For those who will read, Carey's contribution can counter the recent trend to what Lohrey calls "the pervasive idolatry" of the free market.

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Trends in World Communication: On Disempowerment and Self-Empowerment *by. Cees J. Hamelink* (Southbound & Third World Network, Penang, Malaysia, 1994), pp. 168, US$ 18.00, ISBN 983-9054-06-6

This is an action-oriented book. The author and his associates intend to launch an international people's movement to improve the world's information and cultural environment through the creation of a People's. Communication Charter and a world tribunal to implement it. The book is intended to contribute to mobilization for the movement through the clarification of the major trends of world communication and their. implications for ordinary men and women. While the proposed movement includes people from all countries, this particular book appears to be aimed at an audience from the poor, less-industrialized countries.

The book is lucidly written and covers an enormous amount of ground in amazingly few pages. The author takes the reader through the history of communication from the time of Emperor Cyrus (6th Century BC) to 1993 and presents a series of trends in the contemporary world communication environment. A broad range of communication media and technologies are covered. Arguing that "current trends in world communication converge toward the disempowerment of people" (p. 121), the author then goes on to discuss different approaches to empowerment and provides a draft of the People's Communication Charter, presumably as part of his favoured approach.

The book's weaknesses can be traced to vastness of its scope and possibly the author's conception of a work intended to mobilize. This reviewer has reservations about the intellectual and mobilizational value of piling on illustrations supporting claims of mega corporations running amuck trampling people's rights. At an intellectual level, the author seems to be setting out "iron laws," not recognizing recent advances in conceptualizing the interplay of structure and agency and the concomitant recognition of uncertainty and complexity in society and technological systems. It is possible, based on the author's own evidence, to provide illustrations of the contingencies intrinsic to the processes he describes. The Bell Atlantic-TCI merger, described as " the largest communication merger in US history" and in language that suggests a fait accompli (p. 86), was not completed. And Bell Atlantic subsequently withdrew the proposals for advanced video services it had submitted to the federal regulatory body. Explaining the tendency toward concentration on the same page, the author quotes Mickey Schulhof, the president of Sony USA, on the. necessity of combining software and hardware. Had the author written this chapter two years later, it is unlikely that he would have quoted Schulhof, now presiding over a crisis-ridden, money-losing music and film business. Even at a pragmatic level, the value of portraying communication corporations as omnipotent entities exerting greater and greater control over their environments is puzzling. If the readers were to accept this portrayal unquestioningly, the logical response would appear to be one of hopelessness and apathy. The alternative view which recognizes contradictions between industries and enterprises, allows for uncertainty and mistakes, and identifies points of vulnerability, appears to hold much greater potential for mobilization.

The author's previous work, particularly Hamelink's book in 1983, seemed to allow for greater uncertainty [1]. It is possible that the "popular" level of this book and the tailoring of the presentation to an audience from the poor, less-industrialized countries led to the appearance of the "iron laws" . But this could surely not have been the author's intention, given his interest in empowerment and the condemnation of transferring the lowest of what is produced in the West to the third world (p. 128). The contrast between the sophisticated concept of cultural synchronization advanced in Hamelink's 1983 book and the concept of McDonaldization (p. 111) advanced in this book illustrates this point. Cultural synchronization, particularly in relation to the then dominant concept of cultural imperialism, allowed for greater recognition of the volition of subjects in non-western countries and perhaps even for some synchronization occurring in the more powerful countries as a result of contact. McDonaldization, while more catchy, does not.

Perhaps as a result of space limitations and the desire to keep things simple, the author leaves a number of interesting issues unexplored. For example, he raises the question of "selective short-circuiting" of trading opportunities of poor countries or of their entire process of integration into the world economy on p. 110. It is a great pity the issue is sidestepped by the comment that "this may be a blessing in disguise . . . [making] those not invited [to integrate into the world economy] less vulnerable to the problems as posed by McDonaldization." The thesis that the greatest danger to poor countries and their people today is one of irrelevance and not of exploitation is one that has been raised in scholarly fora by Castells and Cardoso [2] , and appears to be the basis of the policies of the current president of Brazil and former dependency theorist, Fernando Henrique Cardoso. It is clearly one that is of fundamental importance to any people's movement intending to change the world's communication environment. Another example is the simplistic treatment of international intellectual property issues. It is a pity that the author does not adequately explore the contradiction between allowing "piracy" or the uncompensated import of intellectual property and the fostering of indigenous cultural expression. It can easily be argued that piracy amounts to an artificial underpricing of imports or a form of dumping that prevents the local cultural producers from realizing their livelihood and stifles indigenous cultural expression. Instead, the author merely asserts that the form of intellectual property protection the West wishes to impose has "a fundamentally negative impact on the possibilities for Third World countries to develop local technologies and cultural expression" (p. 116).

The book includes a number of tables arraying powerful media corporations by various criteria. In some cases, the data are obsolete. For example, Tables 4 and 5 depict US communication corporations with the largest defence contracts in 1982. Many of these corporations have undergone major changes in the 13 years between 1982 and the publication of the book, some being merged or acquired (eg., Sperry and Burroughs, listed as separate entities) and others suffering dramatic reverses in fortune (eg., IBM and ITT). In any case, the end of the Cold War has qualitatively changed the relations between the defence industries and government. In other cases, it is difficult to understand what the author intended to say. Table 6 lists the top corporations in the international communication industry with strong direct military connections, along with their home(?) countries. The text does not define what direct military connections are and does not. explain the significance of direct or indirect military connections for the thesis of the book. The relevance of the countries listed against the corporations is not explained either. Some of the corporations have since changed nationality (eg., RCA is no longer an American company). It is a pity that the space wasted on these questionable tables could not have been better utilized say, for a discussion of the relevance or importance of national identification of multinational corporations.

The introduction suggests that the people's communication charter is an integral, and

perhaps consummative, element of the book. Unfortunately the author does not explicitly develop the connections between the two components, merely mentioning the charter in the one but the last page of the last chapter. Given the author's expertise in international law, the reviewer expected a powerful argument for the strategy of seeking to resolve international communication problems through the mechanism of a supranational charter of rights rather than through national policies, both communication-specific and broad, or through consumer boycotts or consumer education, among others. It may be that the author believes in the charter so strongly that such an effort was considered superfluous. In terms of the charter itself, two key questions may be raised. First, the extremely broadly formulated articles have the advantage of being inclusive and the disadvantage of being difficult to interpret and enforce, particularly when two or more articles come into conflict. For example, Article 4 gives people the right to gather information, including the right of access to information on matters of public interest held by pubic authorities. Article 16 provides protection by law against interference with privacy. In cases that have already arisen in some countries, media or public access to significant amounts of personal information held by government bodies poses a serious threat to privacy of individuals. The charter does not appear to recognize the potential for such conflicts and does not provide guidance on how to deal with them.

The second question raised by the charter is the perennial question of the enforceability of international law. Communication-related "rights" are difficult enough to enforce within national borders. But these difficulties pale in comparison with the difficulties of enforcing international rights pertaining to communication, including those deriving from international legal instruments such as the Convention on the International Right of Correction, adopted by the United Nations General. Assembly in 1952 and which entered into force in 1962. Few countries have bothered to ratify it, no one seems to know about it, and, to the best of this reviewer's knowledge, not a single attempt has been made to exercise a "right of correction" deriving from international law. If this is the sorry fate of formal legal instruments that governments are party to, what will be the status of a charter that is outside the realm of governments and formal law?

The book and its mobilizational effects would have been much stronger had the author addressed these kinds of questions. In fact, a strong argument can be developed for building a corpus of international law for global civil society. The question of enforceability, which affects both formal international legal instruments and the People's Communication Charter, can be turned on its head to justify the development of supranational legal instruments outside the sphere of inter-governmental relations. Because international laws are unenforceable, unless national governments choose to enforce them, it may be argued that the question of enforceability is a red herring. The real purpose of international law is to set benchmarks for ethical behavior, not to create enforceable legal rights. If this is taken to be true, there is no reason to allow governments to monopolize the creation of these benchmarks. More organizations committed to public interest concerns should engage in the formulation of international "law", the building of knowledge about and support for international legal instruments and the mounting of campaigns to get national governments to adopt provisions from them into national law and thereby enforce them. In this context, the book under review plays a valuable role in mobilizing people and organization throughout the world to address the urgent issues of ethical behaviors in the emergent world economy and polity.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

[1] M. Carnoy, M. Castells, S.S. Cohen, & F.H. Cardoso, *The new global economy in the information age: Reflections on our changing world*, Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park, PA, 1993

² C.J. Hamelink, *Cultural autonomy in global communications: Planning national information policy*, Longman, New York,1983

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Growth Through Competition, Competition Through Growth: Strategic Management and the Economy of Japan, *by Hiroyuki Odagiri* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1994), pp xv + 356, A$120 (hb), A$44.95 (pb), ISBN 0-19-828655-4

The apparent Western fascination with Japanese management practice has seen a wave of books on the subject published over the past decade. This quite excellent monograph is not just another narrative volume which describes the so-called unique features of the Japanese management system. To the contrary, Hiroyuki Odagiri's analysis is relatively sophisticated and balanced, its argument firmly set within a framework of economic theory and its hypotheses tested utilising quantitative techniques and much empirical data. It is also ambitious in its attempt to not only discuss the motivation, behaviour and organisation of Japanese management but also analyse the consequences of the Japanese system on its industrial organisation and macro economy.

Right from the beginning the author sets out question the popular stereotypes which stress either the cultural peculiarities of the Japanese business and management system or the conspiratorial elements of the so-called model of *Japan Inc,* with both strands highlighting harmony and consensus over individuation and competition. Odagiri turns the current orthodoxy on Japanese management on its head by arguing that the principle of the invisible hand is just as applicable to the Japanese economy (and possibly more so) as it is to the western economies. The central theme of the book is that the Japanese management system is 'an economically rational system and...a competitive system...and that this competition is enhanced by the preference of Japanese management for growth and competition (which) in turn makes growth feasible.' In particular, the author persuasively argues that growth and competition are hallmarks of the Japanese management system and that Japan's business strength lies specifically in its strong incentive system which links Japanese workers and management and causes them to behave differently to their western counterparts.

The book is divided into three sections, the first containing a core discussion of the behaviour and characteristics of the Japanese management system. The first chapter sets the stage for the book by presenting a number of key concepts and outline of the contents. The emphasis on human resources within the Japanese management system and its relationship to growth and competition within the Japanese firm are introduced, with the author arguing that human resources constitute a more fundamental constraint on the growth of the firm than do physical or financial resources. By doing so the author challenges the traditional orthodoxy and presents the reader with an alternative way of looking at the firm, hitherto overlooked in neo-classical theory.

In a brief taste of what is to come Odagiri then shows how Japanese internal labour market practices, such as lifetime employment and internal promotion work to maximise labour