makers, and public opinion on development issues<sup>1</sup>

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The relationship between a country's politics and the public opinion prevailing in the country has long been of interest to researchers. In referring to public opinion, we mean the opinion held by the general public instead of by any small group in society.<sup>2</sup> The question has been whether the political decision-makers affect public opinion or whether public opinion affects the decision-makers. Perhaps the usual image is that there is a pre-existing public opinion on most issues which affect politicians by limiting their possibilities to act.<sup>3</sup> Other researchers claim that the politicians affect public opinion and that their possibilities to do so are often underestimated.<sup>4</sup> Peterson<sup>5</sup> has studied public opinion and official foreign policy in the United States during a ten-year period and has come to the conclusion that the American foreign policy elite often sees public opinion as a limitation on their freedom to act, but that the elite in this case overestimate public opinion and underestimate their own possibilities to affect the public. Another view is presented by Pool<sup>6</sup> who stresses that the political elite is far less often influenced by overt expressions of public opinion than by the need to take anticipatory maneuvers to avoid the consequences of future public opinion.

Generally speaking, the opinions of the elite are rarely the same as those of the public. Lane and Sears<sup>7</sup> show that the way members of Congress vote is very weakly associated with the

opinions held by the electorate. Regarding the relationship between the public opinion and a country's foreign aid policy, which is of main interest in this article, several studies show that the political elite in several European countries is more in favor of aid than is the electorate they represent.<sup>8</sup>

In 1968 a study was made of the attitudes of a sample of members of the Swedish Parliament to development aid and other related questions. 88% of the politicians who completed the questionnaire thought that the grants to developing countries should be increased, and 10% thought that they were big enough.<sup>9</sup> The public was asked the same question at about the same time,<sup>10</sup> and only 33% of the public thought that the grants should be increased, and 49% thought that they were big enough.<sup>11</sup>

This would therefore support the hypothesis that the unwillingness of the public to change its attitude to developing countries and development aid prevents many countries from giving more aid. Had the political decision-makers been able to make their decisions without considering the public opinion, the total aid volume would have been larger than it is today.

An interesting and most important question in this connection is whether the politicians know what the people they represent think. Johnson *et al.*<sup>12</sup> asked the members of the Swedish Parliament to estimate what percentage of the Swedish population wanted to increase the grants to the developing countries. Less than 25% of those who replied gave an answer which the researchers considered to be correct. Unfortunately, the report of the study does not show whether those who gave a wrong answer overestimated or underestimated the percentage in favor.

It is interesting to note that three-quarters of the members of Parliament think that they ought to be "ahead" of the public opinion. Both in Norway and Sweden, politicians, irrespective of what party they represent, seem to think it necessary to try to make public opinion more favorable towards development aid and development issues in general.<sup>13</sup>

Peterson<sup>14</sup> concludes that the diffusion of attitudes is such that it takes a while for the attitudes and values of the elite to become accepted by the public. This is done through local opinion leaders. She thinks that Rosenau's four-step hypothesis<sup>15</sup> is more realistic when describing the dissemination process than earlier hypotheses.<sup>16</sup>

In our opinion one of the most important groups of opinion-makers is the representatives of the mass media. In industrial societies people spend a great deal of their time reading newspapers and watching television. Daily newspapers play an important part in giving people information about and making them interested in foreign affairs. Even if Swedish people in general receive a great deal of information about world affairs in news programs and documentary programs on radio and television, daily newspapers give more extensive background information and explanations than other media.<sup>17</sup> The press journalists who collect, handle, and transmit information about foreign affairs are, therefore, of the greatest interest in this type of study.<sup>18</sup> By selecting the news to be presented and how to present it, they can affect the public's picture of reality.<sup>19</sup> They show which events are important, which countries and people are of interest and can affect developments, and they give explanations of events and development trends.

It is important for public opinion that the mass media can independently choose which subjects to discuss. Welch<sup>20</sup> thinks that there are many examples of the mass media making decision-makers aware of certain, long ignored, situations.

As well as influencing the public directly, the mass media and journalists can get their messages through to the public via opinion-leaders. These people often have certain positions in society which give them the possibility of influencing other people. This indirect influence, and the possible exchange of information between the representatives of the mass media and the local, regional, and national elites, is probably far more important than

the direct influence. Cohen, who has examined the effects of the pattern of press coverage of foreign affairs on the foreign policy-making environment, concludes:

... it seems clear from this analysis that the press itself is such an important institution in the policy-making network that *any* pattern of press coverage would leave a substantial mark of one kind or another on the participants and thus on the process.<sup>21</sup>

Who, then, supplies the information transmitted by the mass media? The information is often not about events which can be observed and reported by other people, but is more about questions, conditions, and matters which the journalists might never have noticed if especially interested people had not brought them to their notice.

There are several examples of cases where the mass media have been completely dependent on the political elite for information.<sup>22</sup> In Sweden the best-known example of this is the Vietnam war; for a long period at the beginning of the war, the Swedish mass media received information only from sources that were closely linked to the American government.

Generally, the representatives of the mass media decide what to present to the public and thereby also to a large extent decide what we, as consumers, will consider important. The selection of information can, however, be affected by political and economic decision-makers, since they can decide within which frames the information is to be selected. This may be done on different levels, both through contacts with the mass media and through personal contacts.

If we want to explain the distribution of attitudes, level of information, beliefs, and so on within different groups in society, the relationship between the public, the political elite, the representatives of the mass media, and possible opinion-makers is naturally of great interest. As we have been interested in foreign policy and especially development issues, we have put questions of the following nature to illustrate this relationship: What are

the attitudes of these groups to development aid? If there are differences of opinion between the different groups, how can these be explained? How do the different groups affect each other? Are there differences between public opinion and "mass media opinion"? How much are these groups affected by each other's opinions?

## II

During the autumn of 1974 we studied four different samples, namely the public, local opinion-makers, journalists, and study-circle participants. The latter two samples were directly associated with the problems of the developing countries. The journalists were selected from chief editors, heads of editorial offices, heads of foreign news sections, and those usually working in foreign news sections of daily newspapers. The circle participants were selected from participants in international study-circles. Both these groups of people may be expected to act as opinion-makers in the field of development aid and developing countries. The journalists are naturally most likely to do so as they have the technical resources to spread information and influence people and as it is their job to spread this type of information.

The study-circle participants who have participated in circles dealing with international affairs may be expected to act as opinion-makers in the field of developing countries mainly because they are likely to know more about this subject than the public at large.

The local opinion-makers have been included in the study because they hold the kind of social positions which make them more likely than other people to affect the opinions, attitudes, and values of others.<sup>23</sup> The likelihood that they are thought to have a legitimate right to influence other people is great.<sup>24</sup> The sample consisted of local representatives of the Church of Swe-

den, of the Free Churches, of the schools, of industry, of the trade unions, of the political parties, and of the press. We expected the different samples to have rather different Third World orientations.<sup>25</sup> One of our hypotheses was that the opinions of the two elites (the term is used to mean the local opinion-makers and the journalists) are more alike than their opinions and the opinions of the circle participants, but that the opinions of all these three groups are more alike than are the opinions of any one of them and the opinions of the public.

As all the samples were not asked all the questions, it was, however, not possible to make comparison in every respect. For example, the journalists were not asked the knowledge questions, as we took for granted that they would give the correct answers to these.

Table I shows that a considerable larger percentage of the local elite than of the public answered the knowledge questions correctly, and that the answers of the study-circle participants were more like the answers of the local elite than of the public.<sup>26</sup>

The public's interest in developing countries and foreign affairs differs considerably from that of the local opinion-makers. Table II shows the percentages of these two samples, who say they are interested in some subjects in mass media. As seen from the table the percentage of local opinion-makers who are interested in "the political development in Africa" is twice as large as that of the public. The journalists were not asked this question either. 59% of the study-circle participants said that they were interested in information in mass media about "the developing countries and their problems"—the only one of the three subjects the participants were asked to judge.<sup>27</sup>

All the samples were asked two questions about development aid, namely whether or not we should give aid and how much we should give. The fact that the formulation of the first question was slightly different for the study-circle participants could explain the differences in Table III.<sup>28</sup>

TABLE I  
PERCENTAGES GIVING A CORRECT ANSWER

Questions:	Public	Local opinion-makers	Study-circle participants
How many years is it estimated that it will take for the world population to double in size?	42	64	65
What is the name of the President of Tanzania?	27	62	76
In which country does the African liberation movement FRELIMO operate?	54	70	67
How many per cent of the world population live in what is usually referred to as developing countries?	45 (1674)	74 (421)	49 (2347)

TABLE II  
PERCENTAGES INTERESTED IN INFORMATION ABOUT FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Issues:	Local opinion-makers	Difference
The conflict in the Middle East	46	80
The political development in Africa	27	54
The developing countries and their problems	44 (1674)	73 (421)

others.<sup>29</sup> 94% of each of these samples either want to increase the grants or keep them as they are. The corresponding figures for the study-circle participants and the public are 83% and 82% respectively. However, compared with the public, the study-circle participants have double the percentage in the category "should be increased" and half the percentage in the category "are large enough." If one only considers those who think the grants should be increased to be in favor of development aid, the public is much less in favor of development aid than are the other three groups.

TABLE IV

Question: As you may know 3% of the Swedish government's national expenditure is development aid. Do you think the Swedish grants to developing countries are large enough? Or should they be increased or decreased or maybe discontinued?

Development grants	Public			Local opinion-makers	Journalists	Study-circle participants
	Total	High status				
		Low status	High status			
Should be increased	30	20	38	69	71	55
Are large enough	52	53	46	25	23	28
Should be decreased	5	7	4	2	2	3
Should be discontinued	2	2	3	1	3	1
Don't know/No answer	11	19	10	4	1	13
Total	100	101 <sup>a</sup>	101 <sup>a</sup>	101 <sup>a</sup>	100	100
(n = )	(1621)	(341)	(315)	(421)	(152)	(2347)

a) More than 100% due to rounding off.

The most common answer from the public to the question about how aid should be paid is that it should be paid mainly by private gifts. For the journalists and local opinion-makers it is most common to suggest that it should be paid by tax revenues. About 50% of these groups give this answer (see Table V). The second most common answer for these groups is a combination of tax revenues and private aid. Amongst the study-circle partici-

TABLE III

Question: There are different opinions about whether we in the rich part of the world should help poor countries. Do you think that we in Sweden should help these countries at all?

Shall we help?	Public			Local opinion-makers	Journalists	Study-circle participants
	Total	High status				
		Low status	High status			
Yes-without reservation	62	56	69	88	82	75
Yes-with reservation	33	38	27	11	17	-
No	3	3	3	1	1	6
Don't know/No reply	2	3	1	0	1	19
Total	100	100	100	100	101 <sup>a</sup>	100
(n = )	(1621)	(341)	(317)	(488)	(152)	(2347)

a) More than 100% due to rounding off.

What strikes one about Table III is primarily that the local opinion-makers and the journalists so strongly support the idea that Sweden should help poor countries. The difference in percentage between the different samples is not so great if one looks at all people in favor, but the percentage who have said "Yes" without any reservation is considerably larger for the elite groups than for the public. Another striking thing about the Table is that such a large percentage (19%) of the study-circle participants have no opinion about this question. This might be explained by the fact that the formulation of the question and the suggested answers were different for the study-circle participants. Another explanation is that a large percentage of the study-circles known as "international study-circles" are simply "tourist courses" preparing people for future trips abroad. They need not therefore have anything to do with developing countries, and hence the participants need not be interested in or in favor of development aid.

Table IV shows that there are also differences of opinion about how much aid we should give. The journalists and the local opinion-makers are more in favor of development aid than are the

TABLE V

Question: How do you think this aid should be paid? Should it be paid mainly by tax revenues or mainly by private gifts etc?

Way of financing aid	Public			Local opinion-makers	Journalists	Study-circle participants
	Total	Low status	High status			
Tax revenues	30	16	47	49	52	17
Tax revenues/private gifts	28	24	30	43	38	60
Private gifts	39	56	21	7	6	19
Don't know/No reply	4	5	2	1	4	4
Total (n = )	101 <sup>a</sup> (1621)	101 <sup>a</sup> (341)	100 (316)	100 (421)	100 (152)	100 (2347)

a) More than 100% due to rounding off.

pants "combined financing" is the most common answer, which may be partly explained by the fact that a lot of them are members of religious associations or organizations which in one way or another help poor countries. These people may reasonably be believed to have a favorable attitude to the voluntary aid these associations or organizations give.<sup>30</sup>

How, then, do our different groups explain why developing countries are poor, and what form of aid do they think is valuable? We asked our respondents to say how important each of eleven different reasons for poverty was. For all our samples it was most common to think of lack of education as a very important reason why the developing countries are poor. It was more common for the local opinion-makers, the journalists, and the participants in study-circles—especially for the journalists—than for the general public to consider historical and structural reasons as important explanations why some countries are poor. It was also more common for them to consider economic and demographic reasons as important. It was more common for the general public than for the other three samples to think of nature and culture reasons as important.<sup>31</sup>

We also asked the respondents how valuable they considered each of nine different forms of aid to the developing countries to be. It was most common for all of the four samples to consider education a valuable form of aid. After this it was most common for the general public to think of developing family planning and birth control as valuable, and for the other three samples to consider a trade policy which is favorable to the developing countries as valuable. All of 67% of the journalists, compared to 35% of the general public, thought that information in Sweden about developing countries and their problems is a valuable form of aid. This result is perhaps not so surprising if one bears in mind that the journalists were, in fact, evaluating their own work. It was more common for the local opinion-makers than for the other samples to consider "supporting missionaries" valuable: a large percentage of them represented churches. A larger percentage of the journalists than of any of the other samples thought that political aid was valuable. A smaller percentage of the general public than of the other three groups thought of political aid as valuable, e.g. only 12% of the public and 27% of the journalists thought that supporting armed liberation movements is a valuable form of aid.<sup>32</sup>

On the whole the opinions of the journalists, of the local opinion-makers, and of the participants of study-circles were more alike than those of the general public and of any one of these groups. One can also see that the answers from the elites are more like the answers from the high status group than those from the low status group. This differs from other results.<sup>33</sup> A simple explanation to the presented differences is that the groups which seem to be alike have about the same background features. As earlier studies show that people of higher income, education, and status are more likely to engage in politics, this result can be expected.<sup>34</sup>

Our data show that people who are in a position to influence other people are more Third World oriented than the general public. However, the journalists and the opinion-makers seem unable

to transmit their favorable attitudes and historical, structural view to the general public.

Public opinion about development aid has not changed much during the last fifteen years in Sweden, although the grants to developing countries have increased from 0.25% of the GNP in the fiscal year 1965/66 to 0.95% in 1977/78.<sup>35</sup> The same question—"Do you think that we should increase the present grants to the underdeveloped countries or should we keep the grants unchanged or should we decrease the grants?"—has been asked since 1961. The percentage of the Swedish public who thought that the grants should be increased or should remain unchanged increased from 1961 until 1968 and has since 1968 decreased a little. The reason public opinion was so favorably disposed towards development aid in 1968 was probably that the psychological climate was very favorable and that there was a general feeling of radicalism. The development aid was something which many political parties seemed to think important before the general election that year. Hence the mass media paid much attention to the developing countries.

The somewhat less favorable public opinion in recent years could be the result of changes in the psychological climate and of a worsened economic situation or of the grants increasing, or of a combination of these factors. It could, of course, also be the effects of the mass media. The results of earlier research in this field show that campaigns of different kinds primarily decide what issues are of topical interest, but only to a small extent affect people's attitudes to these issues. Campaigns can be started by decision-makers (politicians, representatives of local, regional, and national authorities, or of industry) or by representatives of the mass media, but most campaigns are initiated by the decision-making elite.

### III

How then can one explain the obvious differences between the elite groups and the general public, and above all, how can one explain why the opinion-makers have not managed to transfer their attitudes and opinions concerning international relationships?<sup>36</sup>

One possible explanation is that the journalists are not capable of transferring their relatively positive outlook because of the organizational or structural relationships inside the mass media sector. Such a relationship would, for instance, be the current news valuation principles which lay stress on negative events and on controversial and personal elements. 62% of our daily press representatives concur with the assertion that an event's newsworthiness increases if it involves situations of conflict between individuals, groups, or nations; and 83% think that news value increases if an event is dramatic. 88% consider that an event's newsworthiness increases if it concerns a subject area currently being discussed.

We know that the necessary selection of news is to a great extent a product of the system and of professional and social group norms.<sup>37</sup> The adaptation to prevailing news valuation principles is probably an important reason why journalists' attitudes on development issues have not been able to be transferred to a wider public spectrum.<sup>38</sup> Other relationships, which the journalists themselves have no control over, are the resources their own newspapers can put at their disposal. From a preliminary analysis of the contents of those newspapers whose representatives we interviewed, it was clearly evident what significance the size of the newspaper had for its interest in and treatment of international material.<sup>39</sup> Larger newspapers are able to give more space to pure foreign material, devote more attention to the political and eco-

nomic aspects of relationships in other countries, as well as give more background information and explanations for events and the course of events than the smaller newspapers are.

What, then, do the journalists contend that newspapers' objectives concerning the selection of developing nations material should be? 82% concurred that of all enumerated alternatives, the goal should be to choose such material that would get the reader to activate himself, for instance by searching out more information. 77% contended that the goal should be to place underdevelopment in its historical context. This accords well with the result we recorded above, namely that the journalists have a more historical and structural outlook on, among other things, the reasons for poverty in the developing countries. The exotic motive, i.e., to choose certain material because the phenomenon can be experienced as interesting because it is relatively unusual here—something that many laymen spontaneously experience as leading the mass media's selection of news when it comes to developing nations—does not get any appreciable support. In fact, only 27% supported this type of goal setting.

We also asked the journalists themselves what they experienced as most problematic concerning working with international material. It is evident that one considers the time limit one works under to be one of the biggest problems. 51% of the respondents considered this to be problematical (see Table VI). This was not a specific problem with just the treatment of the international material, but was something characteristic for the whole journalistic operation. Something which is perhaps more specific concerning the treatment of international material and which is also experienced as a big problem is the lack of archives. Several researchers have considered that to be one of the more important reasons that the news coverage of foreign countries, especially of developing countries, is so sporadic and fragmented.<sup>41</sup> Exactly half of our respondents consider that this constitutes a problem. Furthermore, this is naturally important since the journalists do not consider the news agency material to be informative enough.

TABLE VI  
PROBLEMS CONSIDERED BIG OR VERY BIG BY  
JOURNALISTS AT WORK

	%
The time limit	51
Lack of archives at the newspaper office	50
Adaptation of the information to suit the public	39
Insufficient information	34
Adaptation to opinions at the newspaper office	11

The remaining conceivable problems around the treatment of international material have not been experienced to be as problematic as those two just mentioned.

Another type of explanation for absent effects among the general public could be that the mass media exposure in itself has no significance for Third World orientation; i.e., journalists as opinion-makers would consequently be a myth. In order to study this, we have chosen to concentrate on national morning papers and television, because they constitute the channels that a larger part of the Swedish general public regularly comes into contact with.

The daily press journalists we asked did not think that it is possible for the general public to obtain good knowledge of international relationships through the mass media: 57% of those we asked thought that the mass media do not give the possibility to all in society to procure the knowledge they need in order to totally understand the situation in the developing countries. 38% did not agree with the statement that the mass media give reliable information on what is happening in other countries. One can see this as a sign that journalists are very self-critical, but from what has been said above, it is obvious that they do not consider that it is just themselves or their situation which is at fault for this relationship. The news agencies' way of handling information

is naturally of great importance to the private journalist when it comes to international material, where it is not possible for him to check that the information is correct through other sources. All of 86% of our respondents think that the news agencies reporting from other continents must be complemented with information from other sources. 79% also think that the critique of the mass media's reporting on developing countries is justified, namely that too much attention has been paid to individual events of high news value and not enough to background material which would give more knowledge and understanding of these countries.

A starting point in formulating suggestions for conceivable effects of the mass media when it comes to this area is quite simply that an increased exposure to the mass media means an increased probability of exposure to international material. In turn this increased exposure should result in a higher degree of Third World orientation.

If one studies the variables "knowledge about developing countries," "attitudes to development aid," "interest in developing countries," and "activities concerning developing countries," one finds a positive correlation between these and the exposure to national morning papers. On the other hand, there is no general positive correlation between these variables and exposure to television programs.<sup>42</sup> In fact, it is the moderate television viewers who are the most Third World oriented.

The result is not surprising, since earlier studies have shown that there is a positive correlation between level of information and exposure to printed mass media material.<sup>43</sup> The absence of a correlation between Third World orientation and television exposure can to a large extent be explained by the fact that watching television often constitutes an expressive and not an instrumental behavior.<sup>44</sup> Because those who often watch television are exposed to so much information, their ability to organize it all is limited. Also since they spend a large part of their leisure time watching television, there is reason to believe that they have little time for

other activities, especially those which concern "odd" subject areas like developing countries.

It is not only the quantity and nature of mass media exposure which is of importance for the Third World orientation, but there is also an important interplay between exposure and other variables, above all, different socio-economic variables. Several background variables are likely to have both a direct and an indirect influence on the Third World orientation, which together lead to different effects for different groups in society.<sup>45</sup>

Many authors have said that formal education is the most important variable when explaining exposure to the mass media, the level of information, and the correlation between these two variables.<sup>46</sup> The education variable is also thought to be the most important background variable when explaining the Third World orientation. However, instead of using just one variable we have used a more composite type of variable which measures the social position of our respondents.<sup>47</sup>

The hypothesis that the Third World orientation increases with increased exposure to the mass media is supported by the correlation between exposure to national morning papers and the four previously enumerated variables connected with Third World orientation. If one holds constant social position, the exposure hypothesis is supported by both the middle and high status groups (see Figure 1) regarding the variables "knowledge," "interest," and "activity." The low status group supports it only with regard to "interest." It is a little surprising to note that such a small percentage of those from the low status group who have a high exposure to morning papers have a high level of information about developing countries. One reason for this is probably that the people in the low status group lack the resources necessary to organize the information,<sup>48</sup> or that, because they lack these resources, they quite simply do not read the foreign news. This would also explain why those in the low status group who often expose themselves to newspapers have such a small percentage with favorable attitudes toward development aid. As is made clear from

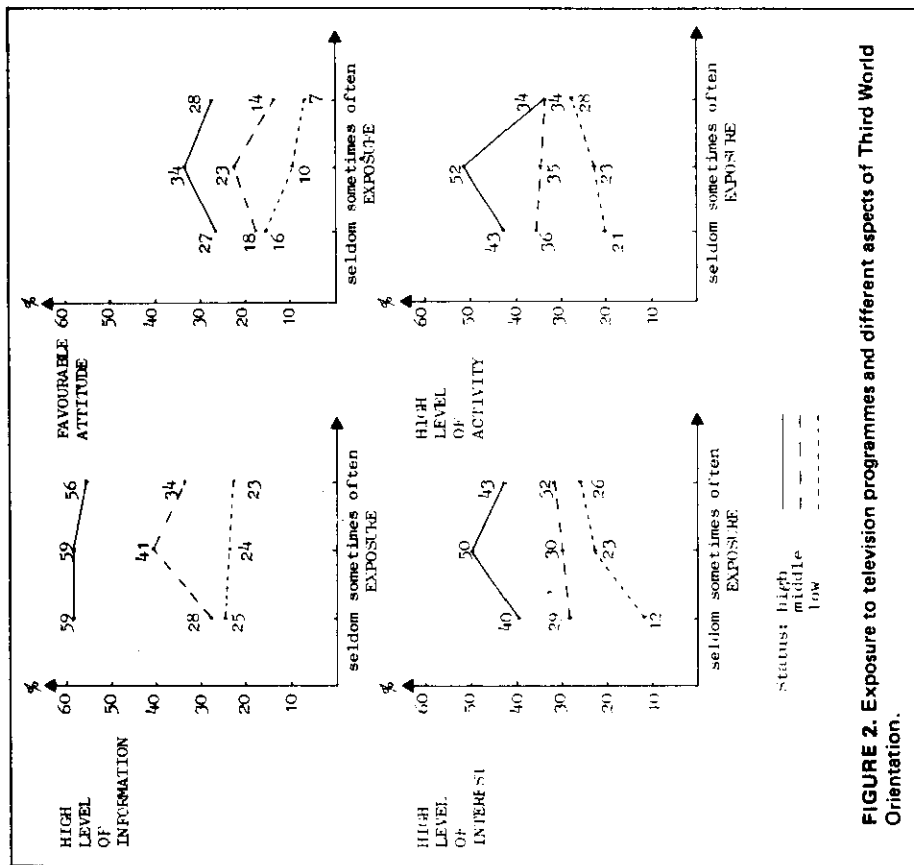


FIGURE 2. Exposure to television programmes and different aspects of Third World Orientation.

Those who watch television seldom and those who watch often are relatively similar in this respect. This suggests that there is a middle group which chooses their programs and is, in turn, influenced by them. In terms of level of information the different exposure groups are shown to have approximately equally high percentages with a high level, which also implies that the degree of television exposure is not so significant for the high status group;

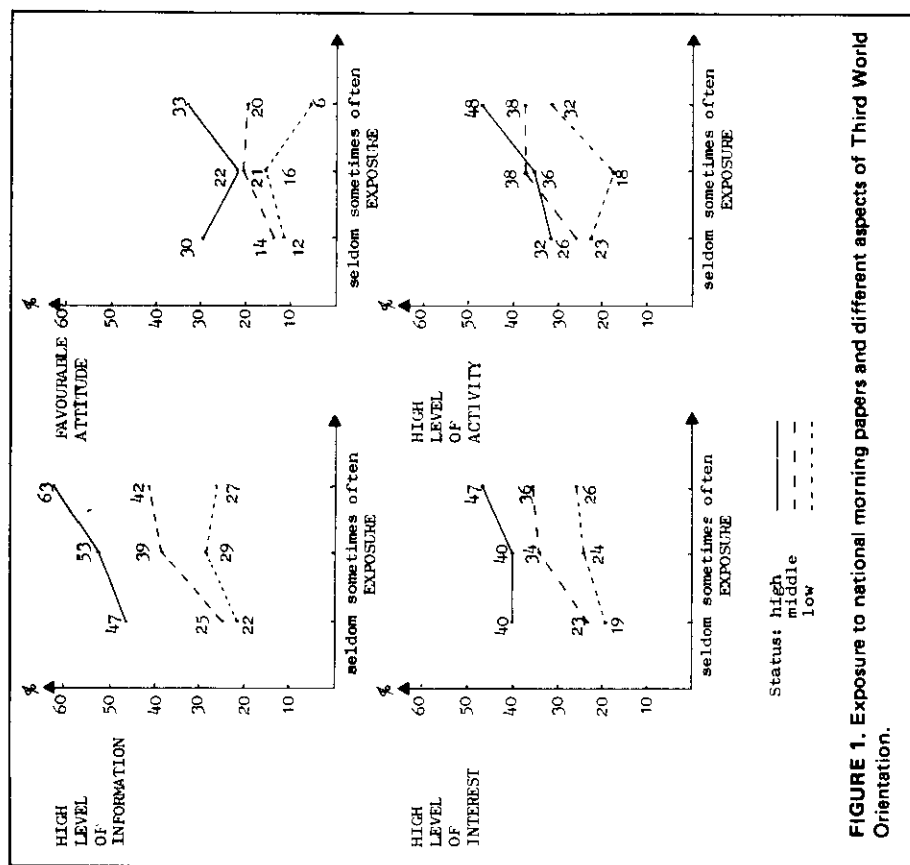


FIGURE 1. Exposure to national morning papers and different aspects of Third World Orientation.

Figure 1, it is for the most part the high status group which benefits from the higher degree of exposure to national morning papers.

If we hold the status variable constant when studying the effects of different degrees of exposure to television we get an inverted U-shaped correlation between the degree of exposure and Third World orientation for the high status group (see Figure 2).

probably because they have attained their knowledge through formal education, and because they can maintain and raise their level of information in their work at the same time as the positions they hold themselves demand a certain measure of general knowledge.

The middle status group displays a similar inverted U-shaped relationship in terms of the knowledge and attitude variables. The moderate consumers have the largest percentage with a high level of information and a favorable attitude. Television watching is shown to have a marginal effect on the variables "interest" and "activity."

In the low status group, exposure to television seems to have the largest significance for "interest" and "activity," where there is a positive correlation; there is a negative correlation for the variables "knowledge" and "attitude."

It is reasonable to suppose that the increased exposure to foreign information, which a high degree of exposure to national morning newspapers implies, influences the views on the reasons for poverty and which forms of aid are valuable.<sup>49</sup> Since a high degree of exposure to morning papers gives—at least for the high and middle status groups—a high level of information as well as a favorable attitude, a high level of activity and a high level of interest, we expect that persons belonging to the high exposure group to a larger extent than others are prepared to choose historical and structural reasons as explanations for the poverty in the developing countries and consider political forms of aid valuable. A high degree of exposure to television cannot be expected to have the same effect, since this does not seem to be related to general knowledge or attitude changes.

What mainly strikes one when studying our data is that the percentages which advocate different explanations and forms of aid vary to such a small extent. How often and for which type of mass media one exposes oneself seems to have little significance for how one regards the reasons for poverty and forms of aid. Those who often read national morning papers do not seem to

have a more structural view on the problems or be more willing than others to solve them by political means. One explanation can be that the press does not stress the historical and structural reasons any more than other reasons in their explanations of the poverty in the developing countries. We expected that there would be more information of this type in the national papers than on television and the radio, and that those who read newspapers regularly would be influenced by this type of information. However, this does not seem to be the case, or at least, the readers are not influenced by this particular type of information.

We have tried to analyze why the elites seem unable to transmit their opinions about developing countries and development aid to the public. We can not conclude that the opinions of the journalists are of no significance as we do not know that the public's opinions would be if the elites did not have such favorable attitudes.

As has been seen from above, our data do not lend support to any general hypothesis that the mass media lack possibilities to influence people. However, the impact of different mass media varies.

We can also conclude that there seem to be factors beyond the control of the journalists that influence, for instance, which events are covered in the mass media. Information from other channels than the transnational news agencies would probably raise the level of information about development issues. So would other structural or organizational changes within the press system.

#### IV

The purpose of this article has been to discuss and analyze the relationships between the opinions about development issues of the representatives of mass media, local opinion-makers, and the general public. We have found that there are big differences between the groups. In general, the elites are more Third World ori-

ented than the public. The questions we have discussed can be included in a broader foreign policy system. From our data it is difficult to decide if we have a foreign policy system according to an "autocratic" or a "guided democracy" model. However, the data suggest that we have an "autocratic" model, since the distance between the elites and the general public seems to be great. The model certainly does not reflect a "democratic" system, where the elites represent and reflect an average of the opinion of the whole society.<sup>50</sup>

Our data do not give us any reliable information about how certain opinions are disseminated in the society. All we can say is that the opinions of the journalists are often the same as those held by the local opinion-makers and by the people who have a high social status. There is no evidence of the local opinion-makers acting as a bridge between the journalists and the public. Neither is there any evidence of the journalists having this function between the political elite and the public. We have paid little attention to how the different groups influence each other and to the role of the local opinion-makers. This means that a lot of questions in this connection have not been discussed. One of these is how "public opinion" is related to "mass media opinion." There seems to be a general misunderstanding among the decision-making elites that these two concepts are, in some way, interchangeable.<sup>51</sup> They also believe that one gets information about what the people think through the mass media. Since the opinions of the journalists to such a great extent differ from the opinions of the public, our data do not support such an idea. The fact that the mass media are in many cases the only available source of information about other people's attitudes and beliefs does not mean that they reflect the views of the average person.

The representatives of the mass media are in a position to act as gatekeepers. They can emphasize certain issues and neglect others. They can present information about and support particular attitudes, values, and actions, and attack others. But we think that they do so more depending on the frames given by the sys-

tem within which they work than on their own attitudes or beliefs. They can not react against the whole international system. In fact, this means that the mass media are able to affect the public's level of information and their attitudes but that the roles of persons working within the system are not so important as one might think. There is more reason to talk about the power of the mass media than to talk about the power of their representatives.

#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Data presented in this article has been collected for a research project called Information Strategy Project which was financed by the Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation and by the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA).
2. Cf. I. de Sola Pool, "Public Opinion," in *Handbook of Communication*, ed. I. de Sola Pool, F. W. Frey, W. Schramm, N. Maccoby, E. B. Parker (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1973), p. 780.  
There is no agreement among researchers as to what public opinion really is. For a discussion see, for instance, H. Hveem, *International relations and world images. A study of Norwegian foreign policy elites* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1972) E. Noelle-Neumann, "Return to the Concept of Powerful Mass Media," *Studies of Broadcasting*, No. 9 (1973), pp. 67-112; R. O. Carlson (ed.), *Communications and Public Opinion*. A Public Opinion Quarterly Reader (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1975).
3. See, for instance, W. Lippman, *The Public Philosophy* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1955); E. Fraenkel, *Offentliche Meinung und Internationale Politik* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1962); K. W. Deutsch, "Changing images of international conflict," *Journal of Social Issues*, 23 (January 1967), pp. 91-107; B. C. Cohen, *The Public's Impact on Foreign Policy* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1973); W. P. Davison, "International and World Opinion," in *Handbook of Communication*, n. 2, pp. 871-886.
4. See, for instance, V. O. Key, *Public Opinion and American Democracy* (New York: Knopf, 1961); J. Galtung, *Peace, War, and Defense*. Essays in Peace Research Vol. II (Copenhagen: Christian Ejlert, 1976).
5. S. Peterson, "Events, Mass Opinion and Elite Attitudes" in *Communication in International Politics*, ed. R. L. Merritt (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1972), pp. 252-271.
6. I. de Sola Pool, n. 2, p. 814.
7. R. E. Lane, D. O. Sears, *Allmän opinion* (Stockholm: Wahlström & Widstrand, 1969), p. 12.

8. L. A. Free, *International Attitudes of Western Europeans. A study of Parliamentary and Public Opinion in Great Britain, France, Italy and West Germany in the Spring of 1968* (Princeton, New Jersey: Institute for International Social Research, 1969); H. Hveem, n. 2.
9. A. Johnsson, S. Lindholm, T. Löbel, *Hälva riksdagen och u-hjälpen. En enkät kring riksdagsmännens attityder* (Stockholm: Sektionen för fredsfor- kning, Pedagogiska institutionen, Stockholms universitet, 1970), Rapport nr 7. Appendix 3, p. 7 (mimeo).
10. Cf. S. Holmberg, *Riksdagen representerar svenska folket. Empiriska stu- dier i representativ demokrati* (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1974), p. 58.
11. S. Lindholm, *U-landsbildningen undersökning av allmänna opinionen* (Stock- holm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1970), p. 270.
12. N. 9, p. 15.
13. See, e.g., K. Ringdal, *Meninger om utviklingshjelp 1953-75. En analyse av Gallupundersøkelser om u-hjelp* (Oslo: Institutt for fredsforskning og In- stitutt for statsvitenskap, Universitetet i Oslo, 1975), Prio publikasjon nr. 16-19, p. 17 (mimeo).
14. N. 5.
15. See J. N. Rosenau, *Public Opinion and Foreign Policy: An Operational Formulation* (New York: Random House, 1961), p. 8.
16. See, e.g., P. F. Lazarsfeld, B. Berelson, and H. Gaudet, *The People's Choice: How the Voter Makes up His Mind in a Presidential Campaign*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1948); E. Katz and P. F. Lazarsfeld, *Personal Influence: The Part Played by People in the Flow of Mass Communica- tions* (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1955); E. Katz, "The Two-step Flow of Communication: An Up-to-date Report on an Hypothesis," *Pub- lic Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (1957), pp. 61-78.
17. On average Swedish people spend 13 hours a week watching television, 17 hours a week listening to the radio and 3 and half hours a week read- ing daily newspapers.  
Almost every household has radio and television sets and about three quarters of the households buy a daily newspaper at least once a week.  
See C. Nilsson, *Hemma i mediesamhället* (Stockholm: Sveriges Radio, Pub- lik och programforskningsavdelningen, nr. 11-1978).
18. See H. Hveem, n. 2, p. 17; B. C. Cohen, n. 3, p. 107.
19. W. Lippman, *Public Opinion* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1922); K. W. Deutsch and L. J. Edinger, *Germany rejoins the Powers: Mass Opinion, In- terest Groups, and Elites in Contemporary German Foreign Policy* (Stan- ford: Stanford University Press, 1959); B. C. Cohen, *The Press and Foreign Policy* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1963); K. W. Deutsch and R. L. Merritt, "Effects of Events on National and Interna- tional Images" in *International Behavior: A social-psychological analysis*, ed. H. C. Kelman (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966), pp. 132-187; K. E. Rosengren, "International News: Methods, Data and Theory," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (1974), pp. 145-156.
20. S. Welch, "The American Press and Indochina 1949-56," in *Communica- tion in International Politics*, n. 5, pp. 207-231.
21. B. C. Cohen, n. 19, p. 269.
22. See, e.g., *ibid.* and S. Welch, n. 20.
23. See J. N. Rosenau, n. 15, p. 45.
24. Cf. W. Spinrad, "Power in Local Communities," in *Class, Status, and Power: Social Stratification in Comparative Perspective*, ed. R. Bendix and S. M. Lipset (New York: The Free Press, 1966), p. 227; and D. McQuail, *Communication* (London: Longman, 1975), p. 146.
25. I have used the term "Third World orientation" to mean knowledge about, interest in, and activities concerning developing countries, attitude to de- velopment aid and opinions about the causes of poverty in these countries, the possible ways of helping them and of financing development aid. See L. Hedman, *Svenskarna och u-hjälpen* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell In- ternational, 1978), p. 34.
26. Twelve questions were asked, but here we show only those which were the same for all three samples. Cf. L. Hedman, n. 25, p. 134.
27. L. Hedman, *Participants in International Study-Circles* (Uppsala: Depart- ment of Sociology, University of Uppsala, 1976), Report no. 4, Informa- tion Strategy Project, p. 24, (mimeo).
28. The study-circle participants were asked "Are you for or against Sweden giving financial aid to countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America?" See L. Hedman, n. 27, p. 25.
29. In the fiscal year 1978/79 the Swedish aid to developing countries will ex- ceed 1% of the GNP. Together with the Netherlands and Norway, Sweden has surpassed the U.N. goal of 0,7% of GNP.
30. Cf. *Youth on development*: Survey of Canadian youth on international aid and development (Ottawa: Canadian Council for International Co- operation, 1971), p. 60.
31. Through a factor analysis of 11 different reasons the matrix of these was reduced to three factors with a total explained variance of 56%. The his- torical/structural factor explained 33% of the variance, the nature/culture factor explained 13% of the variance and the economic/demographic fac- tor explained 9% of the variance. See Hedman, n. 25, p. 57.
32. A factor analysis of the 9 alternatives resulted in three factors. These three factors together explained 58% of the total variance. The political aid fac- tor explained 32% of the variance, the private aid factor explained 14% of the variance, and the basic aid factor explained 12% of the variance. One alternative, "spreading information in Sweden about developing countries and their problems," did not have a high loading in any of these factors but was relatively highly correlated with several of the different variables. This suggests that different people think information valuable for differ- ent reasons. See Hedman, n. 25, p. 61.

33. B. C. Cohen, "Mass Communication and Foreign Policy," in *Domestic Sources of Foreign Policy*, ed. J. N. Rosenau (New York: The Free Press, 1967), p. 199.
34. B. R. Berelson, P. F. Lazarsfeld, and W. N. McPhee, *Voting: A Study of Opinion Formation in a Presidential Campaign* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1954); S. M. Lipset, *Political Man* (London: Mercury Books, 1963); B. Berelson and G. A. Steiner, *Human Behavior: An Inventory of Scientific Findings* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1964); N. H. Halle, "Social Position and Foreign Policy Attitudes," *Journal of Peace Research*, No. 1, (1966), pp. 46-74; S. Verba and N. H. Nie, *Participation in America. Political Democracy and Social Equality* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972); W. Martinussen, *Fjerndemokratiet: Sosial ulikhet, politiske ressurser og politisk medvirkning i Norge* (Oslo: Gyldendal Norsk Forlag, 1973); J. Galtung, n. 4.
35. Although public opinion is shown to be stable, individual changes are probably extensive. About half of the respondents changed their opinion about development aid and developing countries completely during a period of seven months. See L. Hedman, *U-landsopinionen* (Stockholm: Meddelande från Utredningsbyrån, SIDA, 1977), p. 93 (mimeo).
36. I have not considered the effects of personal contacts between journalists and the public. These contacts seem to be limited. See, for instance, S. Windahl and K. E. Rosengren, "The professionalization of Swedish Journalists," *Gazette*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (1976), pp. 140-149.
- Journalists seem to have more contacts with private firms, voluntary clubs, and interest organizations than with the general public. See B. Fjæstad and P. G. Holmlöv, *Swedish Newsmen's Views on the Role of the Press*, paper presented at the 30th Annual Conference of the American Association for Public Opinion Research, June 1975 (Stockholm: The Economic Research Institute at the Stockholm School of Economics, Mimeo).
37. B. C. Cohen, n. 19, p. 103.
38. See A. O. Hero, *Mass Media and World Affairs: Studies in Citizen Participation in International Relations*, Vol. IV (Boston: World Peace Foundation, 1959).
39. In the preliminary analysis three newspapers with different distributions—one national, one regional, and one local—were studied. See L. Hedman, *Svenska pressens behandling av utrikesmaterial* (Uppsala: Sociologiska institutionen, Uppsala universitet, 1978). 26% of the articles in the national paper were pure foreign material. The corresponding figures for the regional and local papers were 19% and 8% respectively. 50% of the international articles in the national paper concerned political issues compared to 25% and 38% in the regional and local papers respectively. Cf. n. 38.
40. We have combined those who consider the alternative to be a very big problem (value 5 on a scale from 1 to 5) and those who think it is a big problem (value 4).

41. See, among others, U. Himmelstrand, *Världen, Nigeria och Biafra. Sanningen som kom bort* (Stockholm: Aldus Aktuelit, 1969).
42. However, if we consider only exposure to news programs and foreign magazine programs the exposure hypothesis gets support. See L. Nowak, *Information gaps in the Developing-Country Field*, Report 1-Summary (Stockholm: Swedish Broadcasting Corporation/Audience and Program Research Department, No. 11-1977, mimeo), p. 16. Those who watched many programs in a television serial about developing countries became more interested in these countries than people who watched only a few programs. In this study there was a weak correlation between exposure and level of information. See L. Hedman, *Multimedia in Adult Educational and Informational Campaigns*, paper prepared for the International Conference on Adult Education and Development, Dar es Salaam, June 21-26, 1976 (Uppsala: Department of Sociology, University of Uppsala, mimeo).
43. See, e.g., J. P. Robinson, "Mass Communication and Information Diffusion," in *Current Perspectives in Mass Communication Research*, ed. F. G. Kline and P. J. Tichenor (Beverly Hills: SAGE Publications, 1972).
44. Cf. n. 38.
45. Cf. H. H. Hyman and P. S. Sheatsley, "Some Reasons Why Information Campaigns Fail," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 11 (1947), pp. 412-423; and J. P. Robinson, n. 43.
46. See, for instance, B. C. Cohen, n. 19, p. 258.
47. Five background variables were used to measure a person's social status. Each respondent was given a score of 0 or 1 for each of the five variables depending on his value on each variable, and from his total score he was classified as having a low status (0-1), a "middle" status (2-3), or a high status (4-5). Cf. J. Galtung, "Foreign Policy Opinion as a Function of Social Position," *Journal of Peace Research*, No. 3-4 (1964), pp. 206-231.
- The variables and the scores awarded for different values on these variables were the following:

Variable	Scores	
	1	0
Sex	Men	Women
Age	30-59	15-29, over 60
Occupation	Directors/managers, high or intermediate ranking officials, free professions	T rademen, unskilled laborers, low ranking employees, unemployed
Education	More than 8 years at school	8 years or less at school
Area of residence	Area where more than 90% live in town	Area where less than 90% live in town

48. Cf. A. O. Hero, n. 38; B. C. Cohen, n. 19.

49. Cf. W. A. Gamson and A. Modigliani, "Knowledge and Foreign Policy Opinions: Some Models for Consideration," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (1966), p. 188.
50. Cf. H. Hveem, "Foreign Policy Thinking in the Elite and the General Population," *Journal of Peace Research*, No. 4 (1968), p. 158.
51. Cf. B. C. Cohen, n. 3, p. 107.

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## Getting in and getting out Notes on method and diplomacy in international communication research\*

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AND

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In 1953, the *Public Opinion Quarterly* devoted a special issue to international communications announcing the Grand Opening of the World to communications research. In his preface to the special issue, Lazarsfeld looked forward with great enthusiasm to the new frontier, arguing that the study of the introduction and functioning of the mass media in the developing world would make the impact of the media more clearly visible.<sup>1</sup> Whereas the study of media effects had until then been beclouded by all of the other aspects of modernity that bear upon the individual in modern society, he thought that media effects might be less confounded in the new nations. Methodologically, Lazarsfeld envisaged two possibilities: (1) the more careful analysis of the relationship between mass media and personal influence through the combination of the techniques of survey research and sociometry; and (2) the interweaving of anthropological techniques—that is, observational material and interviews with informants, both native and specialists—with the more standard questionnaire techniques. As if to kindle Lazarsfeld's optimism, the Bureau of Applied Social Research had recently completed its monumental study of