

TRANSNATIONAL MEDIA

CONCEPTS AND CASES

EDITED BY

SUMAN MISHRA | REBECCA KERN-STONE



WILEY Blackwell

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1

Introduction

Rebecca Kern-Stone and Suman Mishra

This edited book is designed to meet the introductory needs of undergraduate and graduate courses in international media, international mass communication, global media transnational media, comparative media analysis, and the like. More broadly, it aims to fulfill the needs of colleges and universities who are internationalizing their curriculum to meet the needs of an increasingly globalized world through introduction of international-oriented courses. Books that exist on the subject tend to be highly theoretical and often focus on journalism or entertainment media or specific regions of the world. In this book we have provided a broader perspective on national and transnational media in an easy to read accessible form and covered different media forms from Africa, Asia (including the Middle East), the Americas, Europe, and Oceania.

In media studies, concepts such as global communication, transnational communication, international communication, trans-border communication, world communication, intercultural communication, and so on have been used to highlight the communication and flow of information across boundaries. Each of these terms has its own dimension and complexity (Kamalipour 2007). We use the term “transnational” to recognize media’s role in communication and relevance both within a nation and also across the transnational arena.

Thus, this book provides a country-based perspective along with a transnational perspective. It is important to note that it is impossible to cover every region of the world and every country within a region; nevertheless, the book covers media from a wide array of countries from around the globe and highlights its national and transnational dimensions.

Chapters are arranged so that important foundation material is presented at the beginning of the book with regional and country discussions in the remaining chapters. The following two chapters introduce and discuss key transnational media concepts and theories and media systems. The first introduces concepts like globalization and the historical development of transnational media and communication theories in the area, also referred to in general as theories of international communication. It highlights the major strengths and weaknesses of these theories and changes over time. Last, it addresses the many complexities of today’s world to provoke thought and discussion for future theories in this area. The chapter on media systems introduces how media is directly integrated with political, economic, and cultural conditions. These discussions are meant to be introductory and are presented not as highly theoretical models, but as background information to understand how media function around the world.

The book is then divided by regions of the world, namely: Africa, the Americas, Asia (including the Middle East), Europe, and Oceania. These regions have been defined based on the UN’s Standard Country and Area Codes Classifications, revised October 2013 (UN Stats). In each

regional section of the book, we have first provided some basic information about selected countries from the region, including a brief description of their media, and then provided more in-depth country-specific media cases as well as transnational influences of media from that country.

We have invited international scholars to write essays or case studies on specific countries as we wanted to include more international voices in this book. The essays and case studies offer country-specific examples of media trends in television, radio, films, journalism, social media, and music, among others. As a whole, this book explores and answer the following questions:

- 1) How can media be understood on a global scale within and between nations?
- 2) How do changing global conditions – including economic, political, and cultural – impact media and how are they impacted by media in transnational information flow?
- 3) What are some of the primary centers of transnational media activities, both new and old?

1.1 Understanding Transnationalism and Related Trends

Transnationalism engages in political, cultural, social, and economic initiatives that extend beyond the borders of nation-states. A *nation-state* is a geographic locale that has defined borders where people share similar identities. These identities may be cultural in that they involve religion, food, traditions, clothing, history, or other factors that bring groups of people together. The identities may also be nationalistic or have *nationalism*, in that the people of the nation see themselves as part of a geographic place where they live, work, raise families, and engage with government affairs. As a result, there evolves a sense of allegiance with place. While not necessarily politically motivated, people of a nation-state feel a belonging to the place they call home. Nation-states, however, usually have fluid borders. Citizens, in most cases, are able to come and go from their home country and travel. Their view of the world expands beyond their local geography and culture, resulting in new curiosities about global understandings. Under transnationalism, global movement and interactions are what create a more integrated global society.

For transnationalism to occur a few additional factors need to exist. First, there needs to be “regular and sustained social contacts over time across national borders” (Portes et al. 1999, p. 219). In other words, regular trips across borders – whether business or pleasure – that involve activity and transaction, facilitate the concept of transnationalism. The trend of transnationalism is not new. While the term might be, transnationalism has existed since people have crossed borders to engage in political, cultural, social, or economic transactions. It can be tied to the history of globalization, which will be discussed in Chapter 2. Essentially, it could be argued that transnationalism is a long-established trend that only recently was given a name. Second, as Portes et al. (1999) note, transnationalism began with the individual. It is at the local level that individuals sought opportunities across borders, whether for political motivations – as a need to escape government policies or regimes, or economic motivations – as a way to obtain goods or connections for business, for example. Displays of nationalism in sport, music, art, and traditional dress are all presented by the individual. Transnationalism does not only exist at the level of the individual: it begins with the individual but works to embolden larger institutions. These institutions may be government, corporation, education, religion, or of course mass media. Mass media can function on both the local and public level, which would be considered more nationalistic, or on the transnational level. Both are important to how people gain information about the world around them.

Examples of transnationalism can be seen at a macro level through global statistics; for example, in population changes, economic changes, immigration flows, global travel, and

technology. All these changes are intrinsically linked with growth, production and consumption of media, global flow of information, patterns of media adoptions, cultural influences and changes, and so on. For example, many leading media companies from America and Europe today, for example Bertelsmann, are investing in the media markets of developing countries like India, China, Brazil, and Nigeria because of their size, and this provides a growth opportunity for these companies as well as growth of international media reach in these countries. Further understanding of the international reach and investment of a large European conglomerate in growing markets is discussed in Chapter 19. Similarly, economic changes in China have helped Chinese businesses immensely; these businesses are now investing in the established media markets of America and Europe and are helping to boost them. Chinese investment in the American movie-theater chain AMC Entertainment Holdings Inc., Hollywood studio Legendary Entertainment, and India-based Reliance Entertainment's investment in Hollywood director Spielberg's DreamWorks studio, are just a few examples of global changes and the impact they have had on media business. US-based Hollywood's, Australia-based Wellywood's, India-based Bollywood's, and Nigeria-based Nollywood's contributions and connections to global media and markets are further discussed in Chapters 7, 10, 14, and 22, respectively. Other examples include the enormous transnational growth of several Latin American media companies, which has expanded the reach of telenovelas around the globe. For more on Latin American media conglomerates as well as the global impact of telenovelas, see Chapters 8 and 9. Transnational media has impacted news and journalism as much as entertainment. A number of news channels, such as BBC, CNN, Al Jazeera, and Russia Today (RT), are broadcast via satellite around the world, are available online, and have offices and reporters based in major cities around the world. This adds to differing perspectives on global events. The news systems and global reach of Al Jazeera and RT are discussed in Chapters 16 and 20 respectively.

1.2 Population Trends

Population changes can tell us a lot about clusters of growth, media opportunities, employment and capital, infrastructure needs, and other necessities. The population of the world currently is over 7.6 billion (UN DESA 2017). The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2017), expects the population to reach 8.6 billion in 2030, 9.8 billion by 2050 and 11.2 billion by 2100. That is an increase of 14% by 2030, 12% by 2050, and 13% by 2100. The largest countries in terms of population size are China and India, representing 19% (1.4 billion inhabitants) and 18% (1.3 billion inhabitants) of the world's population (UN DESA 2017). However, India is set to overtake China's population within five years. Of the 10 largest countries in the world by population, see Figure 1.1, Nigeria and India are growing most rapidly.

1.3 Economic Trends

Overall, the world economy is projected to double by 2050 (PWC 2017). By 2050, China, India, the United States, Indonesia, and Brazil are projected to be the world's top five economies (PWC 2017). Vietnam, the Philippines, and Nigeria are expected to make the biggest leap upward in the ranking (PWC 2017). On average, the emerging markets (E7: China, India, Indonesia, Brazil, Russia, Mexico, and Turkey) are expected to grow twice as fast as the advanced economies (G7: US, UK, France, Germany, Japan, Canada, and Italy) (PWC 2017).

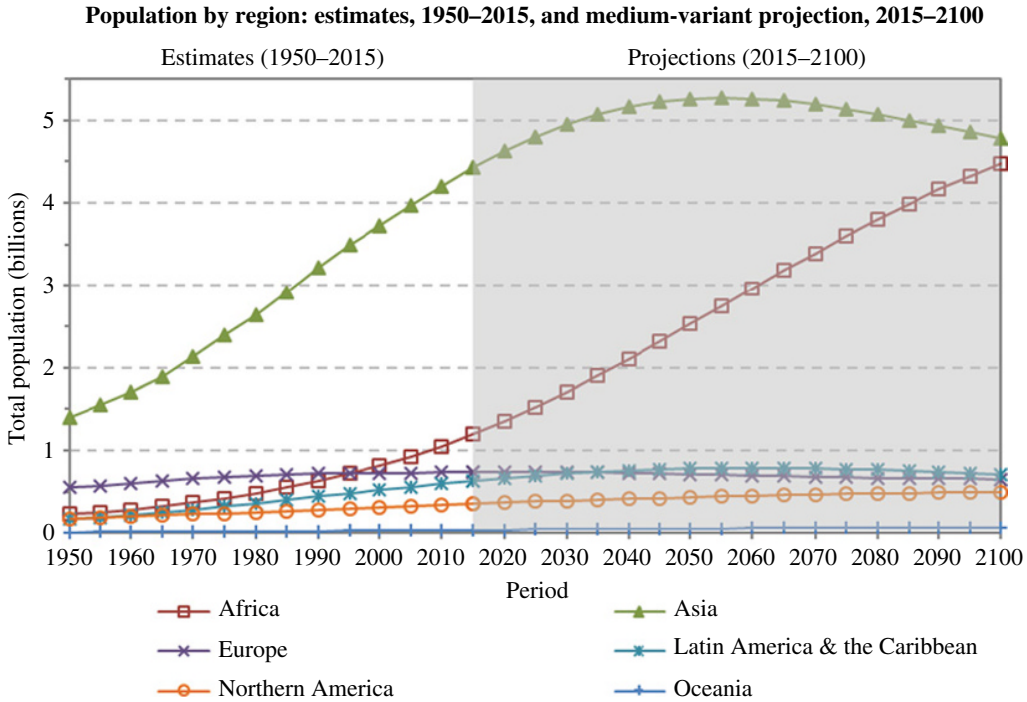


Figure 1.1 Population trends. *Source:* United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2017). *World Population Prospects: The 2017 Revision*. New York: United Nations.

The GDP (Gross Domestic Product) – a measure of economic output, growth, and development – for many countries is changing under overall transnational growth (World Bank 2018). That means a larger labor market, global connectivity, growing opportunities, and greater purchasing power for many. Higher GDP allows for an increase in infrastructure spending which then can be used to bring in media opportunities, such as local radio, internet, and newspaper, as well as education opportunities. It can also boost current media in developing as well as established economies. Overall, the GDP of most countries has been growing. Developing countries have been growing faster than developed regions (World Bank 2018) (see Figure 1.2).

While the economies of countries have been growing, poverty levels on a global basis have been dropping (UN DESA 2015; World Bank 2018). The global poverty line is set at US\$1.90 PPP (purchasing power parity) a day, and since 1990 poverty has dropped by over 20%. However, as the United Nations notes, those in low-income countries – a GNI (gross national income) per capita below US\$1025 or less, such as many in sub-Saharan Africa and southern areas of Asia – are more likely to be caught in the poverty coverage gaps. Poverty in high income countries – a GNI per capita of \$12476 or more – is often overlooked in poverty measurements as wealthier countries are not considered to have any extreme poverty (World Bank 2017). Yet, wealthier nations with extreme poverty gaps have similar problems to poorer nations when it comes to media access. Poverty level and inequity affect people's access to goods and services including access to technology and the communication infrastructure. This also means citizens have less opportunity to create their own stories, whether socio-political or cultural, or engage with transnational voices.

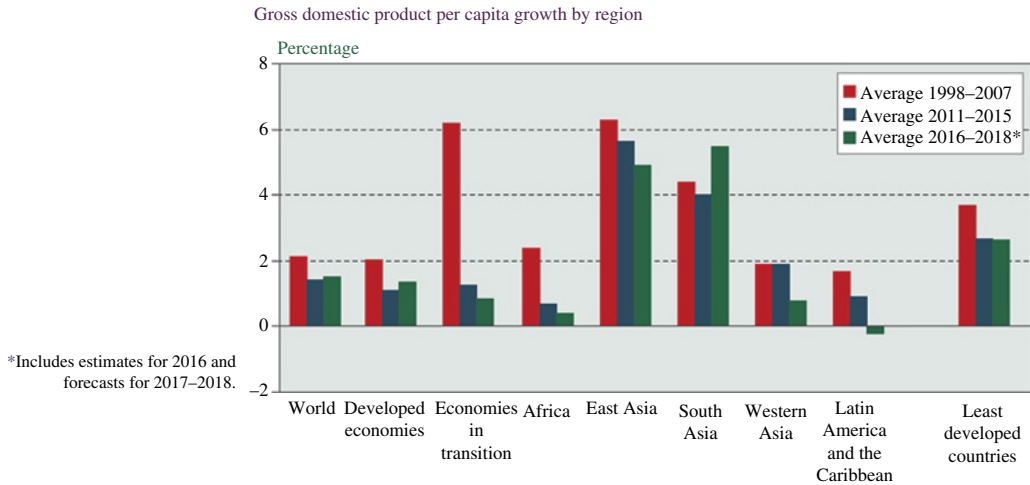


Figure 1.2 Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita growth by region. *Source:* UN/DESA, based on United Nations Statistics Division National Accounts Main Aggregates Database, United Nations Population Division World Population Prospects and UN/DESA forecasts.

1.4 Immigration Trends

Higher labor productivity may be to some extent a by-product of immigration flows. Transnationalism partially involves the movement of peoples across borders. As previously stated, this may be for travel, but under sociological definitions it also means sustained contact, often for business. This means people cross borders seeking work, or other forms of sustained political, economic, cultural, or social interaction. According to the United Nations, in 2017 approximately 257 million immigrants lived outside their country of birth. Asians, Central Europeans, and East Africans have made up the largest segments of immigrants by destination. In addition, as of 2017, Asia, Western Europe, and North America have hosted the greatest number of immigrants. Refugees account for less than 10% of the immigrant population worldwide, according to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD 2017).

Immigration growth under transnationalism can be a positive occurrence. As the OECD (2017) note, when monitored, immigration can do a great deal to spur economic growth in a country. This is because the incoming workers, for example, fill necessary jobs, build businesses, and invest in the local economy. However, there are not always incentives to stay, especially if political, legal, or social entrapments make it difficult for the immigrant to stay in their host country.

Immigration and changes in population diversity also spur changes in media. As people cross borders and establish themselves in new places, they bring with them new languages, cultures, and traditions. In some cases, popular culture and media gain a global foothold, such as in the case studies from Asia, Chapters 13 and 15, where immigration and marketing efforts influenced worldwide interest. Or as in the case study from the Caribbean in Chapter 11, where media is created by immigrants who were brought there, along with indigenous peoples. Sometimes, governments see a need to expand media offerings to immigrants and indigenous groups in native languages. Chapters 17 and 21 explore this type of media expansion on two different continents (Figure 1.3).

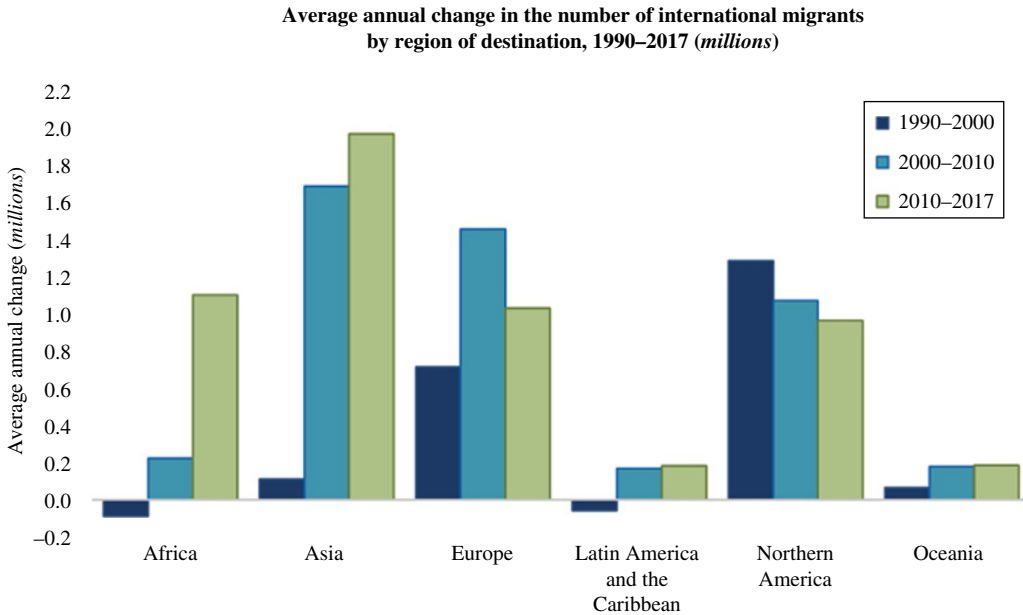


Figure 1.3 Immigration flow: international migrants by region of destination. *Source: United Nations' International Migration Report 2017.*

1.5 Global Travel: Trends

Besides immigration as a major component of transnationalism, global travel is important as it promotes economic growth, cultural curiosity, and increased cultural knowledge. Over the last several decades, global travel has become easier and faster. This is due to changes in mass transportation – airplanes, trains, ships – that can carry more people longer distances at greater speeds. To give some idea of how much this has impacted tourist arrivals globally, according to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) in 1950 world tourism arrivals were 25 million, by 2000 they were up to 674 million, and were 1235 million in 2016. The UNWTO (2017) also notes that tourism accounts for “10% of the global GDP and one in 10 jobs worldwide” (p. 3). Research has also shown that South Asia and Southeast Asia have seen the greatest growth in 2017: between 6.5 and 7%. South Asia is expected to be the frontrunner in the coming decade, with the rest of Asia close behind. These regions are followed by Saharan and sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, and the Caribbean, all of which are expected to grow between 3.5 and 5% over the next decade. North America, Europe, and Oceania are expected to see the smallest increases, which is a significant reversal from years past.

1.6 Technology Trends

Technology has always impacted human lives in significant ways. Communication and the digital technologies of today have significantly increased the pace at which we send and receive information. Satellites, internet, wireless technologies, and social media are all aiding greater global interactions, global flow of local news and information, and entertainment media around

the world. Google, Facebook, and Twitter have become major players in global news and information dissemination. Their worldwide use and popularity make them very powerful transnational players. For example, Facebook and Twitter have played a role in various protests around the world such as Egypt's "Arab Spring," Iran's "Green Revolution," and the United States' "Black lives matter." Their power crosses national boundaries and influences local populations, but also makes them targets for censorship and control in autocratic countries. China, for example, has developed its own social media ecosystem and search engines, and controls websites that its citizens can access (see Chapter 12). Cell phones, wearable technologies, voice driven assistants, and artificial intelligence (AI) are bringing significant changes to the world of media and local lives. The Reuters Institute's 2018 report notes, "China and India become a key focus for digital growth with innovations around payment, online identity, and artificial intelligence" (Reuters 2018, p. 6). Today, more than four billion people, that is more than half of the world's population, are online, a number that is only likely to grow. In July 2018, there were 4.1 billion active internet users, 3.8 billion unique mobile internet users, 3.3 billion active social media users, and 3.1 billion active mobile social media users (Statista 2018), so the world is even more digitally connected today than ever before.

According to The World Bank (2016), Canada, Western Europe, Australia, and Japan have the highest rates of internet usage as a percentage of the population, followed by the United States, Argentina, Saudi Arabia, and the Russian Federation, among others. The countries with the lowest usage include many countries in Africa – namely the Central African Republic, Niger, and Chad – as well as in central Asia, such as Iraq, and south Asia, such as Indonesia (Poushter 2016; World Bank 2016). However, as Poushter (2016) notes, significant increases in internet use have occurred in developing economies, in particular Brazil, Malaysia, and China. Regionally, internet users have grown more significantly in Asia and Africa than any other part of the world between 2009 and 2017 (see Figure 1.4).

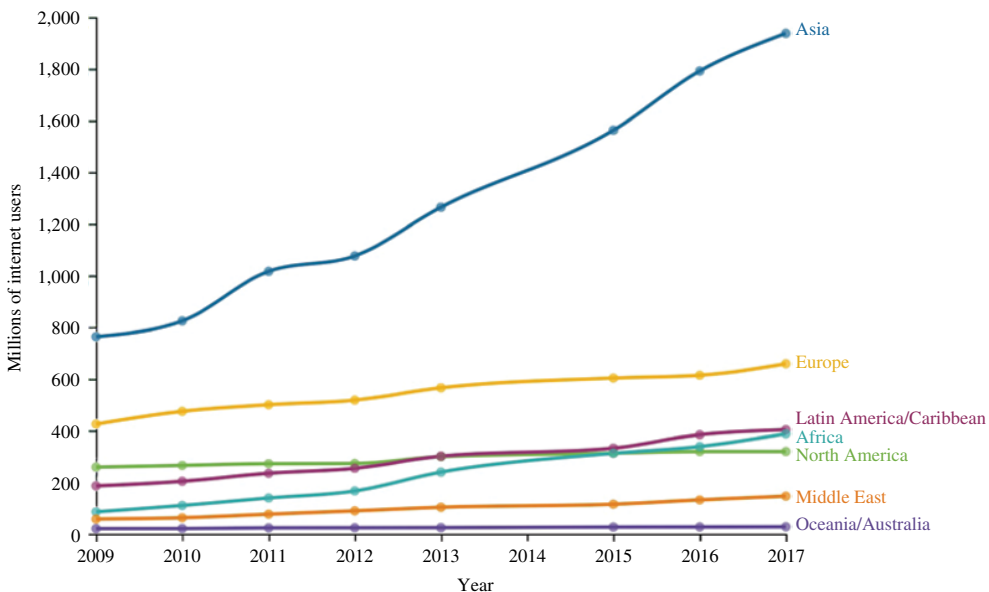


Figure 1.4 Internet user growth trend by region. *Data Source:* Statista (2018).

The *Economist* (2016) notes that while many in Africa do not have fixed broadband access, they do use internet on their mobile phones, which has allowed for increased trade, need for information, and opportunities to connect when other media outlets are unavailable or hindered due to government intervention. However, even within a continent where internet and other media growth has increased, infrastructure impedes growth on many levels and hides poverty in non-urban centers (*Economist* 2016) where many cannot afford basic communication technologies. The use of internet and mobile technologies in different contexts and in different types of economies is further discussed in Chapters 6, 12, and 18.

1.7 Transnational Media

Media are channels through which communication takes place. *Transnational media* is media consumed and constructed globally as well as by those who engage in transnational initiatives. *National media* is media of a nation-state. It is created locally, although it may be part of a larger network of media entities. In some cases, it may be community media or hyper-local media, created and funded by individuals or by the government. In other cases, national mass media may be more corporatized and funded through advertising. Transnational mass media crosses nation-state borders. This may happen because of the proximity of two countries, where radio and television signals reach farther than the countries' borders. It can also happen because media is imported and exported. This varies widely globally, as not all countries or regions import and export media equally.

Marshall McLuhan first described an early version of transnational mass media in his seminal book, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man and the Understanding of Media*. Here he discusses the idea of a *Global Village*, one that is made possible because of electric and electronic communication. He saw a future where mass media would shrink the distance between people globally and would increase cross-cultural understanding. His ideas about a Global Village have since been criticized by some as being romanticized because they do not account for global power imbalances regarding information access, infrastructure, and geopolitics, and because a Global Village would increase the homogeneity of individual cultures. So, it could be argued that transnational mass media is both positive and negative. Positive because information can be shared across long distances and could increase cross-cultural understandings. Negative because globally political and economic situations are not equal and this leaves some without opportunity to engage with global media formats and content.

The United Nations is working hard to promote information and communication technologies (ICTs) as they believe that this will help foster global development. As a part of their 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, one goal includes developing infrastructure, particularly in emerging economies. One point in Goal 9 specifically states, "Significantly increase access to information and communications technology and strive to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in least developed countries by 2020" (United Nations 2017, Sustainable Development Goal 9). This is because around 2.6 billion people in the world do not have consistent access to electricity, and nearly 1.5 billion do not have dependable phone access (United Nations 2017, Sustainable Development Goal 9). These are important initiatives to increase global access to communication, particularly electronic communication. These, paired with initiatives on literacy, poverty, and skills training – among others – can help to shift the power imbalances of information societies globally.

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Part I

Setting the Foundations

Key Concepts

2

Transnational Media: Key Concepts and Theories

Suman Mishra

Media are one of the ways through which information and global culture flow around the world. Over the years, several theories and concepts have been developed to understand, explain, and predict how media operate in the transnational arena. These include globalization and various associated macro-level theories of international communication. These theories go beyond the national and connect the local to the global.

Theories and concepts are developed in a particular social, political, technological, and economic context, and hence they address the needs and concerns of the times in which they are developed. As the context and conditions change, new theories and ways of understanding the world are developed or needed. In the transnational arena, most early theories raised concerns regarding speed, reach, and control of communication by the developed nations of the Global North (e.g. the United States, the United Kingdom, France) and its economic, political, and cultural impact on the less-developed nations of the Global South (many Latin American, African, and Asian countries). Newer theories in this area, however, tend to focus on the complexities of global–local interactions, and the role communities and national audiences play in adoption of foreign content that is circulated through transnational media corporations.

2.1 Understanding Globalization

Globalization is not a new phenomenon; migration of people, goods, and ideas has taken place throughout human history. However, use of the term “globalization” began around the 1930s, and became a buzzword in the 1980s, when journalists, academics, and others started frequently to use the term to describe the integration of international markets (James and Steger 2014).

Even though the term globalization has been popularly used, scholars have differed in their conceptualization of its fundamental meaning. Consequently, today there are more than 100 definitions of globalization (Al-Rodhan and Stoudmann 2006). Most definitions underscore the dynamic and complex nature of globalization, and the many interconnections and interdependencies it creates across social, political, and economic boundaries. Al-Rodhan and Stoudmann (2006, p. 2) provide a good baseline definition in assessing globalization as “a process that encompasses the causes, course, and consequences of transnational and transcultural integration of human and non-human activities.”

Globalization today has its supporters and critics, but few deny its effect on countries and cultures. It is a complex, multidimensional phenomenon that has been categorized into *economic globalization*, *political globalization*, and *cultural globalization*. These three areas are often discussed separately, but in fact they are interlinked. For example, globalization of

finance not only integrates world economies through spread of global capital, it also directly and indirectly affects the social and political spheres by influencing wages, income distribution, and employment, all of which have significant political implications for a nation. Similarly, cultural exchanges among nations – for example, through films, television programs, music, and so on – affect and are affected by the global flow of capital.

Globalization has been occurring for centuries, but three distinct phases of *modern* globalization are discussed below to provide historical context and background to its development and its relationship to theories of international communication. In each phase of globalization, media and communication technologies have played a significant role in connecting the world and facilitating inter-cultural exchanges, and hence their role and impacts have been theorized by scholars. The first phase of modern globalization occurred between 1870 and 1913, the second from 1945 to 1991, and the third from 1992 up to today (Verde 2017).

2.2 The First Phase of Globalization

The first phase of modern globalization began in the 1870s with the expansion of transportation (e.g. railways) and communication technologies (e.g. telephone, phonograph, wireless telegraph). All of these innovations helped to bring the world closer. They also helped to expand international trade among the colonies of Great Britain and other imperial powers and helped shift wealth and resources from the Global South to the Global North. Schmidt and Hersh (2000, p. 3) refer to this period as “the age of discovery and conquest characterized as the epoch of mercantilism and primitive accumulation.” Colonization also helped to spread the cultural, economic, and the political ideologies¹ of the colonial powers to the colonized regions.

In 1914, World War I caused a slowdown in globalization as nations became involved in war. This global slowdown lasted for nearly 25 years until the end of World War II. This was also a period when many of the world’s advanced countries experienced the Great Depression (1929–1932) and looked inwards to address their domestic problems.

2.3 The Second Phase of Globalization

Following World War II, the second phase of globalization began. Global cooperation and trade flourished as nations came together after the war in nation-rebuilding efforts and also in aid of the development of “third world” countries, many of whom had fought for independence from colonial rule and had become sovereign nation-states. Global financial organizations like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) were set up for reconstruction and to facilitate the developmental needs of nations. However, this was also the period of the Cold War when tensions between the two world superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union and their allies, were at a highpoint. US and British concerns over the spread of communism and Soviet dominance in the political and economic arena of Eastern European countries and their political influence in Western European democracies led to closer political, economic, and strategic links between their allies, and also led to the formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), a unified military command to contain the Soviet Union. NATO was made up of the United States and its European allies, many of whom had benefited from the US aid provided to them under the Marshall Plan (officially the European Recovery Program ERP). The United States then and now continues to hold tremendous power in NATO.