MEDIA AND SOCIETY

MEDIA AND SOCIETY

6th Edition

Edited by James Curran and David Hesmondhalgh

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

James Curran and David Hesmondhalgh

Media and Society has become more a branded series than a book: most essays in each new edition have been new. The sixth edition continues this tradition. Twelve out of the seventeen essays in this volume appear here for the first time. Of the remainder, all but one (a classic) has been reworked and updated.

While the content of each new edition has changed, we have stayed faithful to the template on which the book's success has been based. Each new edition has sought to be a textbook that encompasses the field. It has included therefore overview essays on staple topics like media and gender, popular culture and the sociology of news (though what has been viewed as the constitutive elements of the field has evolved over time).

Furthermore, each new edition has sought to catch the tide of change. The first edition foregrounded a debate between Marxist and liberal-pluralist interpretations of the media; the second gave critical attention to the rise of postmodernism; the third focused on cultural studies and globalization; the fourth gave particular attention to new media; and the fifth sought to build a bridge between film and media studies in a new understanding of 'screen studies'. This edition foregrounds changes in communications technology and globalization (with essays on the global internet, global screen industries, digitalization and democratization, digital platforms and globalization, 'datification', and the internet and power).

Continuity has also been maintained by recruiting as contributors not only leading scholars, but also new talent. There has also been an attempt to redress the Western orientation and lack of ethnic diversity of contributors, although we recognize that we still have a long way to go in this respect. We aimed for a better gender balance than in previous editions, but sadly lost two women contributors late in the day owing to other commitments. This is something we are committed to addressing in the next edition.

As before, authors have been encouraged to write clearly. They have also been asked to say something new, even if – indeed especially if – they are providing a summarizing appraisal of the relevant literature.

This, like previous editions, has also sought to highlight critical work. There would be no point in editing this book if it was not for the hope that it will contribute to innovative and progressive analysis.

These four elements – textbook usefulness, timely intervention, high-calibre authors and criticality – seem to have worked. Successive editions of the book have sold large numbers of copies worldwide, reprinted regularly and been translated into five languages. David Hesmondhalgh has replaced the late Michael Gurevitch

as co-editor with James Curran. Michael is remembered fondly by James, the older of the two editors, who knew him well, as a clever and lovable man.

It may be helpful to offer a brief guide to the contents of this sixth edition.[1] As before, Part I offers overviews of media and society (often influenced by history). The opening essay by Jack Qiu provides an appraisal of the internet from the perspective of someone who was born and works in China. It differs from conventional accounts in the panoramic way it surveys the infrastructure, workers, culture and governance of the global internet. Marwan Kraidy also offers a distinctively international account of the study of popular culture. Unlike many other treatments of the topic, he pays serious attention to how scholars from different national traditions have treated the 'folk' dimensions of culture, and the connections of popular culture to national politics, nationalism, geopolitics and colonialism. Susan Douglas, a celebrated pioneer, examines the impact of feminism on media studies, and assesses how representations of women (and also of men) have changed over time. This is followed by Mike Berry's synoptic account of the relationship between the media and neo liberalism. He argues that, in general, the media have promoted neo liberalism, and disparaged or ignored its critics. This is in a context where neo liberal forces have transformed both old and new media. Part I concludes with Manuel Castells' profoundly influential thesis that the internet has transformed both the basis of communication and the nature of power relationships in 'networked society'.

Part II presents differing perspectives on media systems, production and digital platforms. David Hesmondhalgh challenges the conventional view that digitalization is leading to the democratization of communication and culture. He shows on the contrary that the power of tech corporations in the media industries is increasing, and that amateurs and aspiring professionals still have relatively limited access to audiences. Alison Powell addresses one of the most fervently debated topics in public life and social science, the increasing role of data in communication, culture and everyday life (which some call 'datafication'). She seeks to avoid simplifications about the role of data by seeing it as another way in which our lives and worlds are 'mediated' – though she also points to some worrying dimensions of this mediation, including surveillance and commodification. Michael Schudson offers a new, much longer version of his seminal account of the sociology of news. This time, he pays more attention to comparative difference, and to the impact of the internet on journalism. Daniel Hallin and Paolo Mancini update their influential analysis of western media systems, in a form that also takes account of the disruptive impact of the internet. Michael Curtin examines global 'screen industries' (film, television, games and more). He draws attention to Hollywood's continued ascendancy, now based even more on speculation and financialization, but also identifies important

1 As C.W. (Chris) Anderson's chapter in this volume notes, there was an earlier 'edition' published in 1977. But it was an Open University Reader (linked to a specific course) and included reprints. So we started counting editions from 1991 when the book was not tied to a course, and all essays were especially commissioned for the book.

other developments such as the rise of African video films, pan-Arab media conglomerates, and East Asian co-productions. Part II concludes with Aswin Punathambekar and Sriram Mohan's exploration of the uneven and often fraught expansion of digital communication platforms beyond the Anglophone West, including a case study of YouTube India.

Part III addresses a number of problems and challenges facing the media, and media studies. It deliberately pulls together different theoretical and disciplinary traditions to provide a sort of smorgasbord. C.W. Anderson's overview of the digitalization of journalism distinguishes between four eras in its development, and in thinking about it: those of participation, crisis, platforms and populism. He argues that the study of digital journalism would benefit from engaging with related fields, notably science and technology studies, political communication analyzes of populism, sociology of the professions and platform economics. Paula Chakravartty trawls through critical theory and historical research to contest the idealized conception of the US state and media as sponsors of 'modernization', freedom and peace.

Coming from critical cultural studies, Susan Murray examines how the rise of reality TV has changed the production, economics and aesthetics of television, and has had a wider impact on society in the era of Donald Trump. James Curran raids cultural studies to argue that media entertainment makes vital contributions to democracy in ways that are largely ignored in the study of political communication, and illustrates this argument with examples from, among others, the Korean crime film, *Veteran*, to *Sex and the City*. Stephen Cushion examines the political impact of the media through the concept of mediatization. He shows how 'media logic' can distort politics, how politicians (such as Trump) can use the same logic to manipulate the media, and how this dual process needs to be understood in a wider context. Kaarina Nikunen closes the book with an overview of an issue that has become prominent in a range of recent communication and cultural research in recent years: the role of emotion and affect in media. She differentiates and assesses four major ways in which this topic has been investigated: emotion in social media, textual and visual analysis that reveals emotional dimensions in media content, the role of emotions in media work (including data-driven approaches such as sentiment analysis), and the concept of 'affective capitalism'.

Part I

MEDIA AND SOCIETY: GENERAL PERSPECTIVES

Chapter 1

THE GLOBAL INTERNET[1]

Jack Linchuan Qiu

Introduction

What constitutes the global internet? How did it begin, under what circumstances, with what politico-economic and spatial patterns that to this day continue shaping this planetary media system, the largest of its kind that humanity has come to possess? Is the internet really global? Does it contribute to a truly global community of peoples, cultures and nations? Or is it just another shopping mall, with more grandeur and faster pace, but selling age-old commodities of privilege and exploitation, myopia and bigotry? What social forces influence the global internet, leading to what consequences, including new existential threats that jeopardize sustainable development?

This chapter attempts to offer a panoramic overview that critically examines the structural and historical dynamisms of the global internet from several anchor points: infrastructure, labour, culture and governance. As conventional wisdom has it, the internet is a seamless web of digital information flows that are instant, inexpensive, and weightless. It respects no boundaries, political or social, while furthering the norms of western liberal democracy, especially the norms of market economy as embodied in the corporate champions of the Silicon Valley such as Google and Apple. These are private firms enjoying abundant investment from and reporting to the Wall Street. Hence, we are told, the internet as a global project is the favourite child of neoliberal capitalism (McChesney 2013), and by extension, of the American Empire (Fuchs 2016b).

This popular view is not entirely wrong, but it is incomplete. As I shall contend in this chapter, the global internet is not a consistent and unitary entity that can be defined in simple terms. In lieu of a single US-dominated system, the global internet has multiple origins and is full of disparities, contradictions, and conflicts. So much so that the global internet risks becoming a misnomer in the future if it is torn apart by the centrifugal tendencies at play as we move into the third decade

---

1. This chapter benefits greatly from two summer research and reading camps entitled 'The Social Imagination of Digital Media', organized by Kaifeng Foundation in 2017 and 2018.

of the twenty-first century, and if humanity and our planetary ecology cannot continue sustainably. I, therefore, would like to submit that, more than anything else, the global internet is better defined by its internal and external crises. These have triggered numerous struggles around the world to reclaim the internet as a public good, and as the most important resource of our digital commons.

The great diffusion

The internet has become the most global media system in human history. As of December 2017, there are 4.16 billion internet users around the globe, comprising 54.4 per cent of the world's 7.63 billion total population (https://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm). Fully 74 per cent of the internet's user population reside in the Global South, including Asia (48.7 per cent), Africa (10.9 per cent), Latin America (10.5 per cent) and the Middle East (3.9 per cent). Only 26 per cent of the world's internet users live in the Global North: Europe (17 per cent), North America (8.3 per cent) and Oceania (0.7 per cent). In terms of total user population, the internet has further de-westernized since 2010 when Northern countries had 40 per cent of all users globally (ITU 2010). By 2017 their share has decreased to slightly more than 25 per cent. This is certainly a notable development for the Global South, which has become home to most of the world's internet users. But still, 45.6 per cent of humanity are not connected, and the great majority of non-users reside in the 'archipelago of disconnection' such as Sub-Saharan Africa (Straumann and Graham 2016). Even bearing this in mind, we can still consider the internet the most global media system compared to its predecessors.

While oral communication, writing and printing have long been central to the functioning of human society, for centuries these processes did not travel long distances easily. They gave rise mostly to local and national media, for which covering the globe would sound like a fairy tale. This started to change with the invention of electronic media that allowed message delivery at the speed of light, first via wired telegraph or 'the Victorian internet' (Standage 1998), then wireless radio, communications satellites and fibre optics (Starosielski 2015). The internet is another reiteration of the electronics revolution not only through digitalization of analog content but, most importantly, through its functioning as the web of webs. Most other media channels – print or broadcast, local or national, human or increasingly non-human (as in the internet of things) – were then subsumed into this ever-growing, global network.

Not only is the internet more global due to its capacity to link up and encompass other media, it also includes many more functioning and dysfunctional terminals – computers, mobile phones, a wide variety of smart devices – that are visible in the small towns of the Global South as well. One key reason for this is mobility – and not only that related to hand-held mobile devices, but also of the internet itself. As Jonathan Donner reflects on his research in Africa and Asia: 'It is only through mobile technologies that the internet has become pervasive, everyday, and

inexpensive enough to be truly global and, thus, it is only through mobile technologies that many people have been able to use the internet for anything at all' (Donner 2015: 178).

Two decades ago, prior to the wide dissemination of the internet, many ordinary families across much of the world probably had only one TV and one radio used collectively by many family members. Today, the shared use of legacy media has declined because, in many cases, each family member is equipped with her own smartphone or tablet (not to mention the old phones stuffed in the drawer and the outmoded laptops hidden at the bottom of the wardrobe). Although the internet has a much shorter history than television, it has generated a larger quantity of techno-objects than all the TV sets put together. The reason: most people do not replace their TV every other year, whereas the expected norm in the internet industry is to 'upgrade' every year or so at 'an unprecedented speed of built-in obsolescence and product abandonment' (Wajcman 2015: Loc 3048). As a result, the mountains of equipment being connected to or 'retired' from the internet may have well surpassed historical levels.

Another dimension of the internet's globality is its close affinity with US-dominated financial capitalism, not only as conveyor of symbolic content but as the essential infrastructure of transaction. Hence, the architecture of the global internet has its central nodes in the United States, home to the epicentres of global finance, although 'core elements of the internet infrastructure . . . are tilting toward the EU and BRICS countries' (Winseck 2017). A notable development is the BRICS fibre-optic cable system, although it has not yet materialized in any way that would pose realistic challenge to the dominance of the US over global internet infrastructure (Zhao 2015). It is likely that such an architectural shift will not occur before Shanghai and Tokyo surpass New York and Chicago as the key links for financial capitalism.

At the organizational level, newspapers, TV, radio broadcast, film studios and so on are some of the legacy media listed on stock exchanges under the control of entities such as News Corp. But overall, most such media operate within their municipal, regional and national contexts. Many, such as public service broadcasters, receive government subsidies or membership fees. They do not need to produce quarterly reports and are not subject to daily pressure generated by the fluctuation of stock prices. But this is not true for the internet, where most of the major players are publicly listed, and where the logic of financial accumulation is more pronounced than in legacy media. The subsequent result is a greatly intensified version of what Ben Bagdikian calls 'the new media monopoly' (2004). As Graham Murdock points out:

> The absence of effective regulatory oversight, coupled with network effects as people converge on sites with the largest number of other users, has produced the most concentrated sector within advanced capitalism, with a popular internet commanded by a handful of companies: Microsoft, Amazon, Google, Facebook, and Apple.
>
> 2018: 361

As a designator, 'global' is about spatiality as much as temporality. The results of 'time-space compression' (Harvey 1989), of the quarterly reports required by stock market, of the cycles of Moore's Law, have all conspired to increase the global inclusiveness of the internet in absorbing our time. In the past, most people spent at most a few hours each day reading news, watching TV, listening to music. But with the expansion of the internet especially through mobile devices such as the smartphone and associated wearable accessories, we are now hooked to the Web through at least potentially 'perpetual contact' anytime, anywhere (Katz and Aakhus 2002). Never before has any media system been able to capture so much of our time, quotidian and pedestrian, awake or asleep, stationary or on the move. According to my conservative estimate, in 2015 Facebook was able to extract 652.9 billion hours from its 1.04 billion daily active users around the globe (Qiu 2016: 172). The internet, as such, is a global regime of time, whereby the leisure and social time of people around the world is converted into advertising revenue and into 'free labour' (Terranova 2012) that ultimately benefits the major corporate players of the internet.

According to ITU statistics, it took the fixed-line telephone 130 years to reach 20 per cent of the world's population. Yet it took the internet less than three decades to reach 54 per cent of all humanity. This is undoubtedly a great diffusion with extraordinary speed, global scope, reaching into the depth of Global South as well as the metropolitan centres of the North, extracting our time, as the always-on network operating non-stop incurring considerable labour and environmental costs (Murdock 2018). Streaming one hour of video from the cloud, for example, would consume more electricity than two refrigerators (Mills 2013). In 2015, the electricity used by data centres around the world consumed 416.2 terawatt hours of electric energy, a greater power consumption than that of the UK over the same period (300 terawatt hours). This great diffusion is thus much more than a simple diffusion of gadgets, of 'the good life' and enlightenment. It is also a great diffusion of fast-paced consumerism, of neoliberal capitalism, of digital surveillance, e-waste and carbon emissions that threaten planetary sustainability. The question is, how did these all begin?

Historical origins (2125)

History is written by the victors (or is it?). So is the history of the global internet, as told by numerous English-language books (Abbate 2000; Bidgoli 2004; Leiner et al. 1997; Leslie 1993) often with hubris, then regurgitated by journalists, teachers, politicians and sales personnel the world over. The victors are American. They are scientists, military think tanks, Cold War warriors, who conceived and constructed the ARPANET, a project of the US Department of Defense, in order to achieve survivability at the time of a possible Soviet nuclear attack (Abbate 2000). They are the heroes of Pax Americana, and the internet is their brainchild that has grown into the towering giant of global communication. Or so we were told. Because the US was seen to have prevailed when the Soviet Union collapsed, it is only natural

to have American leadership, if not outright ownership, of the global internet that is, in effect, managed centrally by a handful of companies in Northern California.

But this is a partial story that does not hold up to scrutiny. The internet as we know it had to start somewhere, of course. Given the strength of the nation-states before they were weakened by neoliberalization under the likes of Reagan and Thatcher in the 1980s (Harvey 2005), it was no wonder that the internet began under the aegis of national governments (not just the US); and that the landscape of internet has changed considerably over time. Jeremy Tunstall's well-known book, *The Media Are American* (1977), was followed thirty years later by *The Media Were American* (2008), which argued that global communication in such various forms as TV drama, cinema and journalism, is no longer dominated by the US. Can we say the same about the internet?

The global internet did not start in the US alone, however. As Elton and Carey point out, before Sir Tim Berners-Lee invented the World Wide Web, '[o]nline services for the general public' had already appeared '[i]n a dozen or more countries' (2013: 45). In addition to the UK, France, Canada and several other western nations, it is now well documented that the Soviet Union had plans to build a nationwide computer network, most notably the All-State Automated System of Management (OGAS), which was designed to collect information on and coordinate economic activities throughout the vast nation (Peters 2017). Under Soviet influence, in 1956 China also embarked on its journey of computing, which would pave the way for the country to become today's global internet superpower (Wang 2014).

After all, aren't socialist states supposed to use centralized economic planning, creating 'command economies', as opposed to capitalist 'market economies'? Doesn't this mean that socialist countries should have strong motives to build computer networks? Indeed, '[b]etween the late 1950s and the late 1980s, a small group of leading Soviet scientists and administrators tried to develop a nationwide computer network' as 'the Soviet Union was awash in intelligence about contemporary Western initiatives (on the technology front)' and it 'had all the necessary motives, mathematics, and means to develop nationwide computer networks for the benefit of its people and society' (Peters 2017: 1).

However, precisely because Soviet initiatives focused on economic instead of military affairs, there was insufficient institutional support and political will to break the confinement of bureaucracy and 'conflicting private interests' of the various parties in order to bring the project to fruition (Peters 2017: 193). What if the Soviet Union felt such an acute sense of existential threat from nuclear war that its military decided to take over or join forces with the OGAS team? Would this have resulted in the USSR becoming a more dominant player in today's internet? Or at least might it not have collapsed so catastrophically? We can't turn back the clock, but this question still deserves pondering: why did an economic approach to the internet fail in the Soviet Union, when today's internet seems to be so replete with economic activities?

Another equally important but much less lauded birthplace of the internet is Chile, on the west coast of South America. During the 1970–73 Salvador Allende

administration (Medina 2011), Project Cybersyn, also known in Spanish as Proyect Synco, connected a single IBM mainframe computer with 500 telex machines, which was put to use in 500 factories throughout the country. Because Allende was a socialist, who adopted policies that angered his political enemies (including those in the US), he had to face sanctions and strikes designed to paralyze his country's economy. '[T]he telex network helped the government counteract the effects of forty thousand striking truck drivers . . . Using telex technology during this crisis allowed the Chilean government to transform the nation into an information system that top officials could manage through real-time data exchange. The network helped the Chilean government assess the rapidly changing strike environment as well as adapt and survive' (Medina 2011: Loc 3485–3496).

While ARPANET in the US was never tested in the white heat of a nuclear war, Cybersyn had to bear the brunt of an all-out economic warfare funded to the tune of $10 million by the US, 'more if necessary . . . to make the [Chilean] economy scream' (US Senate 1975: 151).[2] Yet, Cybersyn achieved survivability. Although it was little more than a prototype network, it was the first time in human history when a nationwide cybernetic system – a progenitor of today's internet – was subjected to a real-world survival test.

Cybersyn passed that test. Other facts helped, such as the mobilization of popular support and the Chilean leadership, which commissioned the project in the first place. Together, the Allende government, the Chilean people backing Allende and the Cybersyn project were so resilient that a CIA-supported *coup d'état* was needed to halt the otherwise unstoppable Chilean experiment. When Pinochet's army murdered Allende, along with Chilean democracy, in a bloodbath in 1973, their casualties included Cybersyn; thus was a key progenitor of the global internet killed in the cradle by American imperialism. Its premature death does not mean it has become insignificant, however. Rather, as Eden Medina puts it: 'Attempts to combine the political and the technological with the goal of creating a more just society can open new possibilities, technological, intellectual, political, and otherwise. These endeavors can have important legacies, even if they are never fully realized' (Medina 2011: Loc 5069).

It should be now clear that the celebratory tales about ARPANET and the prowess of the US in jumpstarting the internet do not reveal the whole picture. US leadership in the global internet was not preordained when Americans were shocked by the Soviet development of the Sputnik spacecraft; nor was it a given before the bloody 'Little September 11' coup of 1973 in Chile.

Even within the US, the origins of the internet remain disputed. Roy Rosenzweig considers the internet to have several historical roots in the US context:

Such a profound and complex development [of the internet] cannot be divorced from the idiosyncratic and personal visions of some scientists and bureaucrats whose sweat and dedication got the project up and running, from the social

2. $10 million in 1973 is equivalent to $56 million in 2018 (https://www.officialdata.org/1973-dollars-in-2018).

history of the field of computer science, from the Cold Warriors who provided massive government funding of computers and networking as tools for fighting nuclear and conventional war, and from the countercultural radicalism that sought to redirect technology toward a more decentralized and nonhierarchical vision of society.

<div align="right">Rosenzweig 2001: 26–27</div>

In other words, the military establishment is merely one of the several factors that made the US internet possible. It certainly would not have succeeded by itself without the idiosyncratic scientists and the anti-war hackers, some of whom got together in Menlo Park, Northern California, and gave their organization an interesting name: 'People's Computer Company' or PCC (Levy 1984: 137). The first issue of the PCC newsletter began with a call to action on its cover: 'Computers are mostly / used against people instead of for people / used to control people instead of to <u>free</u> them / time to change all that – / we need a . . . / People's Computer Company'.

The story of Silicon Valley, the heartland of the US internet, is certainly much more complicated than a single tale of a grand military strategy. Here lived, and still live, a strong cluster of anti-war activists, who rub shoulders with hippies, hackers and geeks. Northern California has also had a long history of labour and environmental injustice that dates back to before the arrival of the Spanish, to the time of the Gold Rush, to the modern eras of the Information and Nuclear Ages respectively (Pellow and Park 2002). Dreamers come and go in the Valley. The consistent patterns across historical periods are that (a) these are capitalist
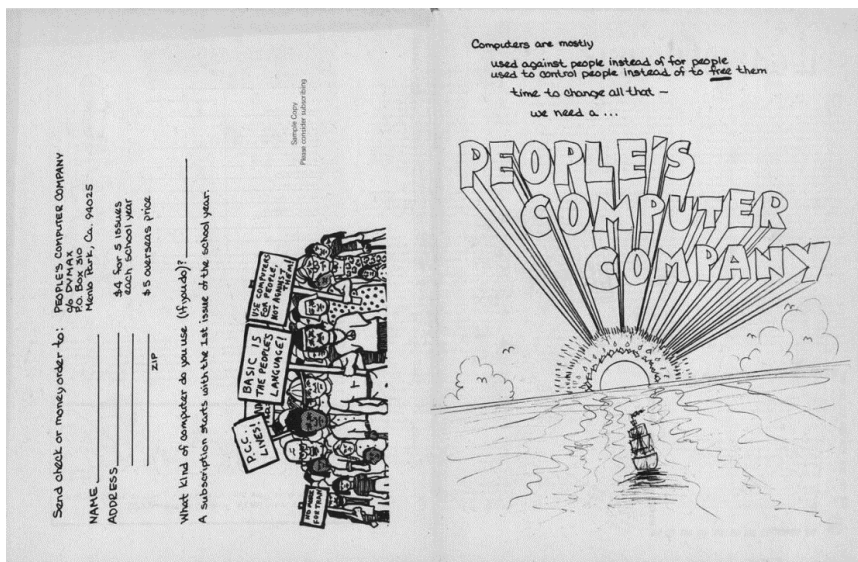

Figure 1.1 The inaugural issue of People's Computer Company newsletter. Source: Stanford libraries (ID: M1141_B9_1:1)

movements that end up exploiting labour, women, and people of colour, while damaging the environment, and that (b) the exploitation and damage often engender counter-movements supporting human dignity and environmental sustainability. The contradictions between these two patterns are at the very root of the historical traditions of Silicon Valley. They are fundamental to the global internet as well.

When ARPANET took shape in Californian labs thanks to generous military funding, anti-war hackers installed computers in Californian garages as their 'machines of loving grace' (Markoff 2015). On the other side of the Pacific, the Vietnam War was another theatre of American imperialism, where the power of the military-industrial complex was showcased, and where the latest IT inventions were deployed to defeat the communist Viet Cong. While $10 million plus 'more if necessary' was used on the Chilean front (US Senate 1975), the investment in Vietnam was much greater. A centrepiece of the American war intelligence system was US Air Force's Operation Igloo White, which cost $6–7 billion from 1967–72 (Edwards 1996: 3). Igloo White consisted of IBM mainframe computers connected to thousands of sensors 'designed to detect all kinds of human activity, such as the noises of truck engines, body heat, motion, even the scent of human urine' (Edwards 1996: 3). The sensors were 'shaped like twigs, jungle plants, and animal droppings' and 'strewn across the Ho Chi Minh Trail' in order to monitor and prevent traffic from the communist North to South Vietnam. When the censors picked up signals, the IBM computers would use the information to calculate and project the specific locations of Viet Cong trucks, which would then be bombed by the US Air Force within five minutes (Edwards 1996: 3).

To Paul Edwards, who examined this 'closed world' of US computer networking, Igloo White was a more prototypical and more realistic 'internet' during this period than ARPANET. But Igloo White proved to be a failure as did the entire US military operation in Vietnam. Even before American troops were defeated in 1975, a US Senate report in 1971 pointed out: 'truck kills claimed by the Air Force [in Igloo White] last year greatly exceeds the number of trucks believed by the Embassy to be in all of North Vietnam' (Edwards 1996: 4). Lessons from this historical chapter are that the role played by the US military in computer networking was not 'benign or disinterested' (Edwards 1996: 44); and that, despite the celebratory discourse today, US imperialism armed with advanced surveillance tools was not, and probably will not be, invincible – in Vietnam and elsewhere.

Back on home turf, a central node in the US telecom network was indeed attacked once on 28 May 1961, when three microwave signal towers in the Great Salt Lake desert of Utah were bombed, disrupting communication among military and civilian users, including the Conelrad emergency broadcast system (Hu 2015: 11). 'This was the first act of sabotage directed against the nation's transcontinental communications circuits, and it signaled a shift in the way the nation understood communications' (Hu 2015: 12). Was it done by Soviet agents or the left in the US? No. It turned out that the perpetrators were two right-wingers calling themselves 'the American Republican Army'; they sabotaged the network because they hated AT&T's monopoly (Hu 2015: 13). The idea to interconnect everything in a distributed network such as the internet was not really loved by everyone from the

start, clearly. It could be attacked from both ends of the ideological spectrum. As Tung-Hui Hu demonstrates in *A Prehistory of the Cloud*, the origins of the internet were multiple, inconsistent, contradictory and conflictual. Many of the historical antitheses – between the left and the right, control and liberation, dystopia and utopia – have been carried forward to the global internet today.

Contemporary realities

If the global internet has such multifarious origins in history, what form does its real-world geography now take? Putting aside the disputes of techno-utopia versus dystopia, let us take a materialistic view of the contemporary realities of the global internet, what it actually brings to the people of the world, and to Planet Earth itself, instead of what it is supposed to do in science fiction or popular belief.

Contrary to the discourse of a 'weightless', 'virtual' technology consisting of 'bits' instead of 'atoms' (Negroponte 1995), the global internet has a heavyweight existence. Our hand-held devices may seem light – the original iPhone was 135 grams; iPhone X is 174 grams – but if we gather together all those 6.1 million original iPhones that Apple sold globally, the stockpile would weigh 823.5 tons. And this is only one model, not to mention other models and brands of smartphones, as well as tablets, laptops and desktops, mobile phone base stations sitting on rooftops, data farms such as the 1.1-million-square-feet Lakeside Technology Center in Chicago (https://bit.ly/2IuXI6M), the communication satellites orbiting in space, the over-land fibre-optics, and the 550,000 miles of undersea cable network that could circle our planet twenty-two times (https://read.bi/2GSXgSy). Think about all these objects, from space to seabed, from the mountains of e-waste to the smooth surface of our hand-held devices – all of them consist of atoms, be they of metal, glass or plastic. Which one of them is 'weightless'?

The planetary media system of the internet is not God-given. Nor does it fall from the sky. In order to create it, the devices of computing and transmission have to be produced materially through processes of 'hyper-industrialization' (Fuchs 2016b). It has to start, first of all, in places such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), which contributes 80 per cent of the world's supply of coltan (Van Reybrouck 2015: 456), a mineral essential to our smartphones and computers. Coltan used to be cheap. But with the arrival of a new generation of mobile phones, its price skyrocketed ten times within a few months in 2000. This occurred during the so-called 'African World War' of 1998–2003. Reports from the United Nations and various NGOs have documented the bloody side of coltan extraction. As most mines were controlled by warlords, the miners had to work under appalling conditions of 'forced labor enforced by armed groups, debt bondage, peonage, sexual slavery, forced marriage, the use of children by armed groups, and other forms of child slavery' (Free the Slaves 2011: 11). While the coltan trade did not cause the African World War directly, its revenues certainly contributed to the prolonging of the conflict, and of the suffering in Congolese mines. In addition to coltan, our electronic devices contain a full range of other minerals such as tin,

gold and, tungsten, which came from the DRC as well as other developing countries such as Indonesia where labour violations have taken place in extracting the minerals (https://bbc.in/1BLwqjs), without which the internet must have spread less quickly and on a smaller scale.

The global internet is also made in China, which produces 95 per cent of the world's rare-earth minerals that are crucial to high-tech industries (Tse 2011). In addition to supplying raw materials, China, as the contemporary 'workshop of the world', plays a dominant role in the manufacture of smartphones and laptops. For example, the Taiwanese company Foxconn, the world's largest electronics manufacturer, once employed 1.4 million workers in China (Mozur and Luk 2013). These are mostly rural-to-urban migrants, many of whom had to endure slave-like working conditions so dehumanizing that fifteen Foxconn workers committed suicide in the first five months of 2010 (Qiu 2016). Foxconn has become the most notorious factory in China, if not the world, partly because it assembles iPhones and iPads for Apple. Less well-known is that Foxconn also manufactures for Sony, Dell, Amazon, Google and Nintendo. The list goes on. Conditions in other Chinese factories such as Pegatron are not necessarily better (https://bloom.bg/2iWxGkg).

What about Samsung? Does the Korean tech giant treat its workers more humanely? Not really. As shown in the documentary films *Another Promise* and *Empire of Shame*, semiconductor workers at Samsung suffered occupational diseases such as leukemia, breast cancer and thyroid cancer. Yet Samsung tried to deny any responsibility and to prevent the victims making their claims public, including screening the documentaries (https://bit.ly/2GA4cVx). Samsung and Foxconn, South Korea and China, are thus not too different in that they are all cogs in the same system that underpins the global internet, the same system that relies on and reports to Wall Street, the same system that tries to squeeze and marginalize workers.

Material labour such as African miners and Asian workers remain central to the global internet. After minerals are removed from Eastern Congo, after gadgets are assembled in China, they have to pass through the hands of shipping workers, warehouse keepers and sales and maintenance personnel before they enter other people's lives. They also need input from software and services such as those provided by Indian workers who also have to face exploitation and discrimination (Xiang 2006). Making content for the internet may sound fun, but to keep a video site 'clean' from abusers would mean the employment of 'commercial content moderators' to watch and filter out graphic and disturbing images that may cause mental health problems (Roberts 2014).

On a larger scale, labour materializes as the internet becomes a basic infrastructure of globalization, technologically, economically and militarily. Who built the server farms in the cloud and the systems that keep them cool? Who laid the undersea cables and fixes the damage caused by earthquakes? Who answers the customer service hotline? Who delivers the goods and services ordered online? Who performs high-frequency trading in Wall Street using supercomputers? Who operates the drones firing missiles into the tribal areas of Pakistan and Yemen? Although in very different domains, these information workers (broadly defined) usually have to be on the payroll of a commercial and/or government entity. Some

are being replaced by artificial intelligence (AI), but even then paid labour (e.g., engineers) are needed to program, evaluate and maintain the AI.

The global internet infrastructure is, as such, based on living labour that is increasingly coordinated through the Net. This is an important reason why the schism between the haves and have-nots is widening in the Global North and why unemployment is on the rise in many regions of the South (Greenfield 2017). The basic logic of network society, as Manuel Castells (1996) writes, is inclusion and exclusion, by which he means the social landscape of the internet is often highly uneven, split between 'self-programmable labour' like the Wall Street traders and AI engineers on the one hand, and 'generic labour' like Deliveroo workers and Amazon Mechanical Turkers on the other.

What about the unpaid 'free labour' (Terranova 2012) that has become central to certain parts of the internet, especially search and social media? We are not paid to do a Google search or post a Facebook status update. Nor do Google or Facebook charge us – that is how 'free' it is, in both directions. In reality, Google, Facebook and similar tech companies around the world need to hire paid labour to give us 'free' services, while they obtain information about us, also for free, to be sold for profit to the highest bidding advertisers. That's how the model works in the West or in China, for Google as well as Baidu, for Twitter and Facebook as well as Sina Weibo and Tencent (Fuchs 2016a). That's how the likes of Mark Zuckerberg become so wealthy. Far from decentralized in terms of its political economic structure and network architecture, the global internet has crucial inbuilt disparities between the powerful few and the rest of humanity as evidenced in the revelations of Edward Snowden and Cambridge Analytica: the most fundamental algorithm of the internet has been coded to benefit Big Brother and those with deep pockets more than other players.

However, if we go beyond infrastructure, investment and paid labour, if we examine the content being shared and the traffic patterns among users, decentralization does occur in important ways. As the study by Wu and Taneja (2016) shows, the world's internet traffic flows have become increasingly 'regionalized' rather than directed centrally to the West as the cases of Hollywood hegemony in global box office or the dominance of Silicon Valley in the software industry. Instead, they found 'the rise of the global South along the decentralization or de-Americanization of the WWW' (231).

The patterns of global WWW traffic discovered by Wu and Taneja are more akin to television flows in 'culturally defined markets' (Straubhaar 2007) and to the flows of news and entertainment in 'geolinguistic regions' (Cunningham, Jacka and Sinclair 1996). That is, Chileans and Colombians are likely to visit the same websites (in Spanish), as are Moroccans and Iraqis (in Arabic). Users in Western countries tend to cluster together in a similar fashion, but not as the global centre of traffic. Westerners form their own 'cultural regions', as do South Asians or Eastern Europeans. Notable exceptions include porn sites, which form a separate 'region' by themselves. Other than these, the regional clusters in most parts of the world have become 'thickened' and more intensely connected internally, which is particularly so in the Global South because 'regions internet penetration has grown

significantly during the observation period [2009–2013] witness cultural thickening online' (Wu and Taneja 2016: 240). If the trend continues, we should anticipate increasing size and more distinct cultural regions for the Global South in the world map of WWW traffic because the bulk of the next billion internet users will certainly come from Southern countries.

What kinds of content are being circulated through the global internet? Back in 1996, when John Perry Barlow published *A Declaration of Independence of Cyberspace*, answering this question was relatively easy. Most content online was related to science and technology, free of charge, shared globally with anyone who could access the internet. Hence Barlow's pronouncement: 'Your legal concepts of property, expression, identity, movement, and context do not apply to us. They are all based on matter, and there is no matter here' (https://bit.ly/1KavIVC).

However, with the rise of the commercial internet, freely shared scientific content is now just a trickle in the mainstream of online entertainment, consumerism, e-commerce and financial news, where the more valuable, high-quality content is often locked up behind paywalls. Outside the restricted zones that are only open to the rich and the powerful, the ocean currents are often rough and unpredictable, although the pattern in recent years has been the upsurge of populism, xenophobia and fake news including systematic post-truth arguments against the scientific community on such issues as climate change (https://bit.ly/2Iuc3A8). As a global trend, this was well under way before the shocks of Brexit and Trump, as demonstrated for instance by the deluge of 'hate spin', online and in legacy media, during the 2014 Indian election that saw Narendra Modi take office (George 2016).

The world's internet cultures have become more hybridized as imported music, art, pop icons, mobile phone games and reality show formats are mixed up with local references and traditional elements, resulting in the torrent of seemingly incoherent content through our social media feeds, whose logic is often unintelligible outside the black box of corporate algorithms. But one thing is clear: the space of the global internet is no longer devoid of 'matter', as Barlow once declared. Governments and corporations have taken the Net as serious 'matter', and they have taken over large quarters of the Web. The global internet, in cultural as well as political terms, faces unprecedented challenges of nationalism, bigotry and centrifugal tendencies at a time that is also characterized by the centripetal features of digital media platforms and the neoliberal financial market. Probably the only way to summarize the situation is to borrow Michael Mann's phrase: the global internet today is an 'incoherent empire' (Mann 2003).

Many struggles

In September 2015, members of the United Nations adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), of which Goal 9 'Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure' includes the aim to 'strive to provide universal and affordable access to the internet in least developed countries by 2020' (https://bit.ly/2uOkeW6). This

affirms the status of internet access as a basic human right globally, although it remains a formidable task to eliminate inequality in internet access. For example, according to UNESCO, the global gender gap between male and female internet users has in fact increased between 2013 to 2016, especially in regions such as Africa (https://bit.ly/2qa8sRe).

Even if everyone gets internet access, how will people use it – not only as consumers, 'stocktizens', YouTube couch potatoes or Facebook 'free labour', but as concerned citizens, knowledge producers, activists, organized political forces? If extant problems of the global internet persist, will the next billion people going online mean more child labour in African mines? More suicides in Chinese factories? More data extracted to feed corporate AI and state surveillance machinery? More e-waste to pollute our planet? It is clear that we cannot wait until everybody has internet access before addressing these pressing issues of social and environmental justice.

It is important to remember here that the world's 'first informational guerrilla movement' was the Zapatistas who in 1993 used the internet to defend Indigenous land and communities in South Mexico (Castells 1997: 79). Then from the 1999 anti-WTO 'battle of Seattle' to the Philippine 'People Power 2' in 2001, from Arab Spring of 2011 to #MeToo in 2017, the history of the internet has been punctuated with campaigns that deploy online activities innovatively to further progressive ends, and in so doing, transform the meaning of the Net.

But why, after so many struggles, does the internet remain fundamentally a neoliberal system controlled by financial interests under the watchful eyes of Big Brother? Why, despite the belief that 'information wants to be free', have internet censorship and surveillance not only continued in authoritarian societies such as China but also crept into the Western 'free world'? The progressive movements may have targeted irresponsible corporations and corrupt officials; they may have battled racism and sexism using the most creative memes. But as Jodi Dean (2005) maintains in her critique of 'communicative capitalism', too often the result is 'no response' (52) and the movements seldom produce durable social change, while protesters' tweets, Facebook updates and YouTube uploads feed into corporate algorithm and government surveillance. Hence, '[e]ven as globally networked communications provide tools and terrains of struggle, they make political change more difficult – and more necessary – than ever before' (71). This call for change is more pertinent with the rise of regressive social forces such as religious fundamentalism on all continents, which also utilize social media and cutting-edge Web analytics. The way forward, as Dean points out, is to abandon fantasies about the Net as inherently liberating in order to address the real root problems in the governance of the internet and of global capitalism overall.

This is not the first call to reform systems of global communication. In order to correct the imbalance of information flows between developed and developing countries, UNESCO appointed the MacBride Commission (1977–79) to produce the report *Many Voices, One World* (UNESCO 1980) that became the signature document of what later became known as the struggle for New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO). Although this struggle at the level of

transnational organizations was unsuccessful due to the withdrawal of the US and the UK from UNESCO and the ensuing neoliberal turn, the endeavour continues to restore equality of communication flows and revive democracy in media governance especially at the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). A centrepiece of WSIS' strategy is its 'multi-stakeholder, consensual approach (reflecting the interests of governments, the private sector and civil society) in all deliberations' (Sreberny 2004: 195).

More than a decade has passed since the beginning of WSIS. Over this period, two major shifts have occurred in the way the global internet works. 'The first is a shift away from formal government regulation toward informal and often highly corporatized governance mechanisms. The second is a shift away from state-based governance (and global governance institutions organized around state membership) toward transnational governance institutions more directly responsive to the asserted needs of private entities, often also corporations, that are those institutions' 'stakeholders' (Couldry et al. 2018: 533).' The internet has become increasingly at the disposal of transnational corporations. This much is clear.

What remains unclear is how balance can be tilted toward responsible governing bodies and civil society. In policy circles, the basic schism persists between 'internet sovereignty' as claimed by China, and 'internet freedom' as espoused by the US (Price 2018). During 2010–11, Beijing and Washington DC aimed their rhetorical artillery at each other. The US approach can, of course, be blamed for creating the neoliberal conditions under which the corporate takeover happened. But its more fatal assailant was Edward Snowden who exposed PRISM, the US global data surveillance programme. Hence, for now it seems that the intergovernmental debate on 'internet sovereignty' versus 'internet freedom' has been concluded. With Donald Trump defeating Hilary Clinton (the main figure behind the US's 2010 internet freedom campaign) in 2016, defensive walls are going up in the US and its Western allies on issues related to internet governance and high-tech sectors. While in practice, many 'defensive' measures in the West target Chinese firms, such as Huawei being prevented from acquiring Qualcomm (https://nyti.ms/2qczg3i), in principle they paradoxically confirm the substance of the 2010 Chinese White Paper on the internet. That is, each national government is entitled to apply domestic law and regulation to the internet on its territory as if it were just another piece of land. International disputes over this 'internet land' is to be solved within the UN framework. If this is fully institutionalized, which is increasingly the case as in Russia and Iran, then 'the global internet' as we know it would cease to exist.

Fortunately, there are several alternatives to the 'Chinese model' that is based on the notion of national sovereignty more than anything else. Starting from the South, first is the *Marco Civil* conference in Brazil that promotes civil society participation, responsible state policies in support of pluralism, liberty and open-source businesses that benefit local community (https://bit.ly/1EePf4u). Second is the Freedom Online Coalition (FOC), a group of thirty governments – with member states from all continents – which attempts to promote human rights online especially the right to 'free expression, association, assembly, and privacy'

(Price 2018: 52). Moving further North, from the Nordic countries such as Sweden to other parts of Europe and North America, there are the 'Pirate Parties' advocating open content, civil rights, privacy and participatory politics (Burkart 2014). Related is Iceland's positioning of itself as a 'digital safe haven' for journalists and whistle-blowers.

Apart from laws and regulations about internet content and governance rules, there are also notable alternatives for those who hope to use sustainable hardware and even create their own platform economies. A case in point is Fairphone, a Dutch initiative that started in 2010 as an 'awareness campaign about conflict minerals' whose 'aims are to build smartphones using only conflict-free raw materials; to provide fair working conditions during assembly; to design a phone that is robust, long-lived and fixable; to establish a comprehensive recycling system; and to be fully transparent about the entire process, including costs and pricing' (http://ow.ly/Oxoso). Fairphones are all manufactured in China but under considerably better labour conditions for Chinese workers than those described above (https://bit.ly/2wGeBF5).

Last but not least, there is the global movement of platform cooperativism that aims to 'allow workers to exchange their labor without the manipulation of the middleman' (Scholz 2014). This movement was triggered by the exploitation and opaque management on platforms such as Uber and Airbnb. It draws from related movements of cooperatives and commons-based peer production, while extending them to online ecosystems in a collective effort to create a 'new vision for the future of work and a fairer internet' (Scholz and Schneider 2017).

The above approaches have their critiques and limitations. Some, like the Pirate Party in Sweden, have ebbed and flowed. But in various ways they converge in questioning the bipolar imagination of the global internet as either American capitalist or Chinese authoritarian. After all, both China and the US are internally complex in themselves. A more meaningful conception is to think about the contradiction between a proprietary internet consisting of gated gardens, be they corporations or Big Brother, on the one hand, and a commons-based internet that serves as public good for everyone (Fuchs 2008). *Marco Civil*, FOC, Fairphone, platform co-ops – these are all attempts to imagine a more inclusive and more democratic internet, and to put the alternative imaginations to practice.

Concluding remarks

To conclude, this chapter has examined structural and historical patterns of the global internet panoramically from several anchor points: infrastructure, labour, geography, culture, politics, internet governance and models and practices of alternative development. The internet has diffused so phenomenally that it has become the largest global media system humanity has seen, even in remote corners of the Global South. Its historical origins are complex and multifarious beyond the myth of US Cold War strategies. Its contemporary patterns are multi-dimensional with the material base in the Global South as much as the Global

North. It's excessively simplistic to call the global internet weightless or de
centralized, friction-free or neoliberal. In reality, this planet-wide media system
is better understood through the many crises it faces and helps to precipitate, be
they consumerist and environmental or nationalist and geopolitical. Therefore,
more than a single medium, the global internet is a multi-scaped network of
networks; more than a single struggle, it is the site of many struggles and the tool
for many movements – for social justice, equal opportunity, sustainability and a
better world.

References

Abbate, J. (2000), *Inventing the Internet*, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
Bagdikian, B. (2004), *The New Media Monopoly,* Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
Bidgoli, H., ed. (2004), *The Internet Encyclopedia*, Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
Burkart, P. (2014), *Pirate Politics,* Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
Castells, M. (1996), *The Rise of Network Society,* Oxford: Blackwell.
Castells, M. (1997), *The Power of Identity,* Oxford: Blackwell.
Couldry, N., C. Rodriguez, G. Bolin, J. Cohen, G. Goggin, M. Kraidy, K. Iwabuchi, K.-S. Lee,
    J. L. Qiu, I. Volkmer, H. Wasserman, Y. Zhao, O. Koltsova, I. Rakhmani, O. Rincon,
    C. Magallanes-Blanco and P. Thomas. (2018), 'Chapter 13 – Media and
    Communications', in International Panel on Social Progress (ed.), *Rethinking Society for
    the 21st Century*, 523–62, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Cunningham, S., E. Jacka and J. Sinclair (1996), *New Patterns in Global Television,* Oxford:
    Oxford University Press.
Dean, J, (2005), 'Communicative Capitalism', *Cultural Politics,* 1 (1): 51–74.
Donner, J. (2015), *After Access,* Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
Edwards, P. (1996), *The Closed World*, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
Elton, M. and J. Carey (2013), 'The Prehistory of the Internet and Its Traces in the Present',
    in W. H. Dutton (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Internet Studies*, 27–47, Oxford: Oxford
    University Press.
Free the Slaves (2011), *The Congo Report*. Available online: https://bit.ly/2JmXcJe (accessed
    9 April 2018).
Fuchs, C. (2008), *Internet and Society,* New York: Routledge.
Fuchs, C. (2016a), 'Baidu, Weibo and Renren', *Asian Journal of Communication*, 26 (1): 14–41.
Fuchs, C. (2016b), 'Digital Labor and Imperialism', *First Monday,* 67(8). Available online:
    https://bit.ly/2EwueD4 (accessed 9 April 2018).
George, C. (2016), *Hate Spin*, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
Greenfield, A. (2017), *Radical Technologies,* London: Verso.
Harvey, D. (1989), *The Condition of Postmodernity,* Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.
Harvey, D. (2005), *A Brief History of Neoliberalism,* Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Hu, T.-H. (2015), *A Prehistory of the Cloud,* Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
ITU (International Telecommunications Union) (2010), *Measuring the Information
    Society,* Geneva: ITU.
Katz, J. E. and M. Aakhus, eds (2002), *Perpetual Contact,* Cambridge: Cambridge
    University Press.
Leiner, B. M., et al. (1997), 'Brief History of the Internet', Internet Society. Available online:
    https://bit.ly/2GLtWds (accessed 9 April 2018).

Leslie, S. W. (1993), *The Cold War and American Science*, New York: Columbia University Press.

Levy, S. (1984), *Hackers: Heroes of the Computer Revolution,* New York: Dell Publishing.

Mann, M. (2003), *Incoherent Empire,* London: Verso.

Markoff, J. (2015), *Machines of Loving Grace,* New York: HarperCollins.

McChesney, R. (2013), *Digital Disconnect,* New York: The New Press.

Medina, E. (2011), *Cybernetic Revolutionaries*, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Mills, M. P. (2013), 'The Cloud Begins with Coal', National Mining Association and American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity. Available online: https://bit.ly/2H37n7x (accessed 9 April 2018).

Mozur, P. and L. Luk (2013), 'Gadget Maker Foxconn Freezes Overall China Hiring', *Wall Street Journal*, 20 February. Available online: http://ow.ly/MEiLa (accessed 9 April 2018).

Murdock, G. (2018), 'Media Materialisties: For a Moral Economy of Machines', *Journal of Communication*, 68 (2): 359–68.

Negroponte, N. (1995), *Being Digital,* New York: Vintage Books.

Pellow, D. N. and L. Park (2002), *The Silicon Valley of Dreams,* New York: New York University Press.

Peters, B. (2017), *How Not to Network a Nation,* Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Price, M. (2018), 'Closure, Strategic Communications, and International Norms', in M. Price and N. Stremlau (eds), *Speech and Society in Turbulent Times*, 41–55, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Qiu, J. L. (2016), *Goodbye iSlave,* Urbana-Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Roberts, S. (2014), 'Behind the Screen', PhD diss., the School of Information Sciences, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Rosenzweig, R. (2001), 'How Will the Net's History be Written?' in H. Nissenbaum and M. Price (eds), *Academy and the Internet*, 1–34, New York: Peter Lang.

Scholz, T. (2014), 'Platform Cooperativism vs. the Sharing Economy', *Medium*, 5 December. Available online: https://bit.ly/1yqigpr (accessed 9 April 2018).

Scholz, T. and N. Schneider, eds (2017), *Ours to Hack and to Own,* New York: OR Books.

Sreberny, A. (2004), 'WSIS: Articulating Information at the Summit', *Gazette: The International Journal for Communication Studies,* 66 (3–4): 193–201.

Standage, T. (1998), *The Victorian Internet,* London: Walker & Company.

Starosielski, N. (2015), *The Undersea Network,* Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Straubhaar, J. (2007), *World Television*, Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Straumann, R. K. and M. Graham (2016), 'Who Isn't Online?', *Regional Studies, Regional Science*, 3 (1): 96–98.

Terranova, T. (2012), 'Free labor', in T. Scholz (ed), *Digital Labor*, 41–65, New York: Routledge.

Tse, P.-K. (2011), 'China's Rare-Earth Industry', US Geological Survey Open-File Reports. Available online: https://pubs.usgs.gov/of/2011/1042/ (accessed 9 April 2018).

UNESCO (1980), *Many Voices, One World*, Paris: The International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems, UNESCO.

US Senate (1975), *Covert Action in Chile, 1964–1973*, Washington DC: US Government Printing Office.

Van Reybrouck, D. (2015), *Congo,* London: HarperCollins Publishers.

Wajcman, J. (2015), *Pressed for Time,* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Wang, H. (2014), 'Machine for a Long Revolution', PhD diss., School of Journalism and Communication, the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Winseck, D. (2017), 'The Geopolitical Economy of the Global Internet Infrastructure', *Journal of Information Policy*, 7: 228–67.

Wu, A. X. and H. Taneja, (2016), 'Reimagining Internet Geographies', *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 21: 230–46.

Xiang, B. (2006), *Global 'Body Shopping',* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Zhao, Y. (2015), 'The BRICS Formation in Reshaping Global Communication', in K. Nordenstreng and D. Thussu (eds), *Mapping BRICS Media,* 66–86, London: Routledge.

Chapter 2

POPULAR CULTURE

Marwan M. Kraidy

'Popular culture' was historically associated with folk culture, but today it is generally understood that the phrase refers to mass-produced images and objects designed to be consumed under conditions of late capitalism. Popular culture encompasses music, fashion, style, street art, television, movies, posters, games and –with the advent of the internet – various digital and networked permutations of the preceding, from digital video to memes. Because of its fundamentally commercial nature, popular culture incorporates realms of life associated with folklore or daily life, crafts, folk stories, myths, food, drink and others into its roster of commodities. The social life of popular culture, however, does not conclude with consumption, by which I mean the purchase and use of popular culture commodities. Rather, consumption often leads to a variety of processes of material and symbolic redeployment through which people imbue popular culture with expressive energy or use it to reaffirm or contest prevailing norms, values and beliefs. Popular culture, then, is about the production, consumption and reproduction of culture, and the three realms of popular culture's circulation may bolster or undermine each other, since people may embrace or oppose the social meanings embedded in cultural commodities provided to them by the cultural industries.

Popular culture's two constitutive terms are notoriously difficult to pin down. 'Culture' has meant different things in various contexts, but its scholarly understanding has been shaped by German, French and Anglo-American perspectives. The romantic German notion of *Kultur* has a close connection to spirituality and language and is deeply embedded in national identity. In contrast, the Enlightenment French understanding envisions culture as a search for excellence and progress in universal terms. The English view revolves around tension between high – elite, refined artistic and cultural achievement – and low – associated with the working class and folk ways – culture. The American notion of culture is anthropological, connoting a 'whole way of life' (see Kuper 2000). Though we should not over-emphasize the national origins of these definitions, the meanings of which have intermingled and mixed for decades, if not centuries, these notions shape contemporary understandings of popular culture.

'Popular' is also a fraught term, conjuring up as it does notions of taste, class, publicness, scale and, most important of all, the people, the fount of popular sovereignty in democratic polities. 'Popular' itself can mean commercially successful, aesthetically louche, of the people, or working class. This complexity has shaped how academics approached popular culture, the study of which rose as a subject of systematic academic study with the advent of British cultural studies and its US and Australian offshoots in the 1970s and 1980s, and to this day it remains a mostly Anglophone academic pursuit.[1]

This chapter describes the theoretical history of the study of popular culture and explores various contemporary manifestations of the phenomenon. It summarizes definitional debates related to 'popular' culture and how it differs from folk culture in various parts of the world. The chapter then moves on to exploring the role of popular culture in national politics, focusing on issues of nationalism and activism. Finally, the chapter address the importance of popular culture to geopolitics, a topic that has received less attention than warranted, focusing on issues of rival nationalisms and colonialism.

It is important to note that social and political tensions expressed in popular culture have achieved a much broader circulation with the advent of the global internet and the affordances of digital media, which have multiplied modalities of expression, expanded the reach of popular culture, and as a result amplified its impact on public life (see also the chapters by Qiu, and by Punathambekar and Mohan in this volume). This chapter will show how publicness, antagonism and globalization are central dimensions of contemporary popular culture, which is a field of power, a space where various social norms, values and identities struggle for visibility and legitimacy.

What is the Popular?

In a foundational 1981 essay, 'Notes on Deconstructing the Popular', the Jamaican-British intellectual and cultural studies luminary Stuart Hall (1981/1998) offered the field's first English-language dissection of the contradictions and complications inherent in the term 'popular'. With the development of capitalism, Hall argued, arose a struggle to define the culture and tradition of the working classes, in a way that has served the goals of capitalism. In that context, popular culture served to re-educate people for compatibility with capitalism. Popular tradition became a site of resistance to the encroachments of capitalism, which under the guise of cultural change, actively marginalized cultural forms that were not amenable to its operations. From this Hall developed a preliminary and by-exclusion definition:

1. British cultural studies is a research tradition identified with the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies founded by Richard Hoggart and Stuart Hall at the University of Birmingham in 1964. Originally grounded in Marxist analyzes of how practices and objects are best understood through their relationship to power in the context of social class, the purview of BCS later widened to include gender and race as key axes of research.

'popular culture', he writes, 'is neither, in a 'pure' sense, the popular traditions of resistance to these processes; nor is it the forms which are superimposed on and over them. It is the ground on which the transformations are worked' (Hall 1998: 443). Then Hall articulates his central axiom about understanding popular culture. 'In the study of popular culture', he states, 'we should always start here: with the double stake in popular culture, the double movement of containment and resistance, which is always inevitably inside it' (Hall 1998: 443).

The essay's chief contributions are definitional. Hall is clear that the term 'popular' has multiple meanings.

First, 'popular' refers to 'the things which are said to be "popular" because masses of people listen to them, buy them, read them, consume them, and seem to enjoy them to the full' (1998: 446). Hall expresses reservations about this definition, on grounds both institutional-political – 'the notion of the people as a purely passive, outline force is a deeply unsocialist perspective' (446) – and cultural-political, in that this definition neglects 'the absolutely essential relations of cultural power – of domination and subordination – which is an intrinsic feature of cultural relation . . . there is no whole, authentic, autonomous "popular culture" which lies outside of the field of force of the relations of cultural power and domination' (446). Hall concludes that the study of popular culture oscillates between 'pure "autonomy" and "total encapsulation"', both of which he finds unacceptable (Hall 1998: 447).

A second meaning Hall identifies leaves him equally dissatisfied: 'popular culture is all those things that "the people" do or have done. This is close to an "anthropological" definition of the term: the culture, mores, customs and folkways of "the people". What defines their "distinctive way of life"' (Hall 1998: 448). Hall finds this definition too descriptive and reductionist, in that it 'simply collects into one category all things which "the people" do' (Hall 1998: 448). Here is where Hall establish what he calls 'the structuring principle of "the popular"' (448), which consists of the tensions between those cultural forms that occupy the elite centre of society, and those popular culture forms that remain in the periphery (Hall 1998: 448).

Finally, Hall proposes a third definition, about which he is clearly uneasy, but which he finds nonetheless acceptable. It is a definition that 'looks, in any particular period, at those forms and activities which have their roots in the social and material conditions of particular classes; which have been embodied in popular traditions and practices' (Hall 1998: 449). Key to Hall's definition is that:

> What is essential to the definition of popular culture is the relations which define 'popular culture' in a continuing tension (relationship, influence, and antagonism) to the dominant culture. It is a conception of culture which is polarizes around this cultural dialectic. It treats the domain of cultural forms and activities as a constantly changing field. Then it looks at the relations which constantly structure this field into dominant and subordinate formations.
>
> Hall 1998: 449

In other words, Hall defines popular culture as a terrain of struggle between dominant and marginal cultural values, norms and forms. In Hall's understanding,

the rules, tactics and stakes of this struggle change constantly. Popular culture, then, is antagonistic and dynamic.

Popular culture and folk culture

Though Hall's essay was influential in shaping how new generations of interdisciplinary scholars working in English would study and understand popular culture, other scholars working in other traditions did not share Hall's approach, which after all, was specific to the British context. For example, in the purview of British cultural studies, the absorption of folk culture into popular culture has been so complete that there appears to be no trace of folk culture, as empirical reality or conceptual idea. The centrality of both the tension between popular culture as product of the cultural industries on the one hand, and as folklore on the other, and the assumptions about authenticity or lack thereof that each of these understandings of popular culture carries, are not universally accepted. Indeed, scholars working in other traditions and geographic locations have approached popular culture in ways that differ from Hall's perspective.

Consider the Chinese cultural sphere. In an article, unambiguously titled 'Beware of So-Called Popular Culture', originally published in 1996 and published in English three years later in *Chinese Sociology & Anthropology*, the Chinese writer Cheng Zhi'ang (1999) makes a distinction between 'genuine popular culture' and 'so-called popular culture', which he sometimes calls 'pop culture'. Not making a clear distinction between the two, Zhi'ang argues, leads researchers into 'errors both in theory and practice – manifestations of which are that some people blindly promote the development of so-called pop culture, whereas others blindly reject genuine popular culture' (43). To some extent, the cleavage that Zhi'ang makes maps onto the debate between popular culture and high culture, impurity and authenticity would be familiar to Anglophone readership. But Zhi'ang's 'so-called popular culture' is not merely a contrivance of the commercial cultural industries that have entered China since the 1980s, but also includes what he calls 'the resurgence of the cultural dregs of feudalism' (43). He identifies two developments in Chinese society as emblematic of this 'pop culture': the 'royalty fad' and the 'kungfu-outlaw fad'. The first fad is the rehabilitation of dubious characters in Chinese history in television serials that celebrate their deeds while whitewashing their crimes, particularly their crimes against the people they ruled, a rhetoric that Zhi'ang (1999) considers to be tantamount to a rehabilitation of feudalism. The second genre romanticizes martial arts as a dissenting way of life – rather than 'a way of keeping fit' – whereas in reality the genre is a 'sort of fantasizing by the petty bourgeoisie who were unable to help themselves' (44). Marxist reductionism notwithstanding, the above analysis differs from British cultural studies.

Other differences in approach lay bare definitional and analytical tensions related to language and translation as much as they are connected to issues of power. In the Arab world, the systematic study of popular culture has unfortunately mainly occurred between scholars writing in English. The notion of *sha'bi*, Arabic

for popular [*sha'b* = people], is central to the politics of culture and class. The word *sha'bi* (popular) occupies a fraught terrain in which it overlaps with words like *jamahiri* (public) or *baladi* (local/indigenous), in the sense of folk/local/ indigenous/authentic. There are more permutations of *sha'bi*, *jamahiri* and *baladi*, and more nuances in meaning, than there are Arab countries, so my comments here are intended to provide a general impression rather than delve into rigorous definitional differentiations between them. More specifically, *sha'bi* (or *cha'bi,* used in Algeria and other Francophone North African countries) denotes popular musical genres that range from festival music to populist and nationalistic ballads. In Egypt, *baladi* 'means not only "local," but "unsophisticated" and "crude," and invariably pre-modern', though in some contexts, with food for example, the word acquires the positive connotations of localness as authenticity (Armbrust 1996: 26). The American anthropologist Walter Armbrust argues that the word *sha'bi*, 'covers very nearly the same semantic range as *baladi*. *Al-sha'b* (the people) is sometimes interchangeable with *awlad al-balad*' (225–26). Both terms are flexible, with a wide semantic range beginning with a cultural 'folkloric' and ending with a politically inflected 'of the people'. The latter informed the key slogan of the Arab uprisings activists in 2011 and 2012 – 'The people want to topple the system' – which gave voice to demands for popular sovereignty from an elite that had usurped power (Kraidy 2016).

The disjunction between elite and popular culture remains particularly strong in the Arab world. The Egyptian feminist writer Nawal al-Saadawi defined popular culture as 'a mixture of the conscious and the subconscious in the past and in the present. It is a merger of the organic and inorganic within the body, a merger of matter, spirit and mind. That is why popular culture is more expressive of experienced reality than the culture of the ruling elite or the intellectual elite, which usually stems from books and from scientific, religious or cultural texts' (Saadawi 1997: 179, quoted in Sabry 2010: 57–58). The Moroccan-British cultural studies scholar Tarik Sabry (2010) argued that, in the Arab world, there is a profound disconnect between elite and intellectual definitions of culture on the one hand, and the lived experience of culture by the people on the other hand. Sabry (2010) called for:

> a re-articulation of culture, where the concept denotes not only a fixed set of aesthetics or values but also a system of relations, which takes into account the 'gritty' nature of lived experience . . . as well as the best that has been written and said. Re-articulating the concept of culture so that it draws from the present tense of Arab cultures is a way of dealing with and changing what the present of Arab cultures holds, in terms of power relations between for example, male/ female, ruler/ruled, rich/poor, Arab/non-Arab . . .
>
> 163

Popular culture, then, is a vibrant – dare I say, authentic – expression of the people, and in its contemporaneity, it reflects the political present rather than a past wrapped as apolitical folklore.

Perhaps the most systematic argument against understanding popular culture as folk culture, or folklore, was advanced by the Argentinian-Mexican cultural critic Nestor García-Canclini (1995), who argues that the 'staging of the popular' via folklore, or 'the apprehension of the popular as tradition', is tantamount to considering 'the popular as praised residue' (148). Maintaining that folklore is 'almost always a melancholic attempt at subtracting the popular from the massive reorganization of society' (151), García-Canclini proceeds with '. . . six refutations of the classic view of the folklorists' (153). First, he argued, '[*M*]*odern development does not suppress traditional popular cultures. . . .* traditional cultures *have developed by being transformed*' (153, emphasis in original), and uses popular music as an example of a local cultural form that has been amplified by broadcasting into national and international spheres. Second, García-Canclini claimed that '*Peasant and traditional cultures no longer represent the major part of popular culture*' (155, emphasis in original). Rather, traditional forms mix with other forms and circulate far outside their original realm. Third, '*The popular is not concentrated in objects*' (156, emphasis in original), but resides in ever-changing practices of meaning making and market transactions. Fourth, '*The popular is not a monopoly of the popular sectors*' (156, emphasis in original), but is shaped by a variety of actors – 'popular and hegemonic, peasant and urban, local, national, and transnational' (157) – who oppose it, benefit from it, and construct it collectively. Fifth, García-Canclini warned that '*The popular is not lived by popular subjects as melancholic complacency with traditions*' (157, emphasis in original). Rather, the popular is experienced dynamically, often subversively, as in various parodies of hegemonic traditions. Sixth and finally, '*The pure preservation of traditions is not always the best popular resource for reproducing itself and reelaborating its situation*' (168, emphasis in original).

From the preceding, we can conclude that popular culture is shaped by multiple interconnected tensions: between elite and plebeian social groups, between high and vernacular cultural expression, between class sensibilities and the demands of capitalism, between tradition and cultural innovation. The multiplicity of meanings we attribute to popular culture stems from these tensions as much as it derives from the complex lineages of the words 'popular' and 'culture'. In addition, once we stray beyond the influential but not universal norms and assumptions of British cultural studies, we realize that another tension between local cultural practices and foreign influences plays a structuring role in the understanding and study of popular culture in parts of the world where the approach of Stuart Hall and his disciples does not hold sway. These differences will become clearer once we explore the role of popular culture in national politics and global geopolitics, as we will do next.

Popular culture and national politics

If popular culture, as Hall defined it, is an antagonistic and dynamic field of meaning and power, then it is inevitably entangled with politics: 'the terrain of

national-popular culture and tradition as a battlefield', Hall concludes (1998: 451). There is a voluminous literature on the connections between popular culture and politics, particularly in the United States and the United Kingdom. As traditional social structures buckled under modernization, traditional political parties declined and political communication began integrating symbolic practices from outside of its traditional domain. This has paved the way for the emergence of 'symbolic templates of heroes and villains, honored values and aspirations, histories, mythologies, and self-definition' (Mancini and Swanson 1996: 9) endemic to popular culture. Indeed, developments over the last half century compelled the scholar John Street to argue that it was at least plausible that political ventures into the world of popular culture are a legitimate part of the complex ways in which political representation functions in modern democracies' (Street 2004: 436). Liesbet Van Zoonen (2004) echoed this view in arguing that voters are situated towards parties the same way that fans are positioned towards entertainment television programmes. She identifies three similarities between communities of political voters and groups of entertainment television fans: a structural similarity created via performance, a similarity in communicative activities such as discussion and participation and a similarity in emotional investment. Voters and fans, Van Zoonen (2004) finds, engage in similar 'practices of community building' (46).

Popular culture is also political at the level of the nation-state because of the links it has with social class. The 'very complex relations' of the popular to the term 'class' (Hall 1998: 452) – complex because there are no clearly demarcated cultures that fit specific clearly identifiable classes – is one way in which popular culture is political. In a nod to the influence of the Italian philosopher Antonio Gramsci on his work, Hall sees the popular infusing a kind of politics that pit 'The people versus the power-bloc . . . rather than "class-against-class"'. Gramsci had developed the notion of hegemony to illustrate how a ruling bloc exercises leadership by manipulating the populace to believe that its interests converge with the interests of those in power. Though Hall sees popular culture as central to this struggle, he warns that 'there is no fixed content to the category of "popular culture", so there is no fixed subject to attach to it – "the people"' (Hall 1998: 452). In other words, the notion of 'the popular' or speaking in the name of the people can be instrumental-ized by politicians who deploy populist rhetoric to advanced interests opposed to that of the people. Hall provides the example of ex-UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher saying 'We have to limit the power of the trade unions because that is what the people want' (Hall 1998: 452).

Popular culture also connects with nationalism. Aslama and Pantti (2007) argue for a consideration of reality television in Finland as a space of nationalist sentiment. The Finnish reality programme *Extreme Escapades* falls within the growth of domestically produced television since the 1990s. In Finland, the authors argue, 'the most watched programs have a distinctive national character' (Aslama and Pantti 2007: 51). Not only did the producers embed explicitly nationalistic rhetoric in the show's production and promotion, they also intentionally stirred nationalistic sentiments by 'flagging' Finnishness via the relationship between technology and nature (Nokia Nation within a Nordic backwoods landscape), the

circulation of mythologies of Finnishness, the construction of competitors whose rivalry is cool and dispassionate because confrontation is supposedly alien to local culture, and the realization of modes of talk perceived to be typically Finnish. These included the 'quiet Finn' stereotype, which the show tried unsuccessfully to break for dramatic purposes. *Extreme Escapades*' 'construction of national identity', the authors conclude, 'can be interpreted as calculated intentionality' (Aslama and Pantti 2007: 63), which is necessary for the survival of Finnish television production. In popular culture, nationalism and commercialism often work hand-in-hand.

More than simply providing a platform for the expression of nationalism, popular culture often operates like a laboratory in which the changing parameters of national identity are explored. In many countries, music video has been a privileged genre in that regard. These include relatively new nations like the Central Asian republics that gained independence after the fall of the Soviet Union, where music video showcases emblems of national identity. Another variation can be seen in the music video for the song *Made in India*, which uses a bride trying to select a groom from several suitors as an allegory to explore India's shifting identity from a developmental state to a neoliberal new nation (Kumar and Curtin 2002).

Popular culture has also entered the realm of activism. From the Arab uprisings in 2011 to the Women's March against US President Donald Trump in 2018, popular culture provides activists with vernacular affordances that are widely understood and deeply resonant with their publics. In these arenas, popular songs and superheroes, old proverbs and advertising slogans, are deployed by activists to score points against their opponents. Some characters appear to have permeated the social imaginary for so long and to have achieved such broad resonance that they appear to be universally used. For example, the figure of Pinocchio, the Italian wooden figurine whose nose grows when he lies, appeared in stencil graffiti during the Egyptian revolution that toppled dictator Hosni Mubarak in 2011. There, the face of Pinocchio was embedded in a television set, with his overgrown nose breaking the screen, reflecting that state television in Egypt lied systematically (Kraidy 2016). I also saw the symbol of Pinocchio on hand-made signs during the 2018 Women's March in Philadelphia, on which Donald Trump was portrayed with an excessively overgrown nose, underscoring the US President's proliferation of dubious claims.

Popular culture and geopolitics

Though overlaps of popular culture and politics in national arenas now enjoy a commonsense acceptance among scholars, there is much less scholarship on how popular culture is often entangled with geopolitics, entering the global game of power and influence between nations. Considering popular culture in conjunction with geopolitics is less a matter of expansion than it is an issue of history and ideology. Indeed, as Hall argued, 'popular imperialism', which he called 'the most powerful dominant ideology' (444) saturated 'forms of popular recreation' where

there was 'no separate, autonomous, "authentic" layer of working-class culture to be found' (Hall 1998: 443). Though unfortunately Hall did not elaborate on popular imperialism, I understand this to refer to the incorporation of British imperialist ideas and imperial possession in the popular cultural imagination of the British working class during the period Hall was analyzing, which extended from the 1880s to the 1920s.[2]

Imperial histories and colonial traumas, wars of liberation and postcolonial predicament, previously in the British but also the Dutch, Spanish, French and Belgian empires, not to mention the global imperial history of the United States in the long twentieth century, have for hundreds of years mixed cultural forms from around the globe. We are therefore compelled to conclude that contemporary popular culture carries traces of the whole world: languages acquired during colonial dominion, commodities caught in post-imperial glitches, educational, fashion, to food and media habits shaped by colonial time. Today's global popular culture contains the geopolitical histories of the world.

Nonetheless, the literature on 'the geopolitics of the popular' remains small, but as the global internet has expanded the scale of connection between various states and non-state actors globally, it is reasonable to expect that popular culture's role in geopolitics is poised to grow. Traditionally, geopolitics includes international relations between states competing for power and resources, but the turn towards 'critical geopolitics' has been concerned with how geopolitics is 'implicated in the ongoing social reproduction of power and political economy' (Ó Tuathail and Dalby 1998: 2). Scholars have also discerned 'new forms of strategic positioning [that] are . . . taking place by way of using "the popular" and "the imaginary" in novel ways' (Burkart and Christensen 2013: 4).

In the Middle East, the rise of Turkey as a global diplomatic and cultural power since the early 2000s is an excellent case study for how the geopolitics of the popular work. Contemporary Turkey is the world's second (after the United States) leading exporter of television drama series, with active markets in the Middle East, Eastern Europe and Latin America ('Turkey ranks', 2017; Vivarelli 2018). But it is Turkey's use of popular culture to recast its geopolitical relations with its Arab neighbours – countries like Iraq, Tunisia, Libya, Syria and Lebanon – that illustrates the potency of popular culture in geopolitics.

Since the early 2000s, Turkey has developed exactly such repositioning towards its Arab neighbours by a concerted diplomatic, media, cultural and political campaign proclaiming a common history and cultural heritage, most spectacularly in serialized television drama (Kraidy and Al-Ghazzi 2013). Though this campaign suffered serious setbacks when the Arab uprisings, which started in late 2010, reshuffled the board and brought back some enmity between Turkey and Arab countries like Syria, a decade's worth of developments in Turkish-Arab relations provides a goldmine for research into the geopolitics of the popular. If 'a vital dimension of intensive research into popular culture is precisely the considerable

2. As David Hesmondhalgh has pointed out to me, Hall offered no evidence that the British working class was more racist than the middle class.

historical roots of hegemonic cultural frames' (Downing 2013: 15), then the popularity of Turkish television series with Arab audiences in the last decade constitutes an interesting geopolitical reversal, when one recalls that most Arab countries were under the dominion of the Ottoman Empire – which stemmed from what is now Turkey – for half a millennium ending with World War I, which led to the dismantling of the Ottoman Empire.

In Asia, the Japanese occupation of Korea and parts of China in the 1940s meant that Japanese popular culture would be politicized in these two countries, alongside Western, particularly US, popular culture, which defenders of tradition all over the world identify as the main enemy of 'traditional culture'. In China, Zhi'ang (1999) blames the emergence of 'so-called popular culture' not only on the rise of a non-state owned economy in China, but also on Taiwan and Hong Kong, and their status as gateways between China and the West. For example, he argues that 'most of the dregs of feudalism come from Taiwan, which has not undergone the baptism of a democratic revolution and was, in the first place, enshrouded in the poisonous mists of feudalism' (45). By promoting values like filial piety, loyalty and benevolence, Zhi'ang argues, Taiwanese media, including television, have contributed to the return of feudal values to Chinese culture. But there is also the problem of colonialism in China, still alive according to the author, in the BBC broadcasting to China, contributing to China's cultural 'encirclement'. But from a Chinese perspective, British imperialism is no more fearsome than Japanese colonialism. In Japanese animated films popular in China, Zhi'ang (1999) finds expressions of Japanese expansionism, since the movies feature Chinese and Russian characters helping the Japanese control the world. Zhi'ang executes a similar analysis of US animated action-adventure films, where he discerns 'US imperialism's self-portrait as an international gendarme' (1999: 47). Hong Kong and Taiwan, in Zhi'ang's telling, are soft gateways through which the West encroaches on China through 'so-called popular culture'.

Objection to foreign culture is not limited to non-Western gatekeepers protesting Western popular culture. This is made clear in French reactions to reality TV. The French debate over reality television consumed the intellectual class, whose members duelled over the social implications of *Loft Story* and *La Ferme Célébrités* in the pages of leading newspapers like *Le Monde*, which published a 'dossier spécial' on 2 November 2002 under the telling title 'Télé-réalité, les nouveaux maîtres de l'écran'. *Loft Story*, the French version of *Big Brother*, inspired a rich repertoire of scornful epithets. For the most part, the French cultural elite had a visceral reaction against reality television, with Jerôme Clément, then president of the high-culture Franco-German channel Arte calling reality television 'rampant fascism' (Le Guay 2005: 42). Less than a year later, the then Minister of Culture Jean-Jacques Aillagon summed up the view of the French intelligentsia during an interview with the conservative Catholic newspaper *La Croix*, when he said that reality television programmes 'pose a threat to the equilibrium of our society' (Le Guay 2005: 12).

Even as states, intellectuals, and cultural leaders criticized imported popular culture, their behaviour sometimes amounts to appropriation and redeployment.

For example, popular culture genres imported from the West were useful to Chinese authorities. The reality television trend entered China in 2000, starting with outdoor survival shows inspired by *Survivor*. By 2004, the studio contest genre of *Idol* had moved to become the dominant sub-genre, and since 2006 there has been a wide variety of formats fitting loosely under the label of reality television. The Chinese handling of reality television reflects that the genre is regarded to address the two objectives of satisfying the authoritarian state's propaganda while also addressing consumer society's interests and imperatives. The first issue is clear: Zhao and Guo (2005) argued that television in China is 'the most powerful site for the construction of an official discourse on nationalism and the mobilization of patriotism' (531). The second issue is less explicit, but it gained in importance as the state continued to withdraw subsidies to the media industries in the last decade, the Chinese media commercialized rapidly. Reality television enabled a 'harmonious' pairing of the party line and bottom line.

The tendency of controversial genres of popular culture to be appropriated appears to know no geographic boundaries. However controversial, a highly popular genre is sought after both by profit-seeking media industries and popular legitimacy-searching politicians. For example, after years of heated controversies surrounding pan-Arab (regional and supranational) reality television in the Arab world, in which clerics, intellectuals, journalists, and government officials accused the genre of being nothing short of 'cultural terrorism', while other journalists and politicians defended reality productions for their economic benefits, cultural openness and extreme popularity with women and youth (this often occurred against a backdrop of geopolitical tensions between rich Gulf countries and poorer North African countries, or between small and large countries), several locally resonant reality genres emerged. These included *Green Light*, which pitted contestants who strove to accomplish good, charitable deeds, and *Poets of the Millions*, in which contestants competed to compose and deliver poetry on live television. Both charitable work and poetry are deeply resonant across the Arab world, and once the reality format was bent to accommodate these locally desirable forms, controversy subsided (Kraidy 2010).

The geopolitical importance of popular culture can also be seen in the ways in which contemporary popular culture articulates colonial history even as it enables political and economic debate on a continental scale. According to Sean Jacobs (2007), *Big Brother Africa*, a pan-African show produced in South Africa, '. . . shed[s] light on a range of complex issues all too often cast aside or altogether ignored in discussions of cultural phenomena south of the Sahara: economic relations between countries, issues of race and class, and perceptions of self and other, among others' (852). But the relationship between the global genre of reality television and Africa goes beyond reality shows produced by African television channels. US reality television shows, according to Steeves (2008), 'support Africa's colonization via commodification' (418). American reality shows like *Survivor* and *The Amazing Race*, some seasons of which are shot in Africa, operate through what can perhaps be called 'reverse neocolonial mimicry', with American contestants imitating African traditions, 'as observed in colonial narratives and tourism'

(Steeves 2008: 425). This includes various 'pseudotribal props' like 'tribal councils' and tiki torches that essentialize and exoticize Africa. Also, as Steeves point out, *Survivor* seasons are called specifically following the country, island or locality where the shooting occurs (Borneo, Marquesas, Thailand, Vanuatu); the third season is the only one to be called the much broader, vaguer and exotic *Survivor Africa*. Hubbard and Mathers (2004) argue that *Survivor* casts participants as a mixture of gazing tourists, humanitarians and colonialists:

> *Survivor Africa* combines nostalgic colonial flair with critical plots that turn on notions of a future of constant surveillance and a form of life conducive to an empire for a post-imperial age . . . It is no accident that it is Americans that are playing this game so successfully. It is America that needs to learn how to 'be' in relation to a world that it increasingly dominates . . . *Survivor* is, thus, a primer for the subjects of this new empire, one that depends heavily on notions of the free market, human rights and what makes up the modern.
>
> 2004: 444

In that vein, '. . . *Survivor Africa* places an imagined Africa as central to an emerging discourse of a humanitarian American empire' (Hubbard and Mathers 2004: 445), enacting what the authors call an 'emaciated modernity' (454). Scenes that show hospitals, SUVs and other trappings of modernity, instead of undermining the premise of the show – primitive isolation – show Africa as a hopeless case, a last redoubt that stubbornly resists being transformed by global capitalism. The ensuing sympathy 'gives rise to a form of care that rides on the belief that America can save Africa, that within the realm of responsibility for freedom is the need to care about Africa' (454).

In addition to colonialism, popular culture is entangled with competing nationalisms that emerged (or re-emerged) in geopolitical mayhem, like the bloody unravelling of the former Yugoslavia. There, the pan-Yugoslav reality television show *To Sam Ja* (*That's Me*) promoted what Volcic and Andrejevic (2009) call 'commercial nationalism'. As the nations resulting from the breaking-up of Yugoslavia attempt to forge a sense of national identity and at the same time strive to fit in the emerging pan-European identity trope, their television systems have become increasingly commercialized. In the new media environment, reality television has emerged as a pervasive genre. As in the Arab world (see Kraidy 2010), initially the trend was towards adapting formats that had proven successful elsewhere – *Big Brother*, *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire*, etc. Then a pattern of local, i.e. non-format-adapted cultural productions emerged in the countries that had previously made up Yugoslavia: Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia. In Slovenia alone, seven local reality shows appeared between 2003 and 2007 (Volcic and Andrejevic 2009). As was the case in the Arab world and Africa (Jacobs 2007), reality television promised a new economic model integrating television with the internet and mobile phones.

To Sam Ja promised to be a platform of reconciliation between the different nationalities spawned by the breakup of Yugoslavia, which inevitably involved

bringing in the register of what Volcic (2007) and others have called 'yugonostalgia', a phenomenon whereby 'events, spaces, identities and media representations . . . consumer goods and tourist travel . . . that invoke fond memories of the Yugoslav era' (Volcic and Andrejevic 2009). Because it was satcast globally, the show attracted many in the vast post-Yugoslav diaspora, who were among the 1.5 million people who, the producers claimed, used the show's interactive website to post comments, follow developments, etc. In that process, the nations emerging from the ex-Yugoslavia were discursively pitted against each other, undermining the soothing post-national pretensions of the producers. This context gave rise to the expression of stereotypes held by post-Yugoslav national groups against each other, which degenerated into offensive behaviour and hateful rhetoric, including threats of stabbing, accusations against Bosnian Muslim contestant of terrorism, and flare-ups inspired by a clash of civilization mindset. The authors conclude that instead of a return to traditional notions of national identity, what reality television gave rise to is a nationalism imbricated with a neoliberal ethos of individual consumption (Volcic and Andrejevic 2009).[3]

Entanglements of popular culture with geopolitics exist beyond the specific genres of television drama and reality television. Examples include the 2017 Dutch television satire of Donald Trump and his ignorance of world politics, the proliferation of anti-Canada digital memes by internet trolls associated with the Saudi government in the context of a diplomatic crisis between Saudi Arabia and Canada in the summer of 2018, and the Turkish-German football player Mesut Özil quitting the German national team in protest against racism after the 2018 World Cup. By entering the geopolitical arena, drama, reality TV, satire, digital trolling and sports showcase popular culture's ability to infuse global politics with a vernacular rich with social resonance and political relevance. Future generations of scholars will hopefully give more attention to connections between popular culture and geopolitics.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the subject of popular culture from a definitional and theoretical perspective, explained differences between popular and folk culture, and examined the role of popular culture in contemporary politics and geopolitics. Popular culture is an antagonistic, pluralistic, dynamic and global field permeated by power struggles. Understanding popular culture as a space and means of power struggle means popular culture is never too far from politics. Going back to Stuart Hall:

> . . . there is a continuous and necessarily uneven and unequal struggle, by the dominant culture, constantly to disorganize and reorganize popular culture, to enclose and confine its definitions and forms within a more inclusive range of dominant forms.

3. This discussion of reality television draws directly from Miller and Kraidy (2016).

There are points of resistance; there are points of suppression. This is the dialectic of cultural struggle.

1998: 447

I hope this chapter has provided examples of these points of resistance and suppression, and more broadly, of the organizing principle that Hall identified, that popular culture is always caught in a dynamic of rebellion and incorporation, resistance and containment. Developed by profit-seeking media industries that freely incorporate elements from folk culture in the creation of contemporary commodity, popular culture is appropriated by ordinary users and activists, opposed and instrumentalized by nation-states. As most countries in the world now have commercial media and cultural industries, we can expect popular culture to continue to be a fluid and conflictual field that nonetheless plays the main role of creating surplus value for global capitalism.

Bibliography

An, N., C. Liu and H. Zhu (2016), 'Popular Geopolitics of Chinese Nanjing Massacre Films: A Feminist Approach', *Gender, Place & Culture,* 23 (6): 786–800.

Armbrust, W. (1996), *Mass Culture and Modernism in Egypt*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Aslama, M. and M. Pantti (2006), 'Talking Alone: Reality TV, Emotions and Authenticity', *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 9 (2), 167–84.

Aslama, M. and M. Pantti (2007), 'Flagging Finnishness: Reproducing National Identity in Reality Relevision', *Television and New Media,* 8 (1): 49–67.

Browitt, J. (2000), 'Nationalising the Popular: Ritual, Resistance and Survival in Latin American Popular Cultures', *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Research,* 6 (2): 1–26.

Burkart, P. and M. Christensen (2013), 'Introduction: Geopolitics and the Popular', *Popular Communication,* 11: 3–6.

Couldry, N. (2002), 'Playing for Celebrity: Big Brother As Ritual Event', *Television and New Media,* 3 (3): 283–94.

Cullity, J. (2002), 'The Global Desi: Cultural Nationalism on MTV India', *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 26 (4): 408–25.

de la Torre, C. (2017), 'Trump's Populism: Lessons from Latin America', *Postcolonial Studies*, 20 (2): 187–98.

di Piramo, D. (2009), 'Speak for me!': How Populist Leaders Defy Democracy in Latin America', *Global Change, Peace & Security*, 21 (2): 179–99.

Downing, J. D. H. (2013), '"Geopolitics" and "the Popular"', *Popular Communication,* 11: 7–16.

Elias, N., A. Jamal and O. Soker (2009), 'Illusive Pluralism and Hegemonic Identity in Popular Reality Shows in Israel', *Television and New Media,* 10 (5): 375–91.

Fahmy, Z. (2011), *Ordinary Egyptians: Creating the Modern Nation Through Popular Culture,* Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.

Fung, A. Y. (2007), 'The Emerging (National) Popular Music Culture in China', *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 8 (3): 425–37.

García-Canclini, N (1995), *Consumidores y Ciudados,* Argentina Poniente: Editorial Gryalbo.

Hall, S. (1981/1998), 'Notes on Deconstructing the Popular', in J. Storey (ed.), *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: A Reader,* 442–53, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Pearson/Prentice Hall.

Hartley, J. (2007), '"Reality" and the Plebiscite', in K. Riegert (ed.), *Politicotainment: Television's Take on the Real,* 21–58, New York: Peter Lang.

Huat, C. B. (2004), 'Conceptualizing an East Asian Popular Culture', *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 5 (2): 200–21.

Hubbard, L., and K. Mathers (2004), 'Surviving American Empire in Africa: The Anthropology of Reality Television', *International Journal of Cultural Studies,* 7 (4): 441–59.

Iwabuchi, K. (2004), 'Feeling Glocal: Japan in the Global Television Format Business', in A. Moran and M. Keane (eds), *Television across Asia: Television Industries, Programme Formats and Globalization,* 21–35, London: Routledge.

Jacobs, S. (2007), '*Big Brother*, Africa Is Watching', *Media, Culture & Society,* 29 (6): 851–68.

Kawai, Y. (2009), 'Neoliberalism, Nationalism, and Intercultural Communication: A Critical Analysis of a Japan's Neoliberal Nationalism Discourse Under Globalization', *Journal of International and Intercultural Communication,* 2 (1): 16–43.

Kraidy, M. M. (2010), *Reality Television and Arab Politics: Contention in Public Life*, New York: Cambridge University Press.

Kraidy, M. M. (2016), *The Naked Blogger of Cairo: Creative Insurgency in the Arab World*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Kraidy, Marwan M. and O. Al-Ghazzi (2013), 'Neo-Ottoman Cool: Turkish Popular Culture in the Arab Public Sphere', *Popular Communication,* 11 (1): 17–29.

Kraidy, M. M. and K. Sender (2010), *The Politics of Reality Television: Global Perspectives*, London and New York: Routledge.

Kumar, S. (2005), *Gandhi Meets Primetime: Globalization and Nationalism in Indian Television,* Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Kumar, S. and M. Curtin (2002), '"Made in India": In Between Music Television and Patriarchy', *Television and New Media,* 3 (4): 354–66.

Kuper, A. (2000), *Culture: The Anthropologists's Account*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Le Guay, D. (2005), *L'empire de la télé-réalité,* Paris: Presses de la Renaissance.

Mancini, P. and D. Swanson (1996), 'Politics, Media and Modern Democracy: Introduction', in P. Mancini and D. Swanson (eds), *Politics, Media and Modern Democracy,* 1–28, Westport, CT: Praeger.

Mathjis, E. and J. Jones, eds (2004), Big Brother *International: Formats, Critics and Publics,* London: Wallflower Press.

Miller, T. and M. Kraidy (2016), *Global Media Studies*. London: Polity.

Miller-Idriss, C. (2017), *The Extreme Gone Mainstream: Commercialization and Far Right Youth Culture in Germany,* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Ó Tuathail, G. and S. Dalby (1998), 'Introduction: Rethinking Geopolitics: Towards a Critical Geopolitics,' in G. Ó Tuathail and S. Dalby (eds), *Rethinking Geopolitics,* 1–15, London: Routledge.

Otmazgin, N. (2014), 'A Regional Gateway: Japanese Popular Culture in Hong Kong, 1990–2005', *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies,* 15 (2): 323–35.

Sabry, T. (2010), *Cultural Studies in the Arab World: On Media, the Modern and the Everyday,* London: IB Tauris.

Smith, D. C. (2008), 'Critiquing Reality-based Televisual Black Fatherhood: A Critical Analysis of *Run's House* and *Snoop Dogg's Father Hood'*, *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 25 (4): 393–412.

Squires, C. (2008), 'Race and Reality TV: Tryin' to Make It Real – But Real Compared to What?', *Critical Studies in Media Communication,* 25 (4): 434–40.

Steeves, H. L. (2008), 'Commodifying Africa on US Network Reality Television', *Communication, Culture & Critique*, 1 (4): 416–46.

Street, J. (2004), 'Celebrity Politicians: Popular Culture and Political Representation', *British Journal of Politics and International Relations,* 6 (4): 435–52.

'Turkey ranks second in TV drama export' (2017, 30 September), *Hurriyet*. Available online: http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-ranks-second-in-tv-drama-export-120144

Van Zoonen, L. (2004), 'Imagining the Fan Democracy', *European Journal of Communication,* 19 (1): 39–52, p. 42.

Vivarelli, N. (2018, 8 April), 'Turkey experiences its own peak TV'. Available online: https://variety.com/2018/tv/features/turkey-experiences-its-own-wave-of-peak-tv-1202746009/

Volcic, Z. (2007), 'Yugo-nostalgia: Cultural Memory and Media in the Former Yugoslavia', *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 24 (1): 21–38.

Volcic, Z. and M. Andrejevic (2009), 'That's Me: Nationalism and Identity on Balkan Reality TV', *Canadian Journal of Communication,* 34 (1): 7–24.

Wei, L. (2008, September). 'Chinese Reality TV and Politics: Entertainment vs. Socio-Political Responsibility.' Paper presented at Reel Politics Conference, Istanbul, Turkey.

Zaslove, J. (1998), 'Vindicating Popular Culture in Latin America: A Response to García Canclini', *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies/Revue canadienne des études latino-américaines et caraïbes*, 23 (46): 133–54.

Zhao, Y. and Z. Guo (2005), 'Television in China: History, Political Economy, and Ideology', in J. Wasko (ed.), *A Companion to Television,* 521–39, London: Blackwell.

Zhi'ang, C. (1999), 'Beware of So-Called Popular Culture', *Chinese Sociology & Anthropology,* 31 (4): 42–57.

Chapter 3

MEDIA, GENDER AND FEMINISM

Susan J. Douglas

On 7 September 1968, Robin Morgan, a former child television star, along with other feminists, organized several busloads of women to stage a demonstration against the Miss America Pageant, an annual live media event staged in the United States at the time. There, on the Atlantic City boardwalk, they crowned a sheep 'Miss America', set up a 'Freedom Trash Can' into which various trappings of femininity like curlers and bras were hurled, and held up signs that read 'Welcome to the Miss America Cattle Auction' (Douglas 1994: 139). Indeed, one poster that became instantly famous, and titled 'Break the Dull Steak Habit', featured a nude woman kneeling, with her back facing the camera, her body divided up like a piece of meat with her parts marked 'Rib', 'Rump' and 'Round'.

It is hardly surprising that the first major feminist demonstration of the late 1960s in the United States targeted one of the highest rated programmes on television; second-wave feminists, starting with Betty Freidan in *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), had singled out the mass media as a central culprit in promoting and reinforcing sexist ideas about women. By 1970, the year when American feminists staged an eleven-hour sit-in at *The Ladies Home Journal* to protest its retrograde depiction of women, women at *Newsweek* and *Time* sued the magazines for sex discrimination, and the Women's Strike for Equality in August featured guerilla theatre ridiculing the widespread objectification of women, it was clear that media criticism had quickly become a foundational tenet of feminism.

Certainly Friedan's groundbreaking book not only paved the way for the rise of what would be called 'second-wave feminism', or, more commonly, the 'women's liberation movement', it also indicted the media through her attack on its 'Happy Housewife Heroine', the title of the book's second chapter. This mattered because *The Feminine Mystique* was a blockbuster, and the 1964 paperback version the number one bestseller in the US. This mythically happy housewife, in TV shows, in advertising, and especially in the pages of women's magazines, Friedan observed, was 'young and frivolous, almost childlike; fluffy and feminine; passive; gaily content in a world of bedroom and kitchen . . . the only pursuit, the only goal a woman is permitted is the pursuit of a man' (Friedan 1963: 30).

Meanwhile, also in 1963, Gloria Steinem went undercover as a Playboy bunny, and her exposé, 'A Bunny's Tale', appeared as a two-part series in *Show* magazine. It

revealed the low pay, sexual harassment, expectations by club members of sexual favours, and how the 'bunnies' were required to boost their cleavage and wear false eyelashes on the job (Steinem 1963).

As these blistering accounts of female objectification and women's second-class citizenship circulated through the United States, Britain and other countries as well, young women in America were becoming more politically active, especially in the Civil Rights and Anti-War movements. Smart, well-educated, inspired by the need for social and political change, many of these women became increasingly outraged by their second-class status in these movements, designated to make copies and coffee, not welcomed into leadership positions. This attitude became infamously embodied in 1964 when Stokely Carmichael, leader of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, pronounced that 'the only position for women in SNCC is prone'.

Robin Morgan had herself been active in the anti-Vietnam War and Civil Rights movements, including in SNCC, and the sexism she encountered led her to become a feminist activist and founder of several radical feminist organizations. Her extremely influential 1970 anthology, *Sisterhood is Powerful*, included further indictments of how women were depicted in the media, and what the Miss America demonstration sought to make absolutely clear was how this sexist stereotyping and objectification of women sustained and justified discrimination against them in everyday life.

Female scholars and writers embraced this agenda, and feminist media studies was born. It was driven by the conviction that sexism and discrimination against girls and women in employment, education, in their relationships – in all aspects of everyday life – were driven and legitimated by dismissive stereotypes of women on the pages and screens of the country. And its analytical framework was both simple yet intellectually transformative: that society was structured, institutionally and ideologically, through patriarchy, the domination of men over women.

In its early stages, feminist media studies sought to corroborate activists' charges that women in the media – in magazines and advertising, on television, in films – were primarily young, white, slim, shown almost exclusively in passive or helpmate roles or, worse, used simply as sex objects, and conformed to very narrow corporately defined standards of beauty. Because of the belief that 'biology is destiny', women were cast as suited only to clean house and produce babies, all had a built-in maternal instinct, were by nature passive and inherently domestic, and lived to be deferential to men. Television commercials featured housewives who actually sang, 'Mr Clean, I love you', while scrubbing their bathtubs, and print ads literally showed men holding their wives face-down over their knees and spanking them for making 'flat, stale coffee'. (Women of colour by contrast, who were mostly invisible in the media, could work outside the home – as maids, bathroom attendants or tending to white people's children, for example.) The stereotypes were endless – that women were allegedly terrible drivers, that they were technophobes who had no idea how to use a Hi-Fi record player (yet had mastered the vacuum cleaner and washing machine), and weaklings who shouldn't lift anything over 30 pounds (the average weight of a three-year-old). It was worse for

African-American women who, if and when they were represented at all, were either servile maids and mammies or over-sexed Jezebels.

The 1958 guide book *What Makes Women Buy*, opined that 'at least half of all women are turned into "witches" of varying degrees once a month', that they 'like to see pictures of food', are 'not inclined to be interested in automobiles', and their 'verbal aptitude accounts for the fact that they like to gossip *and* have the last word' (Douglas 1994: 56–57). As *Ad Age* wrote of women in 1970, 'She likes to watch television and she does not enjoy reading a great deal . . . she finds her satisfaction within a rather small world . . . she has little interest or skill to explore . . . mental activity is arduous for her' (Rodnitzky 1999: 115). In addition to all this, with very few exceptions, women were not seen as television reporters or news anchors or, in entertainment programming, as working outside the home or having careers.

In 1970 in the United States, the Women's Liberation Movement was one of the biggest stories of the year. With the serial protests and demonstrations, culminating in the Women's Strike for Equality in August, the largest demonstration up to that point for women's rights, the news media, by now dominated by television, which was in turn dominated by white male reporters and anchors, had to figure out how to cover this explosive and threatening story. It should come as no surprise that it was a contradictory mess, filled with condescension, ridicule and denial on the one hand, yet legitimation of feminist charges on the other. All three of the networks quoted a senator who referred to feminists as 'braless bubbleheads', and various stories illustrated women's demands for equality with images of women learning karate. 'Rage would not be too strong a word to describe the emotion felt by large numbers of feminists about the media's coverage of the women's movement', noted Judith Hole and Ellen Levine in 1971.

Yet some stories were surprisingly sympathetic, and even some of the most derisive male commentators acknowledged that 'equal pay for equal work' was a legitimate demand. More important, however, was the fact that the networks had to give airtime to prominent feminists, thus providing a platform for their issues to gain widespread circulation in the country. This mattered because most Americans learned about the movement from the media, and despite the stereotyping and denigration of feminists themselves, public support for women's rights increased significantly by the mid-1970s (Douglas 1994: 163–91).

Newspapers in the UK for the most part ignored feminist activism, but also branded feminists as 'deviants' as well as lesbians, man-haters and overly aggressive, which was the case in the US as well (Mendes 2011).

Much of the resulting feminist media scholarship in the early 1970s, labelled as analyzing 'sex role stereotypes', relied on content analysis to document and quantify what kinds of roles women had in TV shows or how often female voiceovers (as opposed to male) were used to sell a host of products like laundry detergent or cosmetics (answer, only 6 per cent) (Busby 1975: 109). And the overwhelming charge of nearly all of these early studies was that the media were uniformly sexist and relatively monolithic in their depiction of women. One such study, for example, found that 75 per cent of all ads using females were for products used in the kitchen or bathroom (Dominick and Rauch 1972: 261). The communications

scholar George Gerbner coined a term for this, 'symbolic annihilation': the systematic underrepresentation of a particular group or groups and/or media representations that favour stereotypes and omit realistic portrayals (Gerbner and Gross 1976: 182). And Susan Pingree et al. (1976) and then Butler and Paisley in *Women and the Mass Media* (1980) developed a 'consciousness scale' to rank the depictions of women, from level one, women as quintessential dumb blondes, victims or sex objects to level four, the rare depictions of men and women as equal, to level five, also very rare, where women were shown as individuals or even in roles typically reserved for men.

Meanwhile, feminist analyzes of film, like Molly Haskell's *From Reverence to Rape* (1973) and Marjorie Rosen's *Popcorn Venus* (1973), provided histories of how women had been represented in the movies (primarily American), the roles they had (and at times, had not) been restricted to, and the troubling rise of the increased sexualization of women and the rising violence against them in films. Haskell, in particular, argued that the depiction of women in film had actually gotten worse by the 1960s and early 1970s. Thus, analysis of the representation of women in the media from its early period employed both social science and humanities methodologies.

As a result of both feminist activism and this kind of damning feminist scholarship, media producers had to figure out how to respond. It had become quite clear that the representations of women in television, advertising, magazines and film lagged far behind what many women were doing, how they lived their lives and, most importantly, what they aspired to and how they saw themselves. Yet when I looked back at some of the kitschier programmes of the mid-1960s, *Bewitched* and *I Dream of Jeannie*, for example, in which women had magical powers that men begged them not to use, I found that these shows subtly (and metaphorically) blended women's emerging desire for liberation with their traditional roles as helpmates and love interests. Remember, these shows premiered at the same time that *The Feminine Mystique* was roiling the country and, however preposterous, were one Hollywood response to the emerging feminist sensibilities. So the female leads in these shows actually embodied important contradictions, personifying the intersections between middle-class definitions of the ideal young wife and, through their magical powers, rebelliousness against those very definitions (Douglas 1994: 126–28). Yet few saw those shows as feminist at the time.

As Andrea Press has pointed out, there was no 'feminist moment' on American TV in the 1970s, no shows that even for one second captured women's collective experience of being discriminated against based on gender. Nonetheless, given what had been the default representation of women on TV as housewives, girlfriends, or secretaries, there were major departures from and innovations in media representations of women. Yet they were typically riven with mixed messages as they navigated between feminism on the one hand and femininity on the other, seeking to craft some fusion, some compromise. *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, which premiered in 1970 and was a critical and ratings hit that ran for seven years, featured an unmarried, independent career woman in the title role, a rarity

at the time. And few shows embodied more perfectly the intertwining of traditional femininity with new feminist ambitions. The lead character Mary Richards was not dying to get married and was dedicated to and good at her job. Yet, although she was billed as a producer, she was mostly seen typing at her desk, and she called her male boss 'Mr Grant' while everyone else called him Lou and he called her Mary, reflecting the hierarchy of their relationship. Yet as the series progressed, and as Mary constantly juggled assertiveness with submission, she became more assured, more sarcastic, and more authoritative.

Maude (1972–78), showcased Bea Arthur as a multiply divorced, outspoken, middle-aged feminist who, famously and notoriously for some, discovered she was pregnant and opted to get an abortion, a groundbreaking television moment. By 1975, some TV executives appreciated that there was a transformation in motherhood afoot, in part as a result of the women's movement, and one that would attract female viewers. *One Day At A Time* (1975–84) also broke new ground in focusing on the trials and tribulations of a divorced, single mother of two teenage daughters. She self identified as 'a liberated woman, master of her fate' (Douglas and Michaels 2004: 76). It became an immediate hit, and viewers saw Ann Romano (Bonnie Franklin) contend with a low-paying job, power struggles with her ex, outbursts from her constantly feuding daughters, and unwanted come-ons from her building's superintendent. And in 1974, *Good Times*, with Esther Rolle as an African-American mother seeking to raise her children with her husband in the projects, television opened the door, although quite temporarily and partially, to featuring a black woman in a more realistic lead role than the one offered by the 1968 show *Julia*, in which Diahann Carroll portrayed a nurse living very much in a white world.

British women had also read *The Feminine Mystique* and were beginning to become more politically active, especially in the wake of highly publicized news stories about women's struggles in a patriarchal world. Sylvia Plath, the poet and author of *The Bell Jar*, the story of a young woman's encounter with unfulfilling work at a woman's magazine, loutish men and ensuing depression, committed suicide in London in 1963. In 1968, sewing machinists went on strike against a Ford factory in Dagenham to protest against unequal pay and a proposed classification system that would have ranked them as 'unskilled'. This led to the Equal Pay Act in 1970 and rising feminist activism in Britain, as well as feminist media studies work. And the London 1970 publication of Germaine Greer's international bestseller, *The Female Eunuch*, was a searing indictment of misogyny and a call for the sexual liberation of women.

In Britain, a very different intellectual turn took place that revolutionized feminist analyzes of the media. This was a departure from counting up and categorizing the roles women were seen in; rather, this work exposed the underlying visual structures of how women were seen, and thus saw themselves. First, in 1972, the art critic and novelist John Berger's book *Ways of Seeing*, based on his four-part BBC series, launched a full-bore critique of how women were represented first in oil paintings and then in 'publicity images' (advertising), pointing out that women were always depicted as subject to the male gaze.

Taking on the more conventional (and self-serving) tropes in art history about nudes as the apotheosis of 'high art', Berger argued that female nudes were painted for the pleasure of male viewers, that women were constantly under surveillance in such imagery, and that such depictions persisted right up to the present. As a result, women had learned to constantly watch themselves being watched, and were 'split into two', seeing themselves as 'surveyed' (being looked at), and also through the eyes of those watching them, 'the surveyors'. Thus, the surveyor in her is male, and she must 'turn herself into an object' (Berger 1972: 46–47). The book had an enormous impact on the rise of cultural studies in general and feminist media studies in particular in that it demystified the portrayal of women in art and advertising, and urged readers to see these images as part of an ongoing system of patriarchal representation that structured (while obfuscating) the very way we take in gendered images without much thought.

Then, in 1975, the British feminist film theorist Laura Mulvey published 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' in the journal *Screen*, a scant twelve-page article that broke entirely new ground in how scholars thought about and analyzed female imagery. Mulvey's goal was to appropriate psychoanalytic theory, used against women for decades, to expose 'the unconscious of patriarchal society' as manifested in Hollywood cinema. For her, 'phallocentrism' and castration anxiety were at the heart of how women were represented in Hollywood movies, and led to women being subjected to a controlling male gaze (Mulvey 1975: 6). Mulvey was not concerned with the various roles women played in films or whatever stereotypes inhered in them; rather, she took on the filmic apparatus of how viewers saw women on the screen, through what she identified as the three 'gazes', which she maintained positioned all audience members as heterosexual men. First, the audience member gazed at the woman on the screen in the darkened movie theatre; second, that gaze was controlled by the male directors and cameramen who determined how we saw her, and filmed women as sexual objects 'to-be-looked-at'; and finally, the way the male co-stars looked at the women as erotic objects cemented her function as a sexual spectacle and nothing else. Men were the active agents advancing the narrative of the film, 'making things happen', while women interrupted or worked against the advancement of the story line (Mulvey 1975: 11–12). Thus, men act but women only appear.

Such representations in film were especially powerful, Mulvey argued, because watching larger than life figures in a darkened theatre taps into unconscious instincts such as 'scopophilia' and voyeurism, the 'primordial wish for pleasurable looking' (Mulvey 1975: 9). Because, for Mulvey, all narrative cinema was structured the same way and exploited our desire for visual pleasure in a way that always objectified women (and required us to view films from the subject position of a heterosexual man), narrative cinema had to be rejected and destroyed. Thus, Berger and Mulvey insisted that beyond analyzing stereotypes, the very ways in which our viewing of imagery is structured and maps onto our psyches was crucially important to feminist media studies.

Mulvey's work electrified feminist media scholars and feminist film- and video-makers. Some took up her call to apply psychoanalytical theory to film analysis,

some began to rethink how female spectators related to media texts while others challenged what they saw as her over-arching position about how all film spectators were positioned as heterosexual men.

And feminist scholars began to apply theoretical frameworks from neo-Marxism and post-structuralism, especially Michel Foucault's notion of 'discourses' or discursive regimes, ways of constituting knowledge and power relations that gain an aura of truth and produce particular forms of subjectivity. The concept of fragmented subjectivity – that women, especially, are socialized to inhabit multiple subject positions, some of them in conflict with each other, and learn to identify with contradiction itself (Williams 1984) – also gained considerable influence in conceptualizing how women engaged with media texts. And Antonio Gramsci's concept of ideological hegemony – the process by which beliefs and values that benefit elites become a kind of 'common sense' that non-elites consent to and adopt – also influenced feminists' analysis of how the media affirmed, but also at times undermined, patriarchy. Because this 'common sense' was both a formation of a set of dominant beliefs and attitudes, but also a process by which new, emerging ideas get folded in to reshape prevailing values and attitudes, feminists could now move beyond a 'sexist-not-sexist' binary and think more about the contradictory representations of women in the media.

And contradictions did abound. Hollywood, unsure how to depict women at all in the face of the women's movement, decided mostly to ignore them, and produce male buddy movies (*Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, *The Sting*, *Midnight Cowboy*) or crime dramas and actions movies showcasing male heroism and dominance (everything from *The Godfather* films to *Jaws* to *Rocky*). Yet a few films did deal with the new realities many women were facing in the 1970s – the rising divorce rate, thus the growing number of single mothers, their need (or desire) to work outside the home while raising children, and their longing for independence and strong role models. *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore* (1974) featured a widowed mother juggling work as a waitress with childrearing; Ellen Burstyn won an Oscar for her portrayal. In another 'suddenly single' film, *An Unmarried Woman* (1978), Jill Clayburgh was on her own after learning that her cheating husband had fallen in love with someone else. Both films acknowledged implicitly that there might be an economic and social system one might call patriarchy, yet in both films the women end up meeting very hunky men (Kris Kristofferson and Alan Bates, respectively) who would do pretty much anything to make them happy. So maybe there wasn't such a thing as patriarchy, only a few unreconstructed men? Thus did we get Hollywood's version of how women could find true liberation: through newly enlightened men.

In the United States, probably the most perfect embodiment of these contradictory discourses about patriarchy, feminism and femininity were embodied in the TV hit show *Charlie's Angels* (1976–81). (In an effort to depict women with power, American television also brought us *The Bionic Woman* and *Wonder Woman* in 1976.) Instantly reviled by feminists, and with a staggering 59 per cent of TV sets tuned into it every week, *Charlie's Angels* featured three gorgeous women, often appearing in string bikinis or wet T-shirts, who, as detectives and crime fighters, took orders from Charlie's invisible voice emanating

from a speaker phone. 'One of the most misogynist shows the networks have produced recently', bemoaned one critic. Yet the show perfectly blended the tensions between feminism and anti-feminism. While the Angels indeed took orders from a lecherous man (constantly conveying that he was on the verge of having yet another sexual encounter) and were required to show their physical attractiveness to its best advantage, they went undercover in often very risky situations, overpowered or killed typically awful sadistic men, and frequently used the term 'male chauvinistic pig' to describe the criminals they were about to take down. So while the programme reinforced traditional male power through Charlie's agenda-setting instructions, it featured strong women fearlessly working together to apprehend evil men who were often exploiting other women (Douglas 1994: 212–16).

Two threads, not always mutually exclusive, began to emerge in feminist media studies during this period of media flux in the late 1970s and early 1980s. One continued to explore how various media forms, especially those geared to women, like romance novels, soap operas or melodramas, promulgated patriarchal values that reaffirmed sexism and helped keep women in their place. What was important here was that feminized media texts previously considered beneath contempt became objects of study. The British scholar Angela McRobbie, in her reading of *Jackie* (1978), a magazine for teenage girls, laid out how dismissing such a publication as 'silly, harmless nonsense' ignores the powerful ideological work it does in socializing girls into restrictive codes of femininity.

Another line of work, however, broke from the feminist critique of the early 1970s that most media was sexist and inimical to women's interests, and focused on questions of pleasure: after all, women did enjoy watching, reading and listening to various media texts, even those now deemed retrograde. So some scholars began to ask why women might take pleasure in media texts created for them even if such texts were denigrated as examples of 'trashy', feminized mass culture with no redeeming value. McRobbie's colleague Charlotte Brunsdon (2000) focused on the 'despised' British soap opera *Crossroads* (1983) and argued that such shows both engage with genuine, everyday challenges women face and, more to the point, assumed and cultivated particular viewing repertoires that were complex and added to women's pleasures in the text.

Another pioneering work here was Janice Radway's *Reading the Romance* (1984), in which she interviewed dedicated readers of romance novels. Taking on scholars like Tania Modleski and Ann Douglas, who saw women's engagement with the highly popular Harlequin novels as evidence of a kind of false consciousness, and a willing subjugation to patriarchal ideology, Radway found that despite narratives that affirmed women's subordination to men, the novels also provided satisfying fantasies of women humanizing the initially aloof and gruff male heroes, transforming them into more nurturing and caring men. More to the point, Radway's work pointed out that while it was important for feminist scholars to deconstruct media texts, it was also crucial to pay attention to the audience, to female viewers, to understand how they read media texts both with and against the grain.

Several scholars took up the charge of studying female media consumers to report what meanings they – and not academic analysts alone – got from media texts. One of the most important of these studies was Jacqueline Bobo's *Black Women as Cultural Readers* (1995) because the overwhelming majority of feminist media criticism in the 1970s and 1980s was written by and about white women. This was hardly surprising given that African-American women, with only a very few exceptions, were invisible on American network television and in film (except as mammies, maids and 'tragic Mulattos' and, later, in some Blaxploitation films of the 1970s), and invisible in most advertising and in print media, except that geared to an African-American audience. In 1988, the filmmaker Alile Sharon Larkin wrote one of the first analyzes of the recurring stereotypes of African-American women in film, the interconnections between racism and sexism that informed them, and how black women filmmakers were seeking to reclaim their own image making (Larkin 2007: 3). Bobo's book was the first in-depth study of black women as cultural consumers, and she interviewed them about their responses to novels and films featuring African-American women. She framed them, like Radway, as an interpretive community every bit as legitimate as academic scholars, whose cultural domination and social activism powerfully informed their textual interpretations, often in empowering ways.

Andrea Press attended to the audience as well, and her focus was on class. In *Women Watching Television* (1991), Press interviewed forty women of different ages and social class, and found that working-class women considered most TV shows to be not very realistic (not surprising given the dearth of representations of working-class women), and this led to a more distanced, critical stance, especially towards TV characters. Middle-class women, who liked television less overall, nonetheless did identify with television characters and their portrayed situations and dilemmas. And Press was one of the early scholars to identify the rise of 'postfeminist era television' characterized by a superficial acceptance of feminism coupled with a 'trend for women to be shown back in the home' with their family role emphasized and a de-emphasis on female friendship and solidarity.

By the late 1980s and early 1990s, with the ongoing increase in the number of women working outside the home, marrying later, postponing childbirth and embracing feminism (even if they refused to self-identify as feminist because of how it had been stereotyped), American television featured more career women and women going out to work, some of them pretty tough-talking. In ensemble shows, women started appearing as lawyers, police officers and doctors, and more women, on both sides of the Atlantic, appeared as reporters and presenters of the news, although they were still in the minority. *Roseanne*, starring Roseanne Barr, showcased a mouthy, irreverent mother in a working-class family and sought to rip the veneer off fake, sanctimonious portrayals of perfect motherhood. Sick of seeing 'a male point of view coming out of women's mouths', Roseanne adopted a decidedly emphatic feminist perspective in the show, which became a huge hit the moment it premiered in 1988 (Douglas and Michaels 2004: 217–18.

Likewise, *Murphy Brown*, which premiered in 1988 and ran for ten years, featured Candace Bergen in the lead role as an aggressive, outspoken, acid-tongued reporter feared by her colleagues (especially the men) and totally driven by her hugely successful career. The humour in the show lay in the contrast between how women, even successful career women, were supposed to act and Murphy's utter violation of and often hostility to those norms. One subtext of the show was that feminists were brittle and would pay for success with their personal lives (or lack thereof), but another – that women loved, and wrote to the producers about – was that being a mouthy, independent broad who didn't care what others thought of her was wonderfully freeing (Douglas 2010: 38–39).

At the same time, of course, with the colliding streams of feminism and anti-feminism coursing through the media, with anti-feminism becoming more acceptable during the emphatically macho presidency of Ronald Reagan in the 1980s, other TV shows, news stories, movies and ad campaigns, trafficked in what Susan Faludi famously labelled, simply, 'the backlash'. *Fatal Attraction*, the highest-grossing film of 1987, featured Glenn Close as a career woman who, after having a one-night stand with a lawyer portrayed by Michael Douglas, pursues him obsessively, creating the image of a single woman as miserable and crazed. She was juxtaposed against the lawyer's perfect stay-at-home mom wherein, as Faludi noted, 'the "good mother" wins and the independent woman gets punished' (Zeidner 2012). Most feminists reviled the movie. Other films were more anodyne, such as *Baby Boom* with Diane Keaton, where a high-powered career woman who suddenly becomes the custodian of a baby, resolves her conflict between motherhood and work by moving to the country, starting a baby food company, embracing motherhood and being emotionally rescued by Sam Shepard.

Another arena where this complicated brew of conflicting gender regimes continued to shift in the 1980s and 1990s was popular music, made more visible and salient via MTV. Initially male-dominated (and in the US, white-male-dominated), MTV began showcasing female-led bands and singers like Blondie, Pat Benatar, Heart, Joan Jett and Cyndi Lauper, some of whom played their own instruments, wrote their own songs, played rock music rather than pop or folk, and challenged male hegemony in the industry. And few embodied this challenge more powerfully than Madonna, who quickly gained a widespread following in the mid-1980s among girls and young women labelled as 'wannabes' who copied her style of dress that included a mish-mash of lace, beads, crucifixes, bustiers and men's boxer shorts. With her Boy-Toy belt buckle and provocative performances, Madonna was determined to have it both ways, posing as a sex object and yet ridiculing the passivity that goes with being a sex object.

In several of her videos, she at first seemed to be under masculine control, only to reveal, at the end, that it was all a performance and that she was immune from male sexual power.

Madonna aggressively took control of her own sexuality and affirmed that it was healthy and liberating for a woman to express her sexual desires, whether they were threatening to men or not. As she kept changing her image, every performance acknowledged that womanhood was a series of costumes and poses, and

emphasized how mutually exclusive many of these roles were. For this, female fans not only screamed in gratitude, they helped make her, by the early 1990s, one of the richest women in show business (Douglas 1994: 287–88).

Meanwhile, in media studies, scholars informed by feminism began to critique what seems in retrospect today to be a taken-for-granted yet had been a myopic assumption: that gender equalled women. What about men? How had they been portrayed and what might the consequences of those representations be? The images of men in the media had been seen as constituting some norm, against which women might be measured, as being unproblematic or even exemplary. But now masculinity was seen too as a problematic gender construct.

Scholars who had emphasized how gender was simply the cultural meanings attributed to biological differences, started exploring how masculinity was also socially constructed.

Thus, gender stopped being a code word for women. Just as femininity had been analyzed as a masquerade women needed to learn how to put on, now it was time to examine masculinity through the same lens, and see what the media reinforced as proper modes of behaviour for men: how did the media tell them they had to perform manhood? Were men also being bombarded by contradictory messages about how to be a man? This pivot also led to more work on the images of gay men and lesbians, as gay visibility in the media was on the rise in the 1990s. And again, drawing in part from Gramsci's notion of ideological hegemony, of a mediated construction of 'common sense', what was the common sense of what it means to be a man? Were there dominant or preferred masculinities and subordinate or less preferred, admired masculinities? In other words, were there gender-based hierarchies among men that prevailed in the media? The quick answer was yes.

Thus, one of the earliest terms to emerge out of this work was 'hegemonic masculinity' (Connell 1995: 77–78). This was a version of manhood most frequently seen in action films, spy thrillers (James Bond movies in particular), westerns, war movies and cop and detective shows. Think Clint Eastwood, John Wayne, Sylvester Stallone as Rambo, or many of the superheroes in the comic book movie franchises. Hegemonic masculinity referred to particular masculinities that become or remain dominant; they might not be the most prevalent in actual practice and everyday life, but are often the most valued in male media heroes. Central traits included heterosexuality, whiteness, physical strength, suppression of emotions such as sadness, empathy or regret (being emotionally stoical), athleticism, risk-taking and competitiveness. Such men were brave, financially successful and technologically competent, and possessed sexual prowess and sexual power over women. But the domination over some other men was expected as well, seen as natural, even demanded, and men who failed to do so often found themselves castigated.

A hyper-masculine ideal of toughness and dominance especially emerged in action movies in the 1980s, at the same time that a backlash against feminism was growing. Scholars saw Ronald Reagan, with his tough talk about the Soviet Union, his callous domestic policies towards people of colour and poor people, his sometimes bellicose language and personal style, repeatedly seen on a horse wearing a cowboy hat, as stoking the rise of the tough, muscled guy in action

movies (Jeffords 1993). These men were defined in relation to power and technology, and embodied an aggressive masculinity expressed through guns, motorcycles, helicopters, tanks and other instruments of death. There was enormous emphasis on the male body, it musculature and strength, and its ability to withstand torture and kill efficiently. In most war movies, there was also a celebration of the connection between men and violence. In this genre we saw men initiated into masculinity – they had to shave their heads, get new clothes (uniforms), submit to orders from older men and endure physical ordeals and tests of endurance. In all these kinds of movies, the male warrior was strong, resilient, capable of coping with overwhelming odds, stoical and capable of taking often tremendous pain.

Images of men, however, often varied by genre, and this kind of man was rarely seen in domestic comedies or sitcoms on television. Here, there were more images of male loss of dominance and of being subject to female control, men like Homer Simpson. Many of these TV husbands were economic failures, or were clueless about parenting, or sat around drinking beer while their savvy, in-control wives handled the family and the home.

At the same time, in the 1980s, there was a reaction against the hyper-masculine exemplar in popular music. Again, made visible and even more popular by MTV, rock bands, including a proliferation of heavy metal bands, appeared on the cable channel. And by now there was the rise of what came to be called 'cock rock', characterized by Simon Frith as an 'explicit, crude, often aggressive expression of sexuality' with cock-rock performers as 'aggressive, dominating and boastful', constantly drawing audience attention to 'their prowess and control'. Their bodies were on display, they treated their mikes and guitars like phallic symbols and the music was loud and rhythmically insistent (Frith 1981: 227). They celebrated their mastery of the guitar (or drums) as well as other technology like the amplifiers or stage props, and band members bonded with each other via the exchange of knowing glances and gestures, physical contact, sidling next to each other and singing to each other (Denski and Sholle 1992: 41–60). As Frith noted, 'girls are structurally excluded from this rock experience: it 'speaks out' the boundaries of *male* sexuality' (Frith 1981: 227).

At the very same time, some men were rebelling against this version of masculinity, and promoted and embodied androgyny in their music and performances. The pioneer, of course, had been David Bowie in the 1970s, but now the visuality of MTV, and its need, especially in its early years, for content, opened the doors to bands like Culture Club, featuring the heavily (and beautifully) made-up Boy George, with his flowing clothes and hair, or Duran Duran, with their tousled hair, lipstick and guyliner, appealing directly to female and also gay male fans. Once Michael Jackson broke the colour bar on the channel, Prince too promoted an androgyny that was both heterosexual and female friendly. While the scholar and video-maker Sut Jhally argued, persuasively, in his videos *Dreamworlds*, that many MTV videos produced by male bands promoted a rape culture ideology, MTV was also a platform where very different and warring representations of masculinity vied for legitimacy.

Further complications in the representations of men in the media produced in various television shows what came to be known as the SNAG, the sensitive new age guy. We also got the metrosexual, a term coined in the mid-1990s by the English gay writer Mark Simpson, to satirize what he saw as consumerism's toll on traditional masculinity. Men didn't go to shopping malls, buy glossy magazines or load up on grooming products, Mr Simpson argued, so consumer culture promoted the idea of a sensitive guy, who went to malls, bought magazines and spent freely to improve his personal appearance. In Britain, and then the US, the media found a metrosexual icon in David Beckham, the English football star, who painted his fingernails, braided his hair and posed for gay magazines, all while maintaining a manly profile on the pitch. The rise of gay visibility in the 1990s, provoked in part by massive gay activism around the AIDS crisis, and the growing number of gays and lesbians coming out, produced sitcoms in the US like *Will & Grace* (1998–2006), reality shows like *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*, and an almost routine inclusion of gay characters in various dramatic ensemble shows. And in many of these, especially for men, being gay was no longer a vilified, subaltern masculinity.

For young straight men in the mid- to late 1990s, now confronting what came to be called 'third wave' feminism in which women in their twenties and thirties in particular focused on issues like sexual harassment and violence against women, how to navigate the ongoing cross-currents of gender identity remained challenging. One media solution was the production of what came to be called 'lad's magazines' like *Maxim*, originally launched in Britain in 1995, and then the US in April 1997. Boasting it was 'The Best Thing to Happen to Men Since Women', the inaugural issue celebrated the 'guy lifestyle' of beer, babes and sport and proclaimed, 'Leave that toilet seat up proudly!' (Carlson 1998: C1). *Maxim*'s 'stance' was that it worshipped beautiful women and that its readers were often inferior to them: less cool, lazier, not as smart, dorkier and very possibly not as good in bed. It shamelessly objectified women and reduced them to their body parts (their breasts in particular) and, as a result, was the subject of a host of protests and criticisms. ('Finding the Inner Swine', quipped *Newsweek* and added, 'you'd think the feminist movement never happened'.)

Yet the tone of *Maxim* helped it get away with so much of this, as it so successfully used irony as a shield. As its first woman editor put it, 'it's not about pictures of girls . . . It's about the stance' (Turner and Gideonse 1999: 52). The irreverent, brat boy, 'harmless fun' tone insisted that men were slaves to their sexuality and live to ogle women in string bikinis not because they're sexist but because they can't help themselves since women – well, young, slim, busty, mostly white, gorgeous women – have all the power anyway. *Maxim* offered advice about social lives, relationships and well-being, and to address men's ambivalence about needing such advice (previously directed primarily at women), it used irony and its bad boy stance as a way of making readers comfortable with this self-help content. Thus it sought to provide a sense of reassurance, a certitude about masculinity as gender regimes continued to shift. Here was the admission that men are not invincible like James Bond and they know there's a new gender regime out there. Thus *Maxim* and other lad magazines deflected charges of sexism: they know sexism is stupid and retro,

so why would they be sexist? But it was this 'we-and-you-take-nothing-in-here-seriously' and 'it's all a joke' veneer that give the magazine's sexism such a protected perch (Jackson, Stevenson and Brooks 2001).

As the rise of a magazine like *Maxim* suggests, there was a new sensibility afoot by the 1990s and early 2000s, what had come to be labelled 'postfeminism'. This is a discursive framework that assumes full equality for women has been achieved, that feminism is therefore unnecessary and outdated, and that women can and should, as Yvonne Tasker and Diane Negra put it, 'enthusiastically perform patriarchal stereotypes of sexual servility in the name of empowerment' (Tasker and Negra 2007: 3). Feminist scholars also had to incorporate analyzes of neo-liberalism in their work – the notion that the market, not the government is the best arbiter of the distribution of goods and services – to account for a media insistence that the most important product women now create is themselves, so they can compete effectively in that market. Rosalind Gill in *Gender and the Media* (2007) analyzed the renewed and intensified sexualization of girls and women in the media at the very same time that feminist ideas are also taken for granted. Angela McRobbie's *The Aftermath of Feminism* (2009) powerfully documented 'a new kind of anti-feminist sentiment' in the media in which feminism is indeed 'taken into account' in media texts, primarily so that it can be dismissed as no longer necessary, 'a spent force' (11–12). This work was crucial to my own analysis (2010) of the rise of what I described as 'enlightened sexism' in the twenty-first century.

Enlightened sexism is a response, deliberate or not, to the perceived threat of a new gender regime that began to emerge in the 1990s. Although a widely used and a handy shorthand term, I decided to reject 'post-feminism' because, as Rosalind Gill has noted, it had become too bogged down in too many conflicting definitions. These include post-feminism as an era after the height of the women's movement when more rights have been achieved; as young women's programmatic break with 'second-wave' feminism; as a critique of a new, regressive political stance (taking feminism into account so it can then be dismissed as irrelevant); and as mindset young women needed to adopt and inhabit to successfully compete for men and jobs. In addition, the term post-feminism suggests that somehow feminism is at the root of this discursive formation when it isn't – it's good, old-fashioned, sexism that reinforces patriarchy.

Enlightened sexism insists that women have made plenty of progress because of feminism – indeed, full equality has allegedly been achieved – so now it's OK, even amusing, to resurrect sexist stereotypes of girls and women. After all, these images of back-stabbing girls and women in reality TV shows, or scantily clad women in TV, music videos and film don't undermine women anymore, right? More to the point, enlightened sexism sells the line that it is precisely through women's calculated deployment of their faces, bodies, attire and sexuality that they gain and enjoy true power. Its components – anxieties about female achievements, a renewed and amplified objectification of young women's bodies and faces, the dual exploitation and punishment of female sexuality, the dividing of women against each other by age, race and class, rampant branding and consumerism –

began to swirl around in the early 1990s, consolidating as the dark star it became by the early twenty-first century. Enlightened sexism is especially targeted to girls and young women and emphasizes that now that they 'have it all', they should focus the bulk of their time and energy on their appearances, pleasing men, being hot, competing with other women and shopping.

But this trend in the media also coexists with embedded feminism: the way in which women's achievements, or desires for achievements, are simply part of the media landscape. Feminism is no longer 'outside' of the media as it was in 1970 when women castigated female stereotypes. Today feminist gains, attitudes and achievements are woven into our cultural fabric (Gill 2007: 40). One result of this has been, in US television for example, an over-representation of women as lawyers, judges, surgeons, district attorneys, detectives, police officers and the like, which further suggest that true equality, especially in the professions, has been achieved when it has not. Movies remain dominated by those featuring male leads, yet *The Hunger Games* series, *Mad Max: Fury Road*, *Joy* and *Wonder Woman*, to name a few, have demonstrated that films with strong, powerful, courageous women can become major box-office hits.

There has also been the rise of what Andie Zeisler (2017) has called 'femvertising': incorporating messages about female empowerment in ads for everything from wireless telephone services to sanitary pads. In critiquing what she sees as 'marketplace feminism', a superficial, often celebrity-endorsed notion of feminism divorced from necessary political action or change, Zeisler both welcomes the penetration of feminist ideals into popular culture, and yet notes how that penetration depoliticizes the movement.

But analyzing dominant trends of gender representation in the media has become much more challenging with the ongoing proliferation of cable channels and the popularity of streaming services like Netflix, Hulu and Amazon, all of which began producing an unprecedented number of scripted programmes. In early 2018, *Variety* reported that in total, 487 original scripted series aired on American television, with the number of shows produced by online services like Netflix increasing 680 per cent since 2012. Audience fragmentation has been leading to ever smaller viewing niches, with very few programmes being shared in common by larger audiences. What this has enabled, simultaneously, has been both more stereotype-reinforcing depictions intermixed with those that utterly defy gender stereotypes and indeed provide richer depictions of women's and men's lives.

Reality TV in particular has been the genre that shamelessly indulges in retrograde images of women fighting or competing with each other, being obsessed with clothes, make-up and shopping, and being consumed by their relationships, especially with men. In the US, one of the most popular shows among young women has been *The Bachelor* (2002–present, averaging between 7 and 11 million viewers an episode), lambasted by feminists as providing some young man with a harem of twenty-five women he gets to sample until he chooses the one he likes best. Yet, most young women do not watch the show with a straight face; they watch in groups, or text or tweet constantly during the show, often ridiculing the

behaviours of the bachelor and various of the female contestants. What the show does offer, in a very campy way, is a primer on which kids of women most successfully blend femininity with confidence and independence; those women become the fan favourites. The other reality TV juggernaut, *Keeping Up With the Kardashians*, which premiered in 2007, was, ten years later, airing in 167 countries and had produced nine spinoffs (Bruce 2017). Evoking powerful love-hate reactions, and also viewed with a combination of curiosity, outrage and disbelief, the show featured the sometimes scantily dressed family members and their partners alternately supporting each other and shouting at each other over dinner, going to jail for drunk driving, getting married, having babies, getting divorced and transforming all of its drama into multi-million-dollar brand endorsements for clothes and cosmetics. The various *Real Housewives* shows (of Beverly Hills, New York, Atlanta and elsewhere) similarly trafficked in seemingly shallow, privileged women getting into cat fights and demonstrating the pleasures of conspicuous consumption. While some of these reality TV stars used their fame to start their own successful businesses, this was hardly the domain of twenty-first century feminism. The irony of course is that 'reality' TV shows are scripted and strategically edited, and the participants often plied with alcohol, to produce melodramatic images of women that to many seem quite unreal.

But the proliferation of cable and streaming has also allowed for shows that have represented women rarely seen on TV. Netflix brought Americans *Broadchurch*, with a determined, smart and not conventionally beautiful female detective; it also brought us *The Crown*, exploring Queen Elizabeth II's adjustments to assuming power and authority as a young, female and newly minted monarch. *Insecure* (HBO, 2016–present), based on Issa Rae's much acclaimed web series *Awkward Black Girl*, depicts the work and relationship experiences – and challenges – of two twenty-something black women struggling with acceptance at work and efforts at dating. Particularly sharp-eyed have been vignettes capturing what it's like for women of colour to work in white-dominated companies with often clueless white co-workers, experiences rarely shown on TV. *Grace and Frankie* (Netflix, 2015–present) features Jane Fonda (aged eighty) and Lily Tomlin (seventy-eight) as roommates thrown together after their husbands come out as being in love with each other. Challenging all sorts of stereotypes about older women, the two characters develop and market a vibrator, as well as a sexual lubricant, have affairs, drink and smoke marijuana, and share a deep and abiding friendship. As recently as 2013, fewer than 2 per cent of prime-time characters on TV were sixty-five or older, and twice as many of them were men than women, making *Grace and Frankie* a breakout show. *Orange is the New Black*, one of Netflix's first hits, explored the dynamics of incarcerated women and included one of the first transgender stars, Laverne Cox. And in a genre almost totally dominated by white men, Samantha Bee has staked her claim to the first feminist late-night news commentary and comedy show. Netflix has developed an updated version of *Queer Eye*, with a mixed-race cast, and the bonds that develop between the gay men and their Southern, straight white men have been especially moving. It is fair to say that the television networks of yore would never have green-lighted any of these shows.

And then there have been the shows that, of course, giveth with one hand and taketh away with the other, like *Game of Thrones* (2011–present). Routinely castigated, and rightly so, for its numerous rape scenes and other scenes of violence against women, not to mention its disproportionate and gratuitous showcasing of female nudity, the series has also featured some of the smartest, most determined and at times most ruthless women on television.

By 2017 in the US, with the election of an explicitly misogynistic president, feminist sensibilities have been powerfully revived. It is no coincidence that the #MeToo movement, initially spurred by the Harvey Weinstein sexual harassment and assault scandal, erupted in the wake of Trump's election. Despicable behaviour that had been kept quiet for decades was now exposed, as Weinstein became a surrogate for Trump, onto whom many could project their fury and frustration. And the persistent intersection of ageism and sexism in Hollywood, embodied in part by the serial pairing of sixty-something male leads with twenty-something romantic interests, as well as by older women needing to have 'work' done to remain commercially viable, was challenged by fearless and award-winning performances by Frances McDormand, Allison Janney and Laurie Metcalf in, respectively, *Three Billboards*, *I, Tonya* and *Ladybird*. Thus we still remain amidst these media crosscurrents of enlightened sexism on the one hand and embedded feminism on the other.

The impact of feminist analysis in media studies has been profound and far-reaching. It has transformed how scholars analyze not just entertainment media, but the news, media effects and reception, industry structures and employment practices, programming decisions and the small number of women, still, who get front-page bylines, op-eds in newspapers and serve as sources and experts in the news media. It has launched explorations of how various masculinities are represented in the media, as well as work on sexuality, and on the intersections between race, class and gender on multiple media screens.

And now a new generation of scholars is turning its attention to the possibilities and perils for women in the world of the internet and social media, where facelessness and anonymity are both giving feminists a new platform, while also enabling trolling and the expression of virulent misogyny. The fragmentation of the audience, the proliferation of user generated content, the multiple platforms through which media texts are consumed, and the ongoing war between feminism and anti-feminism, are presenting new and even daunting challenges and opportunities for further elaboration of feminist media analysis to the ongoing, explosive changes in our digital environment and how it too is now profoundly shaping gender identity, performance, relationships and the still elusive hope for gender equality.

Bibliography

Berger, J. (1972), *Ways of Seeing,* London: Penguin.
Bobo, J. (1995), *Black Women as Cultural Readers,* New York: Columbia University Press.

Bruce, L. (2017), 'The Kardashian Decade: How a Sex Tape Led to a Billion Dollar Brand', *Hollywood Reporter*. Available at: https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/features/kardashian-decade-how-a-sex-tape-led-a-billion-dollar-brand-1029592

Brumberg, J. (1998), *The Body Project: An Intimate History of American Girls*, New York: Vintage.

Brunsdon, C. (2000), *The Feminist, the Housewife and the Soap Opera*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Busby, L. (1975), 'Sex Role Research on the Mass Media', *Journal of Communication*, 25 (4): 107–31.

Butler, M. and W. Paisley (1980), *Women and the Mass Media*, New York. Human Sciences Press.

Carlson, P. (1998), 'If It Only Had A Brain; Maxim: Mindless Entertainment for Men', *The Washington Post*, p. C1.

Carrigan, T. et al. (1987), 'Hard and Heavy: Toward a New Sociology of Masculinity', in M. Kaufman (ed.), *Beyond Patriarchy: Essays by Men on Pleasure, Power and Change,* 139–92, Toronto: Oxford University Press.

Connell, R. (1995), *Masculinities*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Denski, S. and D. Sholle (1992), 'Metal Men and Glamour Boys: Gender Performance in Heavy Metal', in S. Craig (ed.), *Men, Masculinity and the Media*, 41–60, Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Dominick, J. and G. Rauch (1972), 'The Image of Women in Network TV Commercials', *Journal of Broadcasting,* 16 (3): 259–65.

Douglas, S. (1994). *Where the Girls Are: Growing Up Female with the Mass Media,* New York: Times Books.

Douglas, S. (2010). *The Rise of Enlightened Sexism: How Pop Culture Took Us from Girl Power to Girls Gone Wild*, New York: St. Martin's Griffin.

Douglas, S. and M. Michaels (2004), *The Mommy Myth: The Idealization of Motherhood and How It Has Undermined Women*, New York: Free Press.

Faludi, S. (1991), *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women*, New York: Crown.

Friedan, B. (1963), *The Feminine Mystique*, New York: W.W. Norton.

Frith, S. (1981), *Sounds Effects: Youth, Leisure, and the Politics of Rock'n'Roll,* New York: Pantheon.

Gerbner, G. and L. Gross (1976), 'Living with Television: The Violence Profile', *Journal of Communication*, 26 (2): 172–99.

Gill, R. (2007), *Gender and the Media*, Malden, MA: Polity.

Gross, L. (2002), *Up From Invisibility: Lesbians, Gay Men and the Media in America*, New York: Columbia University Press.

Haskell, M. (1973), *From Reverence to Rape: The Treatment of Women in the Movies*, New York: Penguin.

Hole, J. and E. Levine (1971), *Rebirth of Feminism*, New York: Quadrangle Books.

Jackson, P., N. Stevenson and K. Brooks (2001), *Making Sense of Men's Magazines*, Cambridge: Polity.

Jeffords, S. (1993), *Hard Bodies: Hollywood Masculinity in the Reagan Era*, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Kearney, M. (2006), *Girls Make Media*, New York: Routledge.

Larkin, A. (1988), 'Black Women Film-makers Defining Ourselves: Feminism in Our Own Voice', in E. Pribram (ed.), *Female Spectators: Looking at Film and Television*, 157–73, New York: Verso.

McRobbie, A. (1978) '"*Jackie*": An Ideology of Adolescent Femininity', Birmingham: Birmingham: Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies. CCCS Stencilled Papers, University of Birmingham.

McRobbie, A. (2004), 'Notes on Postfeminism and Popular Culture: Bridget Jones and the New Gender Regime', in A. Harris (ed.), *All About the Girl*, 3–14, New York: Routledge.

McRobbie, A. (2009), *The Aftermath of Feminism: Gender, Culture and Social Change*, London: SAGE Publications.

Mazzarella, S., ed. (2005), *Girlwide Web: Girls, the Internet and the Negotiation of Identity*, New York: Peter Lang.

Mazzarella, S. and N. Pecora, eds (1999), *Growing Up Girls: Popular Culture and the Construction of Identity*, New York: Peter Lang.

Mendes, K. (2011), 'Framing Feminism: New Coverage of the Women's Movement in British and American Newspapers, 1968–1982', *Social Movement Studies*, 10 (1): 81–98.

Morgan, R., ed. (1970), *Sisterhood Is Powerful*, New York: Random House and Vintage Paperbacks.

Mulvey, L. (1975), 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', *Screen*, 16 (3): 6–18.

Pingree, S., R. P. Hawkins, M. Butler and W. Paisley (1976), 'A Scale of Sexism', *Journal of Communications*, 26 (4): 193–200.

Press, A. (1991), *Women Watching Television: Gender, Class and Generation in the American Television Experience*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Radway, J. (1984), *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy and Popular Literature*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Rodnitzky, J. (1999), *Feminist Phoenix: The Rise and Fall of a Feminist Counterculture*, Westport, CT: Praeger.

Rosen, M. (1973), *Popcorn Venus: Women, Movies & the American Dream*, New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan.

Sender, K. (2005), *Business Not Politics: The Making of the Gay Market*, New York: Columbia University Press.

Steinem, G. (1963), 'A Bunny's Tale', *Show Magazine*. Available at: http://dlib.nyu.edu/undercover/i-bunnys-tale-gloria-steinem-show-magazine

Tasker, Y. and D. Negra (2007), *Interrogating Post-feminism: Gender and the Politics of Popular Culture*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Turner, R. and T. Gideonse (1999), 'Finding the Inner Swine', *Newsweek*, p. 52.

Walters, S. (2003), *All the Rage: The Story of Gay Visibility in America*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Williams, L. (1984), '"Something Else Besides a Mother": *Stella Dallas* and the Maternal Melodrama', *Cinema Journal*, 24 (1): 2–27.

Zeidner, L. (2012), 'The Tempted Husband, the Crazy Bitch, and the Rabbit', *Slate*. Available at: http://www.slate.com/articles/arts/culturebox/2012/09/watching_fatal_attraction_25_years_later.html

Zeisler, A. (2017), *We Were Feminists Once: From Riot Grrrl to Covergirl, The Buying and Selling of a Political Movement*, New York: Public Affairs.

Chapter 4

NEOLIBERALISM AND THE MEDIA

Mike Berry

This chapter will analyze how the mass media has been connected to the spread of neoliberalism through four interconnected processes. First, the chapter will explore how the media has been implicated in the legitimization of neoliberalism. This will involve an examination of how particular neoliberal policies – such as the privatization of state assets – were justified in media accounts, and how the media has promoted beliefs and values associated with the free market. Second, the chapter will analyze how those who opposed the spread of neoliberalism have been represented in the media. A third focus will be on how the turn to neoliberalism has produced a structural transformation in media industries and the implications of this for the production of content. Finally, the chapter will close by considering the relationship between new media and neoliberalism. This will involve a discussion of the historical development of the internet as well as an examination of the internet's business model and its impacts on the economy and cultural industries. However before exploring these issues this chapter will first examine how neoliberalism emerged as an ideology and policy regime during the economic crises of the 1970s.

A (very) brief history of neoliberalism

Following the Great Depression of the 1930s, most developed nations created social democratic welfare state economies. Although this period saw the emergence of different models of capitalism, they tended to share a number of common features including a commitment to full employment, a mixed economy comprised of public and private enterprises and the use of Keynesian demand management (Shonfield 1964). For proponents of economic liberalism, this was an inauspicious period though their ideas were kept alive in organizations like the Mont Pelerin Society, the Freiburg Ordoliberalism School and later the Chicago School of Economics (Venugopal 2015). However, during the 1970s the long post-Second World War economic boom came under increasing strain as capitalism faced a number of challenges which threatened its stability and profitability. These

included a fracturing of the US-centred post-war economic order, a series of oil shocks, a slowdown in productivity growth and a squeeze on profits due to the increased power of organized labour (Glyn 2006). This created an opportunity for the New Right to introduce a range of policies designed to radically recast the state and society along market lines and re-establish the conditions for effective capital accumulation. The Keynesian welfare state based on a social contract between capital and labour was supplanted by a new laissez-faire model built on the principles of neoclassical economics:

> In practice, neoliberalism has directed a set of economic policies across the world: supply-side measures such as low taxes and less regulation, monetarist policy levers over fiscal ones, programmes of privatization and state withdrawal from industry, the marketization of state functions, weakening employee rights and welfare state provision, market deregulation, open trading borders, low inflation and price stability.
>
> Davis and Walsh 2017: 29–30

These policies first took root in the UK and US and later spread to most developed economies, though the degree to which states have implemented neoliberal politics has varied in response to differing national, institutional, political and economic contexts (Harvey 2005; Fourcade-Gourinchas and Babb 2002; Larner 2000). In the developing world they were forcibly imposed on many economies during the 1980s and 1990s by the IMF, World Bank and US Treasury in the form of 'structural adjustment' programmes (Peet 2003). The consequences of the neoliberal policy shift have been dramatic. Economic growth has slowed, financial crises have become more common, corporate power and lobbying has increased whilst income and wealth inequalities have sharply widened. As employment rights have been curtailed, work has become more intensive, precarious and stressful (Leys 2003; Crouch 2004; Harvey 2005; Olsen et al. 2010; Engelen et al. 2011; Standing 2014; Piketty 2014). The public sector in particular has been transformed by the doctrine of 'new public management' which has seen professional autonomy undermined by new layers of bureaucracy which measure 'quality' through various performance indicators (Belfiore 2007; Shore and Wright 2015).

Neoliberal reforms have also changed the structural composition of states. The financial sector has become increasingly dominant in many developed economies, with growth increasingly dependent on the expansion of credit and debt. This process of 'financialization' has been driven by free market reforms such as the deregulation of banking, the lifting of capital controls and the removal of restrictions on credit creation. Its consequences have included a rapid growth in financial markets in relation to the state and productive economy and a tendency for a larger proportion of GDP growth and corporate profits to come from financial transactions (Epstein 2005; Krippner 2005; Engelen et al. 2011). Although most economies have experienced some degree of financialization, these processes have been much more pronounced in countries – such as the UK, US, Holland,

Switzerland and Ireland – where state policy has actively encouraged the growth of finance (Davis and Walsh 2017).

The media's role in the promotion of neoliberal policies and values

The use of the media to sell free-market economics has a history that long predates the beginning of the neoliberal era. For instance, Ewen's (1998) history of the US public relations industry demonstrates how the media was a key site in an ideological battle to win support for American free-market capitalism in the face of threats from Communism and Roosevelt's New Deal. However for brevity, this review will concentrate primarily on the period from 1979 when the first New Right administration was elected in the UK. Shortly before the Conservatives were elected in 1979, a struggle had begun to change how economics was discussed in broadcasting. In 1977 the BBC had aired a thirteen-part series titled *The Age of Uncertainty*, presented by the Harvard economist J.K. Galbraith. The series examined issues such the growth of corporate power and the limitations of capitalism partly through the ideas of John Maynard Keynes and Karl Marx. The screening prompted a backlash from the right and to counter the documentary the leading free-market think tank, the Institute for Economic Affairs, arranged for the economist Milton Friedman to give a series of lectures in London. The think tank also helped to arrange the production of a competing documentary, *Free to Choose*, in which Friedman advocated laissez-faire economics. The documentary was shown on the BBC on Saturday nights in the early 1980s and the Corporation arranged studio discussions featuring Friedman and various political supporters of the free market such as Geoffrey Howe and Nigel Lawson (Mills 2016).

When the Conservatives won the 1979 general election they found that the introduction of neoliberal policies created a series of crises. These included the destruction of a large part of Britain's industrial base, a doubling in unemployment to over 3 million people and widespread social conflict. In order to manage these crises, the Conservative government turned to the public relations industry which grew at an unprecedented pace between 1979 and 1997 (Miller and Dinan 2000). Public relations was also central to the marketing of the one of the signature policies of neoliberalism – the privatization of state assets. The first major privatization involved British Telecom (BT), which at the time was the largest flotation in history. However, the scale and unprecedented nature of the privatization meant there was insufficient interest from institutional investors to guarantee a successful share issue. To ensure the flotation went well, the government heavily marketed the share sale to the public using extensive public relations to shift the image of BT from archaic, wasteful nationalized utility to a high-tech growth stock. It also severely undervalued the company to ensure that the share issue would be oversubscribed.

As noted by John Koski, deputy editor of *Marketing Week*, underlying the privatization was the selling of the idea of a 'people's capitalism':

> What makes the B.T. Campaign special is the role it played in promoting the government philosophy behind the flotation of the company, albeit indirectly. It is a philosophy which seeks to increase the number of private individuals owning shares to produce a system of people's capitalism, a share-owning democracy, the ads might have invited us all to 'share in British Telecom's future', but the invisible link between the lines urging us to share in capitalism's future had become clear enough by the time application for shares needed to be made.
>
>   Koski 1984: 7

The marketing of the BT privatization and 'popular capitalism' was especially effective because it was heavily supported by the financial and popular press. Newman (1986: 144–45, cited in Miller and Dinan, 2000: 17) notes that the PR campaign for the privatization of British Telecom 'virtually captured the press' and transformed the 'pervasive doubts' of the media into headlines 'almost unanimous' in their enthusiasm. Public service broadcasting too tended to provide a relatively uncritical appraisal of privatizations. During the later floatation of BP, Philo (1995a: 211–12) found that broadcasters were 'drawn as if by invisible threads to focus on the agenda' set by the government's PR so that coverage focused on the potential profits to shareholders while excluding those who argued that '80% of the population would no longer have a stake in the industry'.

During this period, entrepreneurialism and the promotion of 'wealth-makers' also began to become a feature of public service broadcasting. The BBC ran a series of programmes on the theme of *Enterprise Culture*, whilst stories of 'wheeling and dealing' became news items, such as a government-promoted scheme for schools to run small businesses:

> Newcaster: All schools should be running their own small businesses says the Trade and Industry Secretary, Lord Young. The Government is launching the second phase of a project it calls mini-enterprise in schools and now they're looking for would-be entrepreneurs to take part.
> Reporter: This is the sort of board meeting the government wants to see at every school in the country. At Capeman School in Whitby the business is salt, brought in as waste at a nearby potash mine, sold off by the bag at a tidy profit.
>
>   BBC1, 18.00, 23 September 1987, cited in Philo 1995a: 218

This was part of a process where economics reporting at the Corporation shifted from industry and labour issues to finance and the perspectives of business. Just before the 'Big Bang' deregulation of financial services in the City of London, a team of BBC reporters were seconded to the Bank of England to get a close-up perspective on how the institution worked and in 1990 a 'business programmes' unit was established which produced a slew of business-focused programming such as *Wake Up to Money*, *Business Breakfast* and *Working Lunch* – later to followed by shows such as *In Business* and *The Bottom Line* (Mills 2016).

The growth of interest in business and the markets at the BBC during this period was reflected in the worldwide expansion of financial news. For instance, corporations such as Bloomberg Television and CNBC have emerged as global networks who claim to be able to reach in excess of 300 million households across five continents (Dauble 2007). CNBC now runs a series of branded regional channels (CNBC Africa, CNBC Asia, CNBC Europe, CNBC Latin America, CNBC Arabiya) as well as outlets geared to specific nations such as CNBC Singapore and CNBC Hong Kong. This period has also seen the rapid growth of indigenous financial and business news in countries such as India and China driven by processes of economic liberalization (Kohli-Khandekar 2008; Zhao 2008).

At one level the growth of financial and business journalism – and the advertising of financial products that accompany this content – serves to normalize the private provision of what were previously seen as collective social goods. Thus, as Fairclough (1999) has argued, the 'common sense' of economics and politics is now constructed against a permanent backdrop which legitimizes a financialized version of the economy. At a deeper level financial and business journalism embodies key neoliberal assumptions about in whose interests business and the wider economy should be structured. For instance, Davis's (2000) study of how the financial press covered the hostile takeover of Forte by Granada in 1995–96 demonstrated how coverage was dominated by a shareholder value framework. Whilst the great bulk of coverage was framed around the consequences for large institutional shareholders, little attention was paid to the negative consequences of the deal for Forte's employees, customers and the taxpayer. The dominance of investor concerns also came across strongly in Durham's (2007) analysis of the *Financial Times*' reporting of the 1997 Asian financial crisis, which found that the issue was framed primarily around the concerns of institutional investors whilst the concerns of the Thai government and its people were largely absent.

The increasing prominence of business and finance focused news has also brought to the fore a new category of expert – the economist or analyst from the finance sector – who has come to dominate mainstream economic reporting in much of the world (Philo 1995a, 1995b; Duval 2005; Fahy et al. 2010; Berry 2013; Rafter 2014). Such experts are used to provide commentary not only on financial markets but also on the wider conduct of macroeconomic policy (Berry 2013, 2015, 2016, 2019). They are also accorded the status of impartial experts so their presence is typically not balanced by opposing sources (Berry 2013, 2015, 2016, 2019). However as Wren-Lewis (2015: 31) notes: 'their views tend to reflect the economic arguments of those on the right: regulation is bad, top rates of tax should be low, the state is too large, and budget deficits are a serious and immediate concern.'

Some scholars working within the fields of governmentality and performativity have argued that the growth of the financial and business media has helped inculcate neoliberal values in more insidious ways. Media discourses, financial products and techniques such as credit scoring, it is argued, have contributed to a 'financialization of everyday life' (Callon 1998; Martin 2002; Aalbers 2008; Langley

2007; Davis 2009; Montgomerie 2009). This refers to the process whereby financial logics such as risk taking, entrepreneurialism and accounting increasingly colonize areas such as personal and family life which had previously been free – or relatively free – from such calculations. Behaviour is moulded by credit ratings scores, relationships become seen in monetary terms and a home becomes seen less as a place to live and more as an asset class, which can be used in an entrepreneurial approach to credit creation and risk taking. Media financial discourses and their material manifestations in the form of products such as student loans, mortgages and investment vehicles, are thus seen to shape both behaviour and underlying values in line with a neoliberal financialized logic:

> The core argument of governmentality scholars is that neoliberal policy and its associated banking practices, discourses and instruments address people as rational and responsible subjects, who are expected to take control of their financial affairs and assume individual responsibility for their own welfare (Langley 2008, 2009, Payne 2012). Conforming to these expectations happens not by direct punishment but through (surveillance and accounting) techniques such as credit scoring, which prompt consumers to internalize these market instruments' guiding logic and to become self-governing. Financial logic enters everyday culture through the discourses, regulations, financial instruments and technological devices that compel people to conform at a practical level, by allowing (or even requiring) and disallowing certain actions and subjectivities.
>
> Pellandini-Simányi et al. 2015: 735–36

Other scholars have suggested that the most significant impact of the rise of financial and business media has not been at the popular level but rather in their 'ability to build and perpetuate certain discourses, narratives, and myths among financial and related stakeholder elite groups' such as finance executives as well as those working in the political and regulatory spheres (Davis 2011: 246). Davis argues that the financial media has spread four key messages that helped to justify neoliberal reforms and the financialization they produce. First, (deregulated) finance is now a key motor of growth – in a new post-industrial 'knowledge economy'. This discourse, he notes, became widely accepted by a range of financial and political elites and also gained popular credibility through the 'feel good factor' generated by rising house prices. Second, financial markets function best when subject to minimal regulation – what is known as the Efficient Markets Hypothesis (Fama 1970). Third, non-financial markets such as labour, health or education work most efficiently if made to operate like free markets – so all distortions that interfere with their smooth running like trade unions, regulation, state intervention, taxation or redistribution should be eliminated. Fourth, globalization, free trade and the opening up of international markets are unambiguously positive developments together with the corollary that the interests of international investors should take priority over those of national governments and citizens (Kantola 2006; Durham 2007). Davis (2011) argues that the financial media did

not create these narratives but they were central to their circulation amongst key financial and political elites helping to establish their ideological and policy hegemony.

The reporting of recent financial crises provide interesting case studies in relation to the issues discussed so far in this chapter. During the 'dot-com bubble' of the 1990s hi-tech stocks acquired valuations that were wildly at odds with traditional accounting measures such as price to earnings ratios. For instance, Priceline.com, an online company which sold excess airline capacity, was at one point valued at US$150 billion – more than the entire airline industry. Yet as Davis' (2011: 251) research indicated, the media rarely questioned 'such developments and, in some cases, actively promoted the "new economy" narrative that underpinned them'. Research on the later and much more serious global banking crisis of 2008 produced similar findings. Mainstream media not only failed to warn about the build-up of debt and risky business practices that precipitated the crisis, but at times actually acted as boosters for such financialization processes (Starkman 2014; Fahy et al. 2010; Chakravartty and Schiller 2010). In the aftermath of the crisis, when one might have imagined a space would have opened up to discuss widespread reform to the sector, the dominance of financial voices in news sourcing together with the protection afforded by key political elites meant that such issues were rarely raised in news accounts (Berry 2013, 2019; Rafter 2014). Furthermore, in the post-crash period when global sovereign debt spiked, studies found consistent support for austerity policies and negative framing of the public sector (Cawley 2012; Schiffrin and Fagan 2013; Schrifferes and Knowles 2015; Touri and Rogers 2013). For example, Schiffrin and Fagan's (2013: 167) study of how US newspapers covered Obama's stimulus package found the programme was frequently criticized on the basis that 'the private sector was efficient and the public sector inefficient', while the potentially negative consequences of pursuing alternative austerity policies were not discussed. Similarly, Cawley's (2012: 613) study of how the Irish press reported Ireland's budget deficit found reporting 'tended to amplify frames that favoured a broadly neoliberal response to the economic crisis: a reduced public sector and a smaller state'.

As well as news accounts scholars have also pointed to the relationship between neoliberalism and popular entertainment forms such as reality television. On one level the growth of this genre can be seen as a response to neoliberal changes to media structures. For instance, the globalization of cultural markets has allowed many formats – such as Big Brother – to be traded internationally as franchises. Deregulation of television has also brought commercial pressures more to the fore making relatively cheap-to-produce reality programming very attractive as a way to fill the multichannel environment. This type of programming is also produced within neoliberal work contexts. Programme producers usually work on casualized short-term contracts whilst the participants are often paid very little and offered minimal employment protection. As Redden (2017: 13) notes this has been part of a deliberate shift in policy pointing to the example of *Cops*, which was produced in reaction to the 1988 strike by the Writers Guild of America and led the industry to

develop 'a form of programming immune from industrial relations provisions necessary for actors and screenwriters'.

At another level, researchers have suggested that reality television formats embody neoliberal values and perspectives. At the core of many of these critiques is the argument that the genre psychologizes and individualizes what are structural problems. In this way participants are presented as the ultimate authors of their own destinies which, it is argued, tends to reinforce a neoliberal view of the relationship between the individual, wider society and the state (Wood and Skeggs 2008; Couldry 2010; Redden 2017). Redden (2017) points to the example of makeover shows where participants are encouraged to engage in forms of personal self-improvement such as fashion, weight loss, surgery or home improvement. Here, he suggests, people are 'walked through how to form appropriate subjectivity, how to adopt the kinds of monitoring and self reflection required to manage one's own life as an individual citizen responsible for one's fortune to the last detail and largely through appropriation of commodities' (2017: 8). Self-improvement itself is not inherently problematic, he argues, but rather the message that it is individual rather than collective forms of empowerment that are key – with the corollary that 'failure is the failure of the will'. Other researchers have illustrated how these types of programmes have dovetailed with specific neoliberal social policies. For instance, Wood and Skeggs (2008: 180) make connections between the structure of makeover shows such as *Supernanny*, *House of Tiny Tearaways* and *Miss Beckles* and the priorities of New Labour's education policy where children's 'failure and achievement are reduced to the psychological, detached from any social context'. This is part, they suggest, of an underlying ideology where inequality is reframed from a 'structural classification' to one that is 'cultural-moral' expressed in terms of 'bad culture' and 'bad choices'. Wood and Skeggs cite the example of the Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO) which 'perhaps not surprisingly' has 'provided good fodder for "reality" entertainment: for example *ASBO Fever*, *ASBO Night* and *From ABSO Teen to Beauty Queen*' (Wood and Skeggs 2008: 180). In this way, reality television both feeds off and reinforces neoliberal perspectives and policies.

Another reality genre that has been accused of embodying neoliberal values is the 'gamedoc' format. Couldry (2010) draws attention to six features of Big Brother which he argues, reflect the requirements of the modern neoliberal workplace: absolute external authority, team conformity, enforced authenticity, being positive, acceptance of arbitrary decisions and individualization. In this way he suggests 'reality TV tracks with striking fidelity the dynamics of the contemporary workplace: it is a place of compulsory self-staging, required teamwork, and regulation by unchallengeable external authority that is mediated via equally unquestionable norms and values to which the worker/player must submit in a "positive" or even "passionate" embrace' (Couldry 2010: 78). Another show which has been seen to reflect – but also legitimize – the neoliberal workplace is *The Apprentice* (Grazian 2010; Couldry and Littler 2011). According to Grazian (2010), the programme valorizes the executive class and entrepreneurial spirit of wealthy businessmen whilst air-brushing out the seamier side of the corporate world seen

in scandals such as Worldcom or Enron. For Couldry and Littler, the show 'educates its viewers (in dramatized form) in how to become "empowered" by struggling within and reproducing the norms of a harsh, unpredictable, precarious, increasingly competitive working climate. As a result, the highly distinctive performance norms of neoliberal business culture are themselves naturalized and objectified as part of "the real world out there"' (2011: 275).

The media and neoliberalism's opponents

In the post-World World II era, two key voices contested the spread of neoliberal policy in the media. One was political parties of the left and social democratic left who had strong relationships with the press, either through ownership or alignment (Hallin and Mancini 2004). Due to their democratic mandate and status as 'primary definers', they also had guaranteed structural access to public service broadcasting (Hall et al. 1978). However, over the last thirty years many of these parties, such as Britain's New Labour, Germany's SPD and Sweden's SAP have, to varying degrees, embraced neoliberal policies (Hay 1999; Lavelle 2007). The second group who traditionally opposed the spread of neoliberalism were the trade union movement. For example, in the UK prior to 1979, even strongly Conservative newspapers employed three or four labour correspondents and their presence on television news was so regular that Hall et al. (1978) described them as 'primary definers'. Since the 1980s though, unions have largely disappeared from the media in the UK, US and much of Europe – though they still remain prominent in some corporatist systems like France (Benson and Hallin 2007; Martin 2007; Nerone 2009; Berry 2013; Wahl-Jorgensen et al. 2013).

With the decline in social democratic parties and labour unions, the task of opposing neoliberalism has increasingly been taken up by new social movements. Although classic studies from the 1960s and 1970s tended to find that new social movements were delegitimized by the media, some researchers have argued that more recent protest movements, which target neoliberal policies at the international or global level, have been able to utilize new media to overcome some of these negative framings and secure better coverage. For instance, Rojecki's study of the Seattle protests against the World Trade Organization in 1999 found that the coverage did feature the core arguments of protestors and did not 'mount an assault on the credibility or knowledgeability of its participants when their costumes, methods for gaining attention, or civil disobedience could easily have become the focus of coverage' (Rojecki 2002: 162–63). More recently, work by Chadwick and Dennis (2017) on the 'Big Tax Turnoff campaign' – an attempt by the pressure group 38 Degrees to challenge tax avoidance by energy provider Npower – provides an interesting case study on how activists can strategically utilize new and old media. The researchers point to the importance of hybridity – how to leverage the capabilities of a mass membership, email, internet polling, crowd funding, social media and links to individual journalists in the mainstream media in order to reach the widest possible audience and create public traction. As

Chadwick and Dennis (2017) note, the campaign – which followed a *Sun* report about Npower's boss Paul Massara's statement to a Parliamentary Select Committee on the company tax structures – was able to generate a handful of articles in the national press over the course of four weeks. It was also able to crowd fund a report into Npower by the tax activist Richard Murphy and put pressure on the company by getting 3,375 of its members to pledge to switch energy suppliers unless it changed its tax policies. The campaign shows what a well-conceived campaign strategically utilizing a mass membership, new communications technology and links with key journalists can achieve in challenging one aspect of neoliberalism. However, it also demonstrates the fragility and weakness of these kinds of actions. In the first instance, the campaign would not have got off the ground without the agenda setting power of the Parliamentary Select Committee which produced the initial *Sun* article. At the same time, as Chadwick and Dennis note (2017: 55), although the leadership of 38 Degrees were able to assimilate 'the fragmented individual voices of its membership' and generate 'important moments of cohesion among the chaos and present 'these to professional media and policy-makers', once the mass media lost interest in the story the public campaign 'withered'.

Ultimately, this demonstrates that even the most resourceful protest movements face an uphill battle to compete with the ideological power and reach of the state, political parties and parts of the business community. These formations have a longevity, depth and guaranteed regular access to mass publics which cannot be matched by the hard won sporadic attention afforded to protest movements. Nor can they effectively contest the power of the media itself which over years can successfully promote particular neoliberal ways of seeing – such as the view that the public sector is 'bloated' and 'wasteful' – in thousands of news stories, editorials and comment pieces (Berry 2019).

What neoliberalism has done to the media

This section will consider how neoliberal forms– primarily deregulation and the increased penetration of market pressure and logics – has impacted on the structures of the mass media and how in turn this has affected the range of content that is produced. In a wide-ranging review of trends in global journalism, Hallin (2008) argues that between the 1950s and the end of the 1970s the impact of the market on commercial media was counterbalanced by two factors. One was the extensive links, either in the form of ownership or alignment, between civil society organizations – such as mass political parties or the trade union movement – and commercial media. However since the 1980s, under pressure from de-industrialization as well as the growth of consumerism and individualism, those collectivist organizations have sharply declined. At the same time, party newspapers have found themselves being forced out of the market by large 'catch-all' publications with superior economies of scale. This, Hallin (2008) argues, has led to both political de-alignment and de-politicization (Curran and Seaton 1997; Franklin 1997). The second factor that, Hallin suggests, acted as a bulwark against

market pressures was a culture of journalistic professionalism manifest in the existence of press councils, trade unions and legal regulation. In the US, this professionalism had been given space to develop by the fact that many newspapers had natural regional monopolies and were family owned. However, from the 1970s, most of these newspapers were sold to public companies and found themselves under increasing shareholder pressure to maximize profits. The former *Baltimore Sun* journalist and creator of the HBO series *The Wire*, David Simon, has commented on the impact of these market pressures on his former newspaper and its ability to sustain its key democratic functions.

> When newspaper chains began cutting personnel and content, their industry was one of the most profitable ... We know now – because bankruptcy has opened the books – that the *Baltimore Sun* was eliminating its afternoon edition and trimming nearly 100 editors and reporters in an era when the paper was achieving 37 per cent profits ... [i]n a city in which half the adult black males are without consistent work, the poverty and social services beat was abandoned. In a town where the unions were imploding and the working class eviscerated, where the bankruptcy of a huge steel manufacturer meant thousands were losing medical benefits and pensions, there was no longer a labor reporter.
>
> <div align="right">Simon 2009, cited in Chakravartty and Schiller 2010: 675</div>

Increased market pressures have also been a key factor in the decline of foreign news reporting. As Seymour Topping, the former Managing Editor of the *New York Times*, noted 'the great threat to intelligent coverage of foreign news is not so much a lack of interest as it is a concentration of ownership that is profit-driven and a lack of inclination to meet responsibilities except that of the bottom line' (Hoge 1997: 48, cited in Sambrook 2010: 11). Such pressures have been exacerbated by the rise of a shareholder value model of corporate management which has seen relatively expensive foreign coverage as a low hanging fruit in a sustained process of cost cutting. In America, research by Pew revealed that front page coverage of foreign affairs in the national press halved between 1987 and 2004 (Sambrook 2010). Meanwhile network news coverage of international affairs declined by 50 per cent over a similar period (Tyndall Report 2009). In the UK, research by the Media Standards Trust (2010) found that international coverage in four national newspapers (*Guardian*, *Telegraph*, *Daily Mirror* and *Daily Mail*) fell by 40 per cent between 1979 and 2009. Furthermore, the proportion of international news featured in both the front pages and the first ten pages of newspapers declined by 80 per cent, with coverage of international politics showing the biggest fall. Data on UK broadcasting shows that there has also been a very sharp decline on commercial television and in addition much international coverage has been shunted to the margins of programme schedules or onto low audience digital channels (Harding 2010; Stone 2000).

However, Hallin (2008) argues that the impact of market pressures have not always been uniformly negative. He cites the example of Latin America, where although deregulation has coincided with a rise in sensationalism, it has also

offered an opportunity for the growth of a media system less controlled by the state or political interests. This has created a space for a journalism that is more investigative, politically open and attuned to public concerns.

Another area where the process of neoliberal reform has been significant has been public service broadcasting (PSB). This part of the media landscape – which has traditionally been insulated from the pressures of the market – has been seen as more central to journalism's core democratic functions (Tracey 1998). Research demonstrates that public service channels deliver a greater quantity of news – and more 'hard news' and foreign news – than commercial channels (Aalberg et al. 2010; Esser et al. 2012; Reinemann et al. 2016). Furthermore, when a culture of strong PSB exists, commercial media tends to offer more prime-time news and current affairs (Aalberg et al. 2010). There is also evidence that PSB helps to produce better informed citizens and widen democratic engagement. For instance, Aalberg and Curran (2012) found that the 'knowledge gap' between the interested and the uninterested is relatively small in European countries with developed PSB systems – but quite dramatic in the US where PSB is much more marginal. This may be because PSB systems with their higher levels of news and political information stimulate more 'passive learning' amongst citizens with lower levels of political knowledge (Shehata 2013).

However, as Tracey (1998) notes, PSB systems across the world have come under increasing pressure in recent decades. Whilst some of this pressure is technology driven – with the rise of satellite, cable and the internet fragmenting the audience – it also stems from a set of neoliberal beliefs which favour 'choice' and 'consumer sovereignty' over judgements of what the audience needs to know in order to function as democratic citizens. The United Kingdom, as a pioneer of neoliberalism, offers an instructive case study in how changing regulatory structures can alter the practice and output of PSB. In 1990 the Broadcasting Act replaced the Independent Broadcasting Authority with the 'light touch' Independent Television Commission. No longer would broadcasters be required to show a particular quantity of news and current affairs programming, nor could the regulator specify that this kind of programming be scheduled in 'prime-time' slots. At the same time, the new legislation required that BBC and Independent Television source 25 per cent of its programming from outside producers. At the BBC an 'internal market' for programming was created – as an alternative way of bringing market mechanisms into public services when outright privatization was seen as politically untenable. This system of 'producer choice' forced established BBC production units to bid against outside companies creating an atmosphere where there was constant pressure to favour the cheapest bids on offer (Philo 1995a). This erosion in job security also heightened the anxiety felt by many BBC staff, which hindered the production of innovative or risk taking television. Furthermore, the destabilization of well-established teams of BBC current affairs producers who had deep specialized knowledge of particular subject areas eroded the ability of television to produce informed and sustained documentary and current affairs programming (Philo 1995a). Instead, producers found themselves on a 'treadmill' having to produce a constant supply of 'saleable'

ideas that could be pitched to BBC commissioning editors. In an analysis of the impact of the reforms Leys, points to seven quantifiable changes in the content of UK PSB:

> The main changes in public service broadcasting over the last two decades are clear and measurable: (1) audience fragmentation; (2) a decline in the volume of programming relevant to making informed decisions about political, social and economic issues, as opposed to programming relevant to coping with life as a consumer; (3) a narrowing in the scope of such economic and political programmes as are made, and – significantly, in the epoch of globalisation – an almost complete absence of foreign topics from current affairs programming on the most watched channels; (4) an avoidance of controversial topics or critical analysis that falls outside the narrow political spectrum defined by the main political parties; (5) a decline in the volume and quality of research for current affairs programming, a greatly increased dependence on government and corporate sources of information, and a drastic decline in investigative journalism; (6) the increasing displacement of serious drama by soap operas; (7) the subordination of artistic and creative aims to commercial ones, including a growing standardisation of the product.
>
> <div align="right">Leys 2003: 161–62</div>

Although Britain was an early and enthusiastic adopter of neoliberal reforms to PSB, the changes in structures and content evident in British broadcasting occurred to some degree in most countries with a history of strong public media.

New media and neoliberalism

During the early growth of the internet, many writers saw new media as an inherently emancipatory technology which would roll back some of the key features of the neoliberal era such as the 'hollowing out' of democracy and the growth of corporate power (Tapscott and Williams 2008; Shirky 2008; Jarvis 2009). However, as this section will show, the development of the internet was in large part shaped by the political and economic context of neoliberalism, and its societal impact has been to intensify some of neoliberalism's key trends – such as the growth of oligopolistic markets and the penetration of market logics into new areas of social life. To unpack the complex – and at times contradictory – relationship between the internet and neoliberalism, this section will examine five issues: a) the early history of the internet; b) the struggle over web governance and regulation; c) the relationship between information and communication technologies (ICTs) and the spread of neoliberalism; d) the business model of the key corporations who dominate cyberspace; and e) the impact of the internet on other parts of the media and civil society.

In a wide-ranging account of the development of the internet, Curran (2012) notes the early history of the technology was shaped by four key interest groups

and ideologies. In the earliest phase of the internet's development, the two most important groups were the US military and the country's academic research community. The internet grew out of ARPANET, a network of computers located at four American universities, with the impetus to create it having grown out of Cold War military concerns to develop a decentralized command and control system which could survive a nuclear strike. Such concerns also drove the development of the internet's core technologies such as packet switching as well as the creation of wireless and satellite systems which could be mounted on military boats, jeeps and planes. The key role of state agencies – as opposed to private sector actors – in the early development of the internet demonstrates that at least in its genesis the internet was shaped by the priorities of state actors rather than market forces. This can also be seen in the unwillingness of the private sector to get involved in the early development of the technology, with AT&T turning down the opportunity to take over ARPANET in 1972 (Curran 2012). Once the network began to expand beyond the military and academic community in the early 1980s, the technology was shaped by two further influences. One was the libertarian countercultural attitudes of many early adopters such as users associated with the WELL (Whole Earth 'Lectronic Link) in San Francisco. Although not specifically neoliberal in their outlook, these early internet evangelists shared many views common to neoliberalism such as a belief in the free market and a distrust of government regulation. The second influence was the tradition of European public service which was most evident in the role played by researchers at CERN – particularly Tim Berners-Lee, who in 1989 created the World Wide Web (WWW). Berners-Lee turned down the opportunity to monetize his invention and instead persuaded CERN to release the WWW code as a gift to the community. Justifying the decision, Berners-Lee argued that he wanted to prevent competition which might lead to a 'subdivision of the web into private domains' and thus 'subvert his conception of a universal medium for sharing information' (Curran 2012: 41).

If the pre-history of the internet was shaped in large part by non-market concerns, by the time the technology began to gain critical mass in the 1990s, its regulatory apparatus began to increasingly bear the imprint of commercial priorities. Chenou's (2014) study of the creation of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) in 1998 demonstrates how four key elite groups – the transnational technical/scientific elite, the US and non-US political elites plus the corporate elite – were central to establishing the core governing principles of internet regulation. As Chenou (2014) notes, during the mid 1990s debate over how the internet should be regulated was dominated by a range of market and non-market discourses. Some of these such as the notion of 'internet exceptionalism' – the belief that the unique nature of the internet makes traditional approaches to media regulation inappropriate – or 'multi-stakehorderism' could fit squarely with a neoliberal governance regime. However, others challenged core neoliberal principles. These included the 'internet as a public good discourse' which emphasized the need for intervention at the national and multilateral level to ensure universality of access; the 'sovereignist' discourse which highlighted the need to maintain state control over the network within national jurisdictions; and

the 'anti-marketization' discourse which stressed that the embedding of the internet within capitalist structures favoured the interests of big business over those of citizens. However as Chenou (2014: 206) notes, during the core discussions which created ICANN and the system of global internet governance 'sovereignist and anti-marketisation perspectives on internet governance were excluded from the debates, as were their advocates'. Instead a predominately deregulated, free market approach was adopted which drew on 'neoliberal visions of internet governance' and 'cyber-libertarian' arguments. Furthermore, ICANN itself was established as a private non-profit organization without any direct representation from national governments or intergovernmental organizations. As Freedman notes this 'multi-stakeholderism' approach set the scene for a dominant mode of internet governance in which corporations would take a central role in setting and enforcing regulation:

> Alongside the impact of code-based regulation, governments are not only re-regulating on behalf of powerful corporate actors but actually delegating regulatory responsibility and initiative to private companies themselves. The neoliberal state is not evacuating the regulatory field so much as launching joint ventures in which it finds itself as the junior partner in what it describes as process of 'networked governance'. According to Mueller (2010: 7), this type of governance refers to a situation in which internet companies 'establish their own policies and negotiate among themselves what is blocked and what is passed, what is authenticated and what is not'. This is a familiar form of self-regulation where operational control is   exercised by private players operating under general guidelines passed down by public authorities.
>
> Freedman 2012a: 114

If the early history and regulatory culture of the net was significantly influenced by neoliberal perspectives, neoliberalism itself as a policy regime could not have achieved its global reach and effect without the growth of ICT of which the internet is a key element. As Harvey (2005: 3) notes the ability to 'bring all human action into the domain of the market' and maximize 'the frequency and reach of market transactions ... requires technologies of information creation and capacities to accumulate, store, transfer, analyze, and use massive databases to guide decisions in the global marketplace'. In particular, Harvey (2005) points to how ICTs, with their ability to accelerate short-term market contracts and speculative flows, were central to the growth of the 'hallmark of neoliberalism' – financialization. As well as driving the shift to a model of finance dominated capitalism, Neubauer (2011: 208) argues that the facilitation of 'a system in which global capital can move in and out of countries with ease, inflating or devaluing local assets at incredible speeds, is essential to the neoliberal goal of undermining the Keynesian state in favor of global regimes of flexible accumulation'. Furthermore Neubauer (2011: 208) argues, the ability that the internet and other ICT give global corporations to 'coordinate flexible production through complex networks of suppliers, producers, subcontractors, distributors, transporters, and

financiers' has weakened the power of labour by allowing transnational businesses to shift investment from one state to another in search of more easily exploited workers:

> This [growth of ICTs] has aided the neoliberal goal of shifting production to low-wage regions, as increased capital mobility allows corporations to invest in (and disinvest from) different regions more quickly and cheaply than before. Just as techno-financial networks enable the disciplining of national governments, global telecommunications networks help capital discipline labour by threatening disinvestment in search of cheaper wages, lower taxes, and weaker regulatory regimes. Technology therefore plays a major role in setting workers in competition with each other on a global scale, as newly unionised workers in Mexico or South Korea shortly find their jobs exported to Indonesia or China, or whoever next guarantees the lowest demands from labour.
>
> <div align="right">Neubauer 2011: 209</div>

As well as aiding the implementation of neoliberal policies, the growth of the internet has also created a small group of technology giants including Google, Apple, Facebook and Amazon, who now dominate the online world. The rise of these tech companies and the 'disruptive' nature of the net, initially led to claims that a 'new economy' was being created which challenged fundamental aspects of neoliberal capitalism. Writers pointed to the growth of the sharing economy, the provision of 'free' online goods and the rise of the open source movement as developments which threatened capital accumulation and radically redistributed power from corporations to citizens (Shirky 2008; Jarvis 2009). Furthermore, it was claimed that the technology giants were forging a new capitalism, where collaboration was replacing hierarchical top-down control and opening up space for human creativity (Tapscott and Williams 2008). Nowhere was better seen to exemplify these trends than Google, where 'employees are fed for free (the chef having a particularly important role to play in many accounts of the company [for example Vise 2008: 192–203]), transported on free, Wi-Fi-enabled buses to the Googleplex and, perhaps most famously, given one day off a week to work on their own projects' (Freedman 2012b: 77).

Yet scratch the surface a little and a different picture emerges. For instance, Google is a highly hierarchical company with the triumverate of Larry Page, Sergey Brin and CEO Eric Schmidt exercising tight control over corporate strategy (Freedman 2012b). The company protects its intellectual property through extensive use of copyright and patents and is heavily involved in tax avoidance through a network of shell companies and tax havens (Bernstein 2017). As for working conditions, technology companies are at the forefront of some the most exploitive neoliberal approaches to labour relations. For instance, Amazon's distribution centres in the US and UK have been the subject to exposes which have revealed that workers have to process 300 packages an hour for ten hours and urinate in bottles because they fear being fired for taking toilet breaks (Bonazzo 2018). Ultimately this means as the *Guardian*'s economic editor Larry Elliott

(2013) notes, 'the people running these new-wave behemoths are not hippy capitalists, they are robber barons in chinos'. As for claims that the internet has destabilized neoliberal capitalism through the rise of sharing, 'free' and the open source movement, the evidence suggests rather that these developments have been appropriated for capital accumulation. As Freedman (2012b: 84) observes, corporations 'have sought to integrate the efficiencies of open source into their own corporate practices' whilst sharing has been used to increase corporate profitability by, for instance, replacing the costs of professional journalists or photojournalists with user-generated content. As for the concept of 'free', this obscures the way that internet content is subsidized by the unpaid labour provided by internet users who allow their browsing history and other personal data to be monetized by tech companies.

This brings us to the question of the core business model of the leading internet companies – the extraction and analysis of data – and whether this new type of 'surveillance capitalism' can be seen as a break from – or intensification of – neoliberalism. In an influential paper, Zuboff (2015) argues that in some senses surveillance capitalism challenges some core tenets of neoliberalism. For instance, she notes that surveillance capitalism with its 'pervasive and continuous recording of the details of each transaction . . . renders an economy transparent and knowable in new ways' which is 'a sharp contrast to the classic neoliberal ideal of 'the market' as intrinsically ineffable and unknowable' (2015: 78). Zuboff (2015: 80) also argues that whilst both welfare capitalism – and to a lesser degree its neoliberal successor – were based on interdependencies between workers and consumers, surveillance capitalism breaks this link because 'its populations are no longer necessary as the source of customers or employees . . . [instead] advertisers are its customers along with other intermediaries who purchase its data analyzes'. However, Zuboff argues that in other important ways surveillance capitalism retains many features of neoliberlism. For instance, a central plank of neoliberalism is deregulation of business and as Zuboff (2015: 80) notes, Google, despite its role as 'chief utility for the World Wide Web' and 'its substantial investments in technologies with explosive social consequences such as artificial intelligence, robotics, facial recognition, wearables, nanotechnology, smart devices, and drones . . . has not been subject to any meaningful public oversight'. Furthermore, its core business of data extraction and analysis marks a substantial intensification of neoliberalism as more and more of people's online and offline lives are captured, commodified and subject to market logics:

> 'Big data' are constituted by capturing small data from individuals' computer-mediated actions and utterances in their pursuit of effective life. Nothing is too trivial or ephemeral for this harvesting: Facebook 'likes,' Google searches, emails, texts, photos, songs, and videos, location, communication patterns, networks, purchases, movements, every click, misspelled word, page view, and more. Such data are acquired, datafied, abstracted, aggregated, analyzed, packaged, sold, further analyzed and sold again.
>
> Zuboff 2015: 78

To conclude this discussion of the relationship between neoliberalism and the internet, this chapter will reflect on how the internet has transformed both media industries, the fortunes of cultural workers and the content of news. The key issue here is how the internet due to its scale, structure and light regulation amplifies neoliberalism's tendency towards corporate power, market concentration and increased inequality. The reason why the internet has these impacts relates in large part to the nature of 'first mover advantages' and 'winner takes all networks' (Keen 2015). As Frank and Cook (1995, cited in Keen, 2015: 45) note, consumers suffer 'mental-shelf space constraints' which mean that in a complex modern economy 'for any given number of sellers trying to get our attention, an increasingly small fraction of each category can hope to succeed'. This tendency towards market concentration is further amplified by algorithms, infrastructure, data and network effects:

> This loop of algorithms, infrastructure, and data is potent. Add what are called network effects to the mix, and you start to see virtual monopolies emerge almost overnight. A network effect occurs when the value of a product or service goes up with the number of people using it. The Ethernet inventor Bob Metcalfe called it Metcalfe's Law. Telephone services, eBay, and Skype are good examples of the network effects at work. The more people who are on Skype, the more people you can call, and thus the more likely it is that someone will join … Facebook, which historically was one of the main beneficiaries of network effects (a social network becomes more valuable to you as more of your friends join it) has grown from two hundred million users to 1.2 billion in the past seven years. And that's not the only way that Facebook has created a near monopoly in social networking. In the past decade, it has ramped up spending on new data centers, hired a lot more engineers, and turned its news feed into a powerful algorithm. The more we use it, the more data we give the company, and the more it is able to control where we turn our attention. The company has more than a billion users around the world, and it has figured out how to become a dominant source of our mobile addiction. Facebook, thanks to this loop of algorithms, infrastructure, money, and data, is a winner-takes-all company.
>
> Malik 2015

These processes together explain why many markets are increasingly dominated by one or two giant players – Facebook and Twitter for social networking, YouTube for videos, eBay for auctions, Google for web searches and advertising, Uber and Lyft for taxi cabs. Furthermore, as the history of Amazon shows 'winner takes all' companies also cement monopoly status through traditional business practices such as acquisitions, lobbying and predatory pricing (Stone 2014). As well as increasing market concentration and corporate power the impact of the growth of 'winner takes all networks' has been to widen inequalities within cultural industries with the creation of a tiny number of extravagantly paid superstars and a 'long tail' of workers earning very little:

The most serious casualty of the digital revolution is diversity. This one percent rule is now the dominant economic feature of every cultural sector. According to Jonny Geller, the CEO of a prominent literary talent agency, the old Pareto law of 80 percent sales coming from 20 percent of writers is now more like '96 to four'. Meanwhile, a 2014 British study revealed that 54 per cent of conventionally published writers and almost 80 per cent of self-published authors make less than a $1,000 a year from their written work. The most serious casualty of the 1 per cent economy in publishing is the disappearance of the 'midlist', which according to Colin Robinson, the co-publisher of the New York-based print-on-demand publisher OR Books, 'comprise[s] pretty much all new titles that are not potential blockbusters'.

<div align="right">Keen 2015: 144</div>

In journalism, too, this has created what Emily Bell (2013), the Director of the Tow Center for Digital Journalism has described as a '1 per cent economy' where a tiny elite of superstars create their own mobile brands whilst other workers face layoffs, pay cuts and an intensification of work.

However, the growth of the internet has consequences that go beyond the fortunes of individual news workers to threaten the entire business model and production culture of news. The business model of news is currently under threat from two processes. First there is an accelerating trend for news consumers to switch from print editions to digital versions of newspapers – especially versions accessed from mobile phones – which is eroding news organizations' revenue base. Between 2015 and 2016, for every £154 British newspapers lost in print revenue they gained only £5 in digital revenue, with total newspaper advertising projected to fall from £1.5 billion in 2011 to £533 million by 2019 (Edwards 2017). Second, the tech giants, primarily Google and Facebook, with their unrivalled data assets and ability to microtarget, are taking an increasingly large slice of advertising budgets which previously went to traditional media companies. Although much of the information shared on social media sites comes from traditional news providers, organizations such as Facebook and Twitter are not passing on the revenue these transactions generate. As Greenslade (2016) notes this means that a company like 'Facebook is a parasite: it feeds off its host, journalism, and is gradually draining its lifeblood'. At the same time, the ability of newsrooms to now monitor real-time audience metrics through tools such as Chartbeat, Omniture and Visual Revenue places new pressure on newsworkers and threatens editorial standards. As Nguyen (2016: 90–91) notes:

Some news organisations, including incumbents such as the *Washington Post*, have reportedly downsized news teams that produce low traffic so that resources are reallocated to more popular content areas. A growing number – Gawker Media, America Online, Bloomberg and Forbes among them – use metrics as the basis to evaluate staff performance, calculate story royalties, determine bonuses and/or set development targets.

Together, these two trends – declining advertising revenues and the unprecedented transparency of news audiences – are creating intense pressures to maximize audiences through softening news content and 'dumbing down'. As Nguyen (2016: 94) argues, a visit to the website of organizations such as *Buzzfeed* or the *Daily Mail* reveals the consequences of such pressures: 'celebrity stories are given prominent space; stories squeezed to minimal lengths; content chunked into news snippets; audio/video material broken into nuggets; photo slideshows offered intensively for fun; headlines bizarrely worded to match the algorithm of search engines.' The ultimate consequence of this is likely to be, as David Simon noted earlier, a news industry that increasingly struggles to play a watchdog role on neoliberal capitalism as it weakens society's economic and social fabric.

Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to map out how neoliberalism is connected to the media both directly and indirectly in a number of complex ways. Four conclusions about this relationship can be drawn. First, from the 1980s onwards, the mass media became a key site of ideological struggle to win public consent for the introduction of neoliberal policies, such as privatization and the weakening of organized labour. This was part of wider attempt to change the way people thought about themselves and their relationship to the state and wider society. As Mrs Thatcher memorably put it, 'economics are the method. The object is to change the heart and soul' (cited in Marquand, 2009). This ideological assault had both elite and popular targets. The national press and broadcasting were the key sites where attempts were made to win over the public so as to ensure political continuity, whilst the financial and business media circulated a set of neoliberal theories and arguments which underpinned policy hegemony.

Second, the commercial media itself was transformed in a more indirect way by the structural changes to the economy produced by the introduction of neoliberal policies. As finance became a more significant element of many developed economies – and the state withdrew from the provision of key goods such as housing and pensions – specialist financial and business media grew to service the informational needs of investors and wider public. However, it was just specialist media that grew, economic reporting in mainstream media found itself increasingly dominated by business and market perspectives whilst the views of organized labour and social democratic politicians disappeared from news accounts.

Third, media deregulation helped to bring the values of the free market centre stage and weakened traditional public service priorities. This was particularly evident in the growth and popularity of reality television. This genre was on one level a product of the forces unleashed by deregulation – increased competition, cost pressures and the need to fill enlarged schedules. At the same time, the withdrawal of regulators and the policing of issues around 'taste and decency' encouraged television to push the boundaries of what could be shown. Inevitably,

this produced programming with specific features – such as interpersonal conflict and public humiliation – which were likely to appeal to people living increasingly insecure and powerless lives (Philo and Miller 2000). At the same time, deregulation and the subsequent weakening of public service broadcasting has depoliticized news, current affairs and documentary programming leaving less space for voices to monitor and challenge the impacts of neoliberalism.

Fourth, the internet has tended to intensify many of the effects of neoliberalism. These include greater market concentration and increased inequality. Market logics are also capturing more and more of social life through data which is then used for behaviour modification. At the same time technology companies are threatening the economic base of news organizations and the media's traditional democratic roles.

The media then is a site in the ideological struggle to legitimate neoliberalism – but also an actor and structure which itself both reinforces and reconfigures neoliberal logics, whilst at the same time being transformed by neoliberal reforms. Ultimately the media and neoliberalism have a complex symbiotic relationship with each both transmuting and strengthening the other.

References

Aalberg, T. (2015), 'Does Public Media Enhance Citizen Knowledge? Sifting Through the Evidence', *PERC Papers Series*: Paper No. 13. Available at: http://www.perc.org.uk/perc/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/PERC-Paper-13-Public-Media-and-Citizen-Knowledge-Toril-Aalberg-Dec-15.pdf

Aalberg, T., P. Van Aelst and J. Curran (2010), 'Media Systems and the Political Information Environment: A Cross-National Comparison', *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 15(3): 255–71.

Aalberg, T. and J. Curran (2012), *How Media Inform Democracy: A Comparative Approach*, London: Routledge.

Aalbers, M. B. (2008), 'The Financialization of Home and the Mortgage Market Crisis', *Competition & Change*, 12 (2): 148–66.

Belfiore, E. (2007), 'Auditing Culture: The Subsidised Cultural Sector in the New Public Management', *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 10 (2): 183–202.

Bell, E. (2013), 'Journalists are on the Move in America – and Creating a New Vitality', *Guardian*, 17 November. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/media/media-blog/2013/nov/17/journalists- move-new-york-times-money

Benson, R. and D. Hallin (2007), 'How States, Markets and Globalization Shape the News: The French and US National Press, 1965–97', *European Journal of Communication*, 22 (1): 27–48.

Bernstein, J. (2017), *Secrecy World: Inside the Panama Papers Investigation of Illicit Money Networks and the Global Elite*, New York: Macmillan USA.

Berry, M. (2013), 'The Today Programme and the Banking Crisis', *Journalism*, 14 (2): 253–70.

Berry, M. (2015), 'The UK Press and the Deficit Debate', *Sociology*, 50 (3): 542–59.

Berry, M. (2016), 'No Alternative to Austerity: How BBC Broadcast News Reported the Deficit Debate', *Media, Culture & Society*, 38 (6): 844–63.

Berry, M. (2019), *The Media, the Public and the Great Financial Crisis*, London: Palgrave-Macmillan.

Bonazzo, J. (2018), 'Report: Amazon Workers Have to Process 300 Packages an Hour and Pee in Bottles', *Observer*. Available at: http://observer.com/2018/04/amazon-britain-harsh-working-conditions/

Callon, M. (1998), *The Laws of the Markets*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Cawley, A. (2012), 'Sharing the Pain or Shouldering the Burden: News-media Framing of the Public Sector and the Private Sector in Ireland during the Economic Crisis, 2008–2010', *Journalism Studies*, 13 (4): 600–15.

Chadwick, A. and J. Dennis (2017), 'Social Media, Professional Media and Mobilisation in Contemporary Britain: Explaining the Strengths and Weaknesses of the Citizens' Movement 38 Degrees', *Political Studies*, 65 (1): 42–60.

Chakravartty, P. and D. Schiller (2010), 'Neoliberal Newspeak and Digital Capitalism in Crisis', *International Journal of Communication*, 4: 670–92.

Chenou, J. (2014), 'From Cyber-Libertarianism to Neoliberalism: Internet Exceptionalism, Multi-stakeholderism, and the Institutionalisation of Internet Governance in the 1990s', *Globalizations*, 11 (2): 205–23.

Couldry, N. (2010), *Why Voice Matters: Culture and Politics After Neoliberalism*, London: SAGE Publications.

Couldry, N. and J. Littler (2011), 'Work, Power and Performance: Analysing the "Reality" Game of The Apprentice', *Cultural Sociology*, 5 (2): 263–79.

Crouch, C. (2004), *Post-Democracy*, Cambridge: Polity.

Curran, J. and J. Seaton (1997), *Power without Responsibility*, London: Routledge.

Curran, J. N. Fenton and D. Freedman (2012), *Misunderstanding the Internet*, Abingdon: Routledge.

Dauble, J. (2007), *CNBC Has Best November in Seven Years in Total Viewers for Business Day Programming*. Available at: https://www.cnbc.com/id/22042044

Davies, W. (2010), 'Economics and the "Nonsense" of Law: The Case of the Chicago Antitrust Revolution', *Economy and Society*, 39 (1): 64–83.

Davis, A. (2000), 'Public Relations, Business News and the Reproduction of Corporate Elite Power', *Journalism*, 1 (3): 282–304.

Davis, A. (2011), 'Mediation, Financialization, and the Global Financial Crisis: An Inverted Political Economy Perspective', in D. Winseck and D. Y. Jin (eds), *The Political Economies of Media: The Transformation of the Global Media Industries*, London: Bloomsbury.

Davis, A. and C. Walsh (2017), 'Distinguishing Financialization from Neoliberalism', *Theory, Culture and Society*, 34 (5–6): 27–51.

Davis, G. (2009), *Managed by the Markets: How Finance Reshaped America*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Durham, F. (2007), 'Framing the State in Globalisation: The Financial Times Coverage of the 1997 Thai Currency Crisis', *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 24 (1): 57–76.

Duval, J. (2005), 'Economic Journalism in France', in R. Benson and E. Neveu (eds), *Bourdieu and the Journalistic Field*, Boston, MA: Polity.

Edwards, J. (2017), 'For Every £154 Newspapers Lose in Print Revenue, they Gain Only £5 on the Digital Side', *Business Insider*, 20 February. Available at: http://uk.businessinsider.com/statistics-smartphones-print-newspaper-revenues-2017–2

Elliott, L. (2013), 'Tax Avoidance: How to Change Corporate Behaviour', *Guardian*, 19 May. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/business/economics-blog/2013/may/19/tax-avoidance-how-change-company-behaviour

Engelen, E., I. Ertürk, J. Froud, S. Johal, A. Leaver, M. Moran, A. Nilsson and K. Williams (2011), *After the Great Complacence: Financial Crisis and the Politics of Reform*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Epstein, G., ed. (2005), *Financialization and the World Economy*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing

Esser, F., C. H. de Vreese, J. Strömbäck, P. V. Aelst, T. Aalberg, J. Stanyer, G. Lengauer, R. Berganza, G. Legnante, S. Papathanassopoulos, S. Salgado, T. Sheafer and C. Reinemann (2012), 'Political Information Opportunities in Europe : A Longitudinal and Comparative Study of Thirteen Television Systems', *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 17(3): 247–74.

Ewen, S. (1998), *PR!: A Social History of Spin*, London: Basic Books.

Fahy, D., M. O'Brien and V. Poti (2010), 'From Boom to Bust: A Post-Celtic Tiger Analysis of the Norms, Values and Roles of Irish Financial Journalists', *Irish Communications Review*, 12: 5–20.

Fairclough, N. (1999), 'Global Capitalism and Critical Awareness of Language', *Language Awareness*, 8 (2): 71–83.

Fama, E. (1970), 'Efficient Capital Markets: A Review of Theory and Empirical Work', *Journal of Finance*, 25 (2): 383–417.

Fourcade-Gourinchos, M. and S. Babb (2002), 'The Rebirth of the Liberal Creed: Paths to Neoliberalism in Four Countries', *American Journal of Sociology*, 108 (3): 533–79.

Franklin, B. (1997), *Newzak and News Media*, London: Arnold.

Freedman, D. (2012a) 'Web 2.0 and the Death of the Blockbuster Economy', in J. Curran, N. Fenton and D. Freedman (eds), *Misunderstanding the Internet*, London: Routledge.

Freedman, D. (2012b) 'The Internet of Capital: Concentration and Commodification in a World of Abundance', in J. Curran, N. Fenton and D. Freedman (eds), *Misunderstanding the Internet*, London: Routledge.

Glyn, A. (2006), *Capitalism Unleashed*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Grazian, D. (2010), 'Neoliberalism and the Realities of Reality Television', *Contexts*, 9 (2): 68–71.

Greenslade, R. (2016), 'Facebook Presents an Existential Threat to Newspapers', *Guardian*, 15 June. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/media/greenslade/2016/jun/15/facebook-is-an-existential-threat-to-newspapers

Hall, S., C. Critcher, T. Jefferson, T. Clarke and B. Roberts (1978), *Policing the Crisis: Mugging the State and Law and Order*, London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hallin, D. C. (2008), 'Neoliberalism, Social Movements and Change in Media Systems in the Late Twentieth Century', in D. Hesmondhalgh and J. Toynbee (eds), *The Media and Social Theory*, London: Routledge.

Hallin, D. C. and P. Mancini (2004), *Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Harding, P. (2010), *The Great Global Switch-Off International Coverage in UK Public Service Broadcasting*. Available at: http://www.lse.ac.uk/media@lse/POLIS/Files/globalswitchoff.pdf

Harvey, D. (2005), *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hay, C. (1999), *The Political Economy of New Labour*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Jarvis, J. (2009), *What Would Google Do?*, New York: Collins Business.

Kantola, A. (2006), 'On the Dark Side of Democracy: The Global Imaginary of Financial Journalism', in B. Cammaerts and N. Carpenter (eds), *Reclaiming the Media: Communication Rights and Democratic Media Roles*, Bristol: Intellect.

Kohli-Khandekar, V. (2008), *The Indian Media Business*, New Delhi: SAGE Publications.

Koski, J. (1984), 'For the Campaign Was Then Selling Not Just BT Shares But a Political Philosophy', *Guardian*, 10 December.

Krippner, G. R. (2005), 'The Financialization of the American Economy', *Socio-Economic Review*, 3 (2): 173–208.

Langley, P. (2007), 'Uncertain Subjects of Anglo-American Financialization', *Cultural Critique*, 65 (Fall): 67–91.

Larner, W. (2000), 'Neoliberalism: Policy, Ideology, Governmentality', *Studies in Political Economy*, 63: 5–26.

Lavelle, A. (2007), 'Social Democracy or Neo-liberalism? The Cases of Germany and Sweden', in G. Curran and E. van Acker (eds), *Globalising Government Business Relations*, Frenchs Forest, NSW: Pearson.

Leys, C. (2003), *Market-Driven Politics: Neoliberal Democracy and the Public Interest*, London: Verso.

Malik, O. (2015), 'In Silicon Valley Now, It's Almost Always Winner Takes All', *New Yorker*, 30 December. Available at: https://www.newyorker.com/tech/elements/in- silicon-valley-now-its-almost-always-winner-takes-all

Marquand, D. (2009), 'The Warrior Woman', *New Statesman*, 26 February. Available at: https://www.newstatesman.com/uk-politics/2009/02/thatcher-social-moral-society

Martin, R. (2002), *Financialization of Daily Life*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Martin, C. R. (2007), 'Writing off Workers: The Decline of the US and Canadian Labor Beats', in C. McKercher and V. Mosco (eds), *Knowledge Workers in the Information Society*, Lanham, MD: Lexington.

Media Standards Trust (2010), *Shrinking World: The Decline of International Reporting in the British Press*. Available at: http://mediastandardstrust.org/publications/shrinking-world-the-decline-of-international-reporting-in-the-british-press/

Miller, D. and W. Dinan (2000), 'The Rise of the PR Industry in Britain, 1979–98', *European Journal of Communication*, 15 (1): 5–35.

Mills, T. (2016), *The BBC: Myth of a Public Service*. London: Verso.

Montgomerie, J. (2009), 'The Pursuit of (Past) Happiness? Middle-Class Indebtedness and American Financialization', *New Political Economy*, 14 (1): 1–24.

Nerone, J. (2009), 'The Death (and Rebirth?) of Working-Class Journalism', *Journalism*, 10 (3): 353–55.

Nguyen, A. (2016), 'News Judgement in the "Click-thinking" Culture: The Impact of Web Metrics on Journalism and Journalists', *Revista Parágrafo*, 4 (2): 88–99.

Olsen, K. M., A. L. Kalleberg and T. Nesheim (2010), 'Perceived Job Quality in the United States, Great Britain, Norway and West Germany, 1989–2005', *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, 16 (3): 221–40.

Peet, R. (2003), *Unholy Trinity: The IMF, World Bank and WTO*, London: Zed Books.

Pellandini-Simányi, L., F. Hammer and Z. Vargha (2015), 'The Finacialization of Everyday Life or the Domestification of Finance?', *Cultural Studies*, 29 (5–6): 733–59.

Philo, G. (1995a), 'Television, Politics and the Rise of the New Right', in G. Philo (ed.), *Glasgow Media Group Reader: Vol. 2: Industry, Economy, War and Politics*, London: Routledge.

Philo, G. (1995b), 'Political Advertising and Public Belief', *Media, Culture & Society*, 15: 407–18.

Philo, G. and Miller, D. (2000), 'Cultural Compliance and Critical Media Studies', *Media, Culture & Society*, 22 (6): 831–39.

Piketty, T. (2014), *Capital in the 21st Century*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Rafter, K. (2014), 'Voices in the Crisis: The Role of Media Elites in Interpreting Ireland's Banking Collapse', *European Journal of Communication*, 29 (5): 598–607.

Redden, G. (2017), 'Is Reality TV Neoliberal?, *Television & New Media*, 19 (5): 1–16.

Reinemann, C., J. Stanyer and S. Scherr (2016), 'Hard and Soft News', in C. de Vreese, F. Esser and D. Hopmann (eds), *Where's the Good News? Comparing Political Online and Offline Journalism in 16 Countries*, New York: Routledge.

Rojecki A (2002), 'Modernism, State Sovereignty and Dissent: Media and the New Post-Cold War Movements', *Critical Studies in Media and Communication*, 19 (2): 152–71.

Sambrook, R. (2010), 'Are Foreign Correspondents Redundant: The Changing Face of International News', *Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism*. Available at: https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2017-12/Are20Foreign20Correspondents20Redundant20The20changing20face20of20international20news.pdf

Shonfield, M. (1964), *Modern Capitalism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Schiffrin, A. and R. Fagan (2013), 'Are We All Keynesians Now? The US Press and the American Recovery Act of 2009', *Journalism: Theory, Practice and Criticism*, 14 (2): 151–72.

Schrifferes, S. and S. Knowles (2015), 'The British Media and the "First Crisis of Globalization"', in S. Schrifferes and R. Roberts (eds), *The Media and Financial Crises*, Abingdon: Routledge.

Shehata, A. (2013), 'Active or Passive Learning From Television? Political Information Opportunities and Knowledge Gaps During Election Campaigns', *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties*, 23 (2): 200–22.

Shirky, C. (2008), *Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizations without Organization*, London: Allen Lane.

Shore, C. and S. Wright (2015), 'Governing by Numbers: Audit Culture, Rankings and the New World Order', *Social Anthropology*, 23 (1): 22–28.

Standing, G. (2014), *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class*, London: Bloomsbury.

Stone, B. (2014), *The Everything Store: Jeff Bezos and the Age of Amazon*, London: Corgi.

Stone, J. (2000), *Losing Perspective: Global Affairs on British Terrestrial Television 1989–1999*, London: Third World and Environment Broadcasting Project.

Starkman, D. (2014), *The Watchdog that didn't Bark: The Financial Crisis and the Disappearance of Investigative Journalism*, Columbia: Columbia University Press.

Tapscott, D. and A. Williams, (2008), *Wikinomics: How Mass Collaboration Changes Everything*, London: Atlantic Books.

Touri, M. and S. L. Rogers (2013), 'Europe's Communication Deficit and the UK Press: Framing the Greek Financial Crisis', *The Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, 21 (2): 175–89.

Tracey, M. (1998), *The Decline and Fall of Public Service Broadcasting*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Tyndall Report (2009), '2009: Year in Review'. Available at: http://tyndallreport.com/yearinreview2009/foreignbureaus/

Venugopal, R. (2015), 'Neoliberal as Concept', *Economy and Society*, 44 (2): 165–87.

Vise, D. A. (2008), *The Google Story*, London: Pan.

Wahl-Jorgensen, K., R. Sambrook, M. Berry, K. Moore, L. Bennett, J. Cable, I. Garcia-Blanco, J. Kidd, L. Dencik and A. Hintz (2013), *BBC Breadth of Opinion Review: Content Analysis*. Available at: http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/assets/files/pdf/our_work/breadth_opinion/content_analysis.pdf

Wood, H. and B. Skeggs (2008), 'Spectacular Morality: "Reality" Television, Individualization and the Remaking of the Working Class', in D. Hesmondhalgh and J. Toynbee (eds), *The Media and Social Theory*, London: Routledge.

Wren-Lewis, S. (2015), 'The Austerity Con', *London Review of Books*, 37 (4): 9–11.

Zhao, Y. (2008), *Communication in China: Political Economy, Power, and Conflict*, Boulder, CO: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Zuboff, S. (2015), 'Big Other: Surveillance Capitalism and the Prospects of an Information Civilization', *Journal of Information Technology*, 30: 75–89.

Chapter 5

Communication Power: Mass Communication, Mass Self-Communication and Power Relationships in the Network Society

Manuel Castells

Introduction

Power relationships constitute society. Whoever has power shapes the institutions and organizes society around its interests and values. However, wherever there is power, there is also counter-power, as social actors challenge the domination embedded in the institutions of society. I define power as the relational capacity that enables a social actor to influence asymmetrically the decisions of other social actor(s) in ways that favour the empowered actor's will, interests and values. Power relationships are supported by structures of domination resulting from the embedding of power in the institutions of society. I define counter-power as the capacity by social actors to resist, challenge and eventually change the power relationships institutionalized in society, that is those relationships that are ultimately supported by the state and its political, legal, military and cultural apparatuses.

Throughout history communication and information have been fundamental sources of power and counter-power. This is because, while coercion is an essential form of exercising power, persuasion it is an even more decisive practice to influence people's behaviour. In the last instance, the way people think ultimately determines the fate of the institutions, norms and values on which societies are constructed. Few institutional systems can last long if they are solely based on violence or the threat of violence. Torturing the bodies is less effective than shaping the minds. And minds are shaped in the process of social production of meaning. The key source for the social production of meaning is socialized communication. I define communication as the process of sharing meaning on the basis of information transfer. And I define socialized communication as the one that exists in the public realm, that is, it has the potential of reaching society at large. Therefore, the battle over the human mind is largely played out in the process of communication. This is particularly so in the network society, the social structure of the Information Age, that is characterized by the pervasiveness of communication networks in a multimodal hypertext.

The ongoing transformation of communication technology in the digital age extends the reach of communication media to all domains of social life in a network that is at the same time global and local, generic and customized in an ever changing pattern. As a result, power relationships are increasingly constructed in the communication realm.

Furthermore, the relationship between technology, communication, and power reflects opposing values and interests, and engages a plurality of social actors in conflict. Thus both the powers that be and the subjects of counter-power projects operate in a new technological framework, with specific consequences on the ways, means, and goals of their conflictive practice.

Although power relationships are not limited to the domain of politics, the role of the state is still central in organizing power in the various spheres of society. Thus, the processes that connect political power to the communication realm provide a useful vantage point to examine the nature of power in the network society.

It is an established fact the predominant role of mass media in the political process everywhere in the world. Media politics has become the core of politics. I argue that the characteristics of media politics have transformed the political process itself, and have contributed in a large extent to the worldwide crisis of political legitimacy. I also contend that the technological and organizational transformation of communication has decisively changed the way media politics operates. Paramount in this transformation is the rise of what I conceptualize as mass self-communication, that is socialized communication enacted via horizontal, digital communication networks. The uses of both vertical mass communication and mass self-communication in the relationship between power and counter-power, both in formal politics, and in the new manifestations of social movements and insurgent politics, have transformed the landscape of power struggles in our time.

Indeed this historically specific form of politics is a key distinctive feature of the network society. In this chapter I will summarize the essence of my analysis while taking the liberty to refer the reader to the empirical basis of this analysis that has been published elsewhere (Castells 2009).

Mass communication and media politics

Let me reiterate, for the sake of the argument, that power, including political power, largely depends on the capacity to influence people's minds by intervening in the processes of socialized communication. The main channel of communication between the political system and citizens is the mass media system, first of all television (Bennett and Entman 2001). Until recently, and even nowadays to a large extent, the media constitute an articulated system characterized by a division of labour in which usually the print press produces original information, television distributes to a mass audience, and radio customizes the interaction. Because in our societies politics is primarily media politics, the materials of the political

system are staged for the media so as to obtain the support, or at least the lesser hostility, of citizens who have become the consumers in the political market (Delli Carpini and Williams 2001).

However, this does not mean that power is in the hands of the media. Nor that the audience simply follows what the media say. The concept of the active audience is now well established in communication research (Eco 1994; Banet-Weiser 2007). Furthermore, the media are relatively autonomous vis-à-vis their corporate owners in terms of content production. This is because they are a business, they are usually diverse and in competition with each other, and in order to strive for audience share they must keep their credibility in front of their competitors. Besides, they have internal controls that run against a biased management of information: the independence, professionalism and dedication of most journalists. On the other hand, we should remember the current rise of ideologically grounded journalism in all countries (actually a good business model, e. g. Fox News in the US), as well as the diminishing autonomy of journalists vis-à-vis their corporate owners, as a result of the intertwining between media companies and governments (Curran 2002; McChesney 2008; Bennett et al. 2008). We should also keep in mind the usual professional practice of what Bennett (1990, 2007) has named indexing, in which editors limit the range of political viewpoints and issues that they report to situate the reporting within the mainstream political establishment.

Yet, the main issue is not the shaping of the minds by explicit messages in the media, but the absence of a given content in the media. What does not exist in the media does not exist in the public mind, even if it could have a fragmented presence in individual minds.

Therefore, **a political message is necessarily a media message**. And whatever politically related message is conveyed through the media it must be couched in the specific language of the media. This means television language in many cases. The need to format the message in its media form has considerable implications, as it has been established by a long tradition in communication research (Bosetti 2007). It is not entirely true that the medium is the message, empirically speaking, but it certainly has substantial influence on the form and effect of the message.

So, **the media are not the holders of power, but they constitute by and large the space where power is decided**. In our society, politics is dependent on media politics. The language of media has its rules. It is largely built around images, not necessarily visual, but images in the neuro-scientific sense (Damasio 2003). The most powerful message is a simple message attached to an image. The simplest message in politics is a human face.

Media politics leads to the personalization of politics around leaders that can be adequately sold in the political market. This should not be trivialized as the way politicians dress or the looks of a face. It is the symbolic embodiment of a message of trust around a person, around the character of the person, and then in terms of the image projection of this character.

The growing importance of personality politics is related to the evolution of electoral politics, usually decided in the middle of the electorate by independent or undecided voters that switch the balance, in every country, between the centre-

Media and Society

right and the centre-left. Thus, although there are substantial differences between parties and candidates in most countries, at the very last minute programmes and promises are tailored to fit the views of the centre and of the undecided, often by the same political advertising companies and political marketing consultants working for both sides in alternating years, and even sharing bed in some instances while working for opposite candidates. The key political marketing strategy is to seek the linkage between specific values and specific candidates (Hallin and Mancini 2004). Following Lakoff´s analysis, we may conclude that the issues debated in the political arena are real issues, but they are also symbolic of values and trustworthiness, and this is what matters most for citizens (Lakoff 2008). Citizens hardly read the political platforms of parties or candidates. They usually follow the headlines of the media reporting on the platforms. The decision on how to vote largely depends on the trust they deposit in a given candidate. Therefore, character, as portrayed in the media, becomes essential, because values – what matters the most for the majority of people – are embodied in the persons of the candidates. Politicians are the faces of politics.

If credibility, trust and character become critical issues in deciding the political outcome, the destruction of credibility and character assassination become the most potent political weapons (Marks 2007). Because all parties resort to it, all parties need to stockpile ammunition in preparing for this battle. As a consequence a market of intermediaries proliferates, finding damaging information about the opponent, manipulating information, or simply fabricating information for that purpose. Furthermore, media politics is expensive, and legal means of party financing are insufficient to pay for all advertising, pollsters, phone banks, consultants, and the like (Hollihan 2008). Thus, regardless of the morality of individual politicians, political actors are on sale for lobbyists with different degrees of morality. This is so even in European countries in which finance of politics is public and regulated (but anonymous private donations are permitted, if they are registered) (Bosetti 2007).

So, more often than not, it is not difficult to find wrongdoing and damaging material for most parties and candidates. A case in point was the political scandal surrounding the British political system in 2009 when the media reported on a widespread practice among MPs and government officials of using tax payers' money for their private expenses, a scandal that tarnished the reputation of a democratic institution as venerable as the British parliament. In addition, if we consider that nobody is perfect, and that people, particularly men, have a tendency to brag and be indiscrete, personal sins and political corruption brew a powerful cocktail of intrigues and gossip that become the daily staple of media politics.

Thus, **media politics, and personality politics, lead to scandal politics**, as analyzed by scholars and researchers, including Thompson (2000), Ginsberg and Shefter (1999), Tumber (2004), Tumber and Waisbord (2004a), Tumber and Waisbord (2004b), Chalaby (2004), Williams and Delli Carpini (2001) and many others. And scandal politics is credited with bringing down a large number of politicians, governments, and even regimes around the world, as shown in the

detailed global account of scandal politics and political crises compiled by Amelia Arsenault at the Annenberg School of Communication in Los Angeles.[1]

Scandal politics has two main effects on the political system. First, **it may affect the process of election and decision making,** by weakening the credibility of those subjected to scandal. However, **this kind of effect varies in its impact.** Some times, it is the saturation of dirty politics in the public mind that provokes indifference among the public. In other instances, the public becomes so cynical that it includes all politicians in their low level of appreciation, thus they choose among all the immoral politicians the kind of immoral that they find more akin or closer to their interests. This seems to be the process that explains the popularity of Bill Clinton at the end of his presidency in spite of his televised act of lying to the country. However, some interesting research by Renshon (2002) and by Morin and Deane (2000) seems to indicate that the second order effect of this low morality had the consequence of bringing additional votes in the 2000 US presidential election to the candidate that appeared to be more principled than the incumbent administration. Of course the experience of such a candidate once elected president shows that there is no more determined political lie in politics that the one performed in defense of self-proclaimed moral principles.

Which leads me to the second kind of effect of scandal politics. Because everybody does something wrong, and there is generalized mud slinging, citizens end up putting all politicians in the same bag, as **they distrust systematically electoral promises, parties and political leaders**. There is some evidence, for instance the statistical analysis for a large number of countries by Treisman (2000) using data from the World Values Survey, on the relationship between the level of perceived corruption, as a result from scandals, and the low level of trust in the political system. The crisis of political legitimacy in most of the world cannot be attributed exclusively, by any means, to scandal politics and to media politics. Yet, scandals are most likely at the very least a precipitating factor in triggering political change in the short term and in rooting scepticism vis-à-vis formal politics in the long term. And the pace and shape of media politics stimulate the disbelief in the democratic process. This is not to blame the media, since in fact political actors and their consultants are more often than not the source of the leaks and damaging information.

Again, **media are the space of power making, not the source of power holding.**

At any rate, we do observe a widespread crisis of political legitimacy in practically all countries with the exception of Scandinavia, with two-thirds of citizens in the world, according to the polls commissioned in 2000 and 2002 by the UN secretariat and by the World Economic Forum, believing that their country is not governed by the will of the people, the percentage for the US being 59 per cent and for the EU 61 per cent. The Eurobarometer, the UNDP Study on Democracy in Latin America, the World Values Survey, and various polls from Gallup, the Field Institute, and the Pew Institute in the United States, all point towards a

---

1 See her findings reported in Castells (2009: 450–71).

significant level of distrust of citizens vis-à-vis politicians, political parties, parliaments, and to a lesser extent, governments (Castells 2009: 286–95).

The distrust in the political institutions partially explains why everywhere a majority of the people tend to vote against someone rather than for something, electing the lesser of two evils. Or else, when the choice is not as dramatic as ending or pursuing a war or dealing with an economic crisis, they may switch in significant proportions, to third party candidates, or protest candidates, often propelled by a colourful presence in the media that makes for good footage or noteworthy news, thus opening the way to demagogic politics. At the same time, distrust in the political system does not equate depoliticization. A number of studies indicate that many citizens believe they can influence the world with their mobilization (Inglehart and Catterberg 2002; Castells et al. 2007). They simply do not think that they can do it through politics as usual. What brings me to consider the emergence of processes of counter-power linked to social movements and socio-political mobilization.

However, any political intervention in the public space requires presence in the media space. And since the media space is largely shaped by business and governments that set the political parameters in terms of the formal political system, albeit in its plurality, the success of social movements or the rise of insurgent politics cannot be separated from the emergence of a new kind of media space: the space created around the process of mass self-communication.

The rise of mass self-communication

The diffusion of the internet, wireless communication, digital media and a variety of tools of open source social software **have prompted the development of horizontal networks of interactive communication that connect local and global in chosen time.** The communication system of the industrial society was centered around the mass media, characterized by the mass distribution of a one-way message from one to many. The communication foundation of the network society is the global web of horizontal communication networks that include the multimodal exchange of interactive messages from many to many both synchronous and asynchronous. Of course, internet is an old technology, first deployed in 1969. But it had only 40 million users in 1996. Only in the last decade, has it diffused throughout the world to reach in 2009 about 1.6 billion users. Mobile communication has increased from about 16 million subscribers (numbers) in 1991 to about 4.4 billion mobile phone subscribers by the end of 2009, which means, with a conservative multiplier factor in terms of users, that about 70 per cent of the population of the planet has access to wireless communication. Wi-fi and wi-max networks are helping to set up networked communities. With the convergence between internet and wireless communication and the gradual diffusion of broadband capacity, the communicating power of the internet is being distributed in all realms of social life, as the electrical grid and the electrical engine distributed energy in the industrial society. Appropriating the new forms of communication,

people have built their own system of mass communication, via SMSs, blogs, tweets, podcasts, wikis and a whole range of social networking spaces, that have come to be known as social media. File sharing and P2P networks make possible the circulation and reformatting of any content that is in digital form. The blogosphere is a multilingual and international communication space, where English, dominant in the early stages of blog development, accounts now for less than a third of blog posts, with the Chinese language leading the pack in 2009. Granted: according to a 2005 Pew Institute survey, 52 per cent of bloggers in the US said they post for themselves (a form of electronic autism), yet 32 per cent post for the audience, whatever this means, and this 32 per cent translates in big numbers when referred to over 100 million and growing. Furthermore what is important about blogs nowadays is that RSS feeds allow the integration and linking of content everywhere, building self-selected networks of sources of messages. We are witnessing the emergence of a global multimodal hypertext of communication. This includes all kind of communication forms: low-power FM radio stations, TV street networks, and an explosion of mobile phone low cost, production and distribution capacity of digital video and audio, and non-linear computer-based video editing systems that take advantage of the declining cost of memory space. YouTube, Myspace, Facebook, Twitter and endless online forms of self-expression and communication have constituted a new media space: what the industry calls social media, that is changing the business model of advertising and therefore of the media industry. Imitators of YouTube are proliferating on the Web, including Hulu, and the major Chinese site Tudou. Copycats of Facebook are spreading fast, particularly in China. At the same time, mainstream media are using blogs and interactive networks to distribute their content and interact with their audience. And internet users around the world are downloading and distributing at will the content produced by mainstream media companies, some times a few hours after their first release. But there are also a wealth of experiences in which traditional media, such as cable TV, are fed by autonomous production of content using the digital capacity to produce and distribute. YouTube and other internet video channels have become a significant source of video for mainstream TV news.

Thus, there is a mixing of vertical and horizontal communication modes. However, the growing interaction between horizontal and vertical networks of communication does not mean that the mainstream media are taking over the new, autonomous forms of content generation and distribution. It means that there is a contradictory process that gives birth to a new media reality whose contours and effects will ultimately be decided through a series of political and business strategies and conflicts, as the owners of the telecommunication networks position themselves to control access and traffic to protect their business partners, and preferred customers, threatening the principle of net neutrality that is essential to unfettered communication over the internet.

And yet, we **have enough evidence to assert the rise of a new form of socialized communication: mass self-communication**.

It is mass communication because it reaches potentially a global audience through the P2P networks, wireless communication, and internet connection. It is

multimodal, as the digitization of content and open source-software that can be downloaded free, allows the reformatting of almost any content in almost any form. **And it is self-generated in terms of content, self-directed in emission, and self-selected in reception by many that communicate with many.** We are in a new communication realm, and ultimately in a new medium, whose backbone is made of computer networks, whose language is digital, and whose senders are globally distributed and globally interactive. True, the medium – even a medium as revolutionary as this one – does not determine the content and effect of its messages. But it makes possible the unlimited diversity and the largely autonomous origin of most of the communication flows that construct, and reconstruct every second the global and local production of meaning in the public mind.

Mass self-communication and counter-power: social movements and insurgent politics in the network society

As stated above, by 'counter-power' I understand the capacity by social actors to resist, challenge and eventually change the power relations institutionalized in society. In all known societies, counter-power exists under different forms and with variable intensity, as one of the few natural laws of society, verified throughout history, asserts that wherever is domination, there is resistance to domination, be it political, cultural, economic, psychological or otherwise. In recent years, in parallel with the growing crisis of political legitimacy, we have witnessed in most of the world the growth of social movements, coming in very different forms and with sharply contrasted systems of values and beliefs, yet opposed to what they often define as global capitalism. Many also challenge patriarchalism on behalf of the rights of women, children and sexual minorities, and are opposed to productivism in defence of a holistic vision of the natural environment and an alternative way of life. In much of the world, identity, be it religious, ethnic, territorial or national, has become source of meaning and inspiration for alternative projects of social organization and institution building. Very often, social movements and insurgent politics reaffirm traditional values and forms, e.g. religion, the patriarchal family or the nation, that they feel betrayed in practice in spite of being proclaimed in the forefront of society's institutions. In other words, social movements may be progressive or reactionary or just alternative without adjectives. But in all cases they are purposive collective actions aimed at changing the values and interests institutionalized in society, what is tantamount to modify the power relations.

Social movements are a permanent feature of society. But they adopt values and take up organizational forms that are specific to the kind of society where they take place. So, there is a great deal of cultural and political diversity around the world. At the same time, because power relations are structured nowadays in a global network and played out in the realm of socialized communication, social movements also act on this global network structure and enter the battle over the minds by intervening in the global communication process. They think local,

rooted in their society, and act global, confronting the power where the power holders are, in the global networks of power and in the communication sphere.

The emergence of mass self-communication offers an extraordinary medium to social movements and to rebellious individuals to build their autonomy and to confront the institutions of society in their own terms and around their own projects. Naturally, social movements are not originated by technology, but they use technology. And yet technology is not simply a tool, it is a medium, it is a social construction, with its own implications.

Furthermore, the development of the technology of self-communication is also the product of our culture, a culture that emphasizes individual autonomy, and the self-construction of the project of the social actor. The studies of the history of the internet show how the culture of the hackers that originally designed the internet protocols as an open architecture based on open-source software were critical about the actual shape and development of the internet as we know it today (Himanen 2002). And in terms of the enabling quality of a technology of freedom for the practice of freedom, the empirical studies on the uses of internet in a representative sample of the Catalan society that I conducted with Tubella, Sancho and Roca show that the more an individual has a project of autonomy (personal, professional, socio-political, communicative), the more he/she uses the internet. And in a time sequence, the more he/she uses the internet, the more autonomous he/she becomes autonomous vis-à-vis societal rules and institutions (Castells et al. 2007).

Under this cultural and technological paradigm, the social movements of the information age are widely using the means of mass self-communication, although they also intervene in the mainstream mass media as they try to influence public opinion at large. From the survey of communication practices of social movements around the world conducted by Sasha Costanza-Chock (Costanza-Shock 2006), it appears that without the means and ways of mass self-communication, the new movements and new forms of insurgent politics would be very different. Of course, there is a long history of communication activism, and social movements have not waited for internet connection in order to struggle for their goals using every available communication medium. Yet, currently the new means of digital communication constitute their most decisive organizational form (in a clear break with the parties, unions and associations of the industrial society), their forums of debate, their means of acting on people's mind, and ultimately their most potent political weapon. But they do not exist only in the internet. Local radios and TV stations, autonomous groups of video production and distribution, P2P networks, blogs, tweets and wi-fi community networks constitute a variegated interactive network that connects the movement with itself, connects social actors with society at large, and acts on the entire realm of cultural expressions. Furthermore, movements, in their wide diversity, also root themselves in their local lives. And in face-to-face interaction. And when they act, they mobilize in specific places, often mirroring the places of the power institutions, as when they challenge meetings of WTO, the IMF or the G7 group near their meetings (Juris 2008), or when they contest the destructive relationships between culture and

nature inherited from the industrial age under the various forms of the multilocal, environmental movement against global warming.

Together with the activation of social movements, we are also witnessing the rise of a new wave of insurgent politics; that is, politics that forms in the margins of the system and produce significant changes in the political system. New horizontal networks of communication are essential in this process. There are two kinds of insurgent politics in contemporary practice: reactive insurgent politics, and proactive insurgent politics.

Reactive insurgent politics appear as social revolts driven by indignation against intolerable oppression, corruption or disregard by the power elites. Very often, they are spontaneous uprisings triggered by an event, which then generate their own networks of protest by converging on a given time and space convened by mobile phones and over the internet. It is what I **name instant political communities of practice**, often enacted by wireless supported, mobilization. In the last decade there have been a number of political insurgencies of this kind, some of which have produced notable changes in the political regime of countries around the world, particularly in Spain, the Philippines, South Korea, Thailand, Nepal, Ecuador, Ukraine, Burma etc (Castells et al. 2006; Brough 2008). In July 2009, the massive (and largely spontaneous) protests against electoral fraud in Iran were organized over mobile phones and Twitter. Furthermore, when the Iranian regime cut off reports from the ground, blocking access to foreign journalists, the Iranian protesters continued to broadcast to the world via their cell phones' cameras, supported by a global network of internet activists that came to the rescue by providing their own servers. True, there was no immediate political change in Iran and repression against the opponents and the democratic Islamic leaders intensified in the short term. Yet, a fundamental change is likely to have occurred in the mind sets of the thousands of youth participating in the demonstrations at the risk of their lives. History will tell if the changes in their minds percolate in society and ultimately transform the political institutions. This is what we know from the lessons of history, and this may well be the future of Iran, although socio-political change often occurs through unexpected paths and formats.

The new media space is also becoming a privileged terrain for insurgent politics that aims to modify the political system, bringing in new political actors and interests. In the traditional theory of political communication, political influence through the media is largely determined by the interaction between the political elites (in their plurality) and professional journalists. Media act as gatekeepers of the information flows that shape public opinion. But things have changed. Elihu Katz emphasized years ago the transformation of the media environment through the fragmentation of the audience, and the increasing control that new communication technologies give to the consumers of the media. The growing role of online, multimodal social networking accelerates this transformation.

In line with this analysis, observation of recent trends shows that the political uses of the internet have substantially increased with the diffusion of broadband, and the increasing pervasiveness of social networking online (Sey and Castells 2004). Sometimes the aim of political actors in using the internet is to bypass

established media outlets and quickly distribute a message. In the majority of cases, the purpose is to provoke media exposure by posting a message or an image in the hope that the media will pick it up. The 2006 US congressional elections were marked by a sudden explosion in the use of new media by candidates, parties and pressure groups across the entire political spectrum. The sharp polarization of the country around the Iraq war and around issues of social values coincided with the generalization of mass self-communication networks. Thus, that campaign marked a turning point in the forms of media politics in the United States and probably in the world at large.

But the most meaningful political event in recent times was the first presidential bid by Barack Obama, particularly in his primary campaign, when he was competing with an apparently unbeatable Hillary Clinton, who could count on the support of most of the Democratic establishment and was well funded by Washington lobbyists.

Because the facts are well known, I will simply highlight what is analytically relevant, referring the reader to the detailed case study I conducted on the Obama campaign (Castells 2009: 364–415).

There is widespread consensus among political observers and media analysts that the skilful use of the internet by Obama was decisive in the outcome of the campaign. But why and how?

First, there was considerable online know-how within the campaign, including some leading figures such as Chris Hughes, the co-founder of Facebook. Second, the demographics of Obama supporters greatly facilitated the use of the internet, since his main base were the younger age groups, well acquainted with the use of the internet, in contrast to Clinton or McCain, whose main support came from citizens over 55–60 years of age. Third, Obama directly connected to youth culture and to pop culture, the drivers of change in our world, by launching a multimedia campaign with viral videos and messages. Fourth, the campaign relied on a novel strategy of combining online communities with local communities, each level of networking reinforcing the other. Fifth, the campaign built instant information networks, with intense interactivity, organized streaming of events in real time, and encouraged active participation of Obama's supporters in the blogosphere, so that the media reports were constantly debated and commented by citizens of all political persuasions. Sixth, online interaction allowed the campaign to build a significant database that provided the ground for targeted mobilization of the vote, thus matching the Republican databases that had given the edge to the conservatives in previous elections. Last but not least, the use of the internet extraordinarily facilitated the small donations to the Obama campaign that ultimately provided the majority of its funding and gave Obama a record funding of over US $700 million dollars from 3.5 million donors, most of whom donated an average of US$ 200.

So here the internet was certainly a useful tool, but it was also an organizational form. It was also a tool fully adapted to the practices of the new America that mobilized around the Obama candidacy, one that broke with the recent trends for political apathy among young voters and minorities.

The question of course is whether the Obama campaign qualifies as a case of 'insurgent' politics. Looking at it from the perspective of Obama in the White

House, and observing the daily compromises any president has to make, his presidency does not look very insurgent. However, not only his electoral strategies look insurgent from the trenches of the campaign, but it can also be argued that the likelihood of an African-American junior politician to be nominated without the support of the mainstream political establishment (including the African-American establishment), with little money, and without the support of the Washington lobbies, was very slim. This is particularly the case considering his early opposition to the Iraq war, an isolated act of courage in 2002, and his left-leaning voting record in the Senate in a country in which (supposedly) a left-wing candidate had no chance to be elected to the highest political office. Moreover, Obama is not really on the left, but he is in a different terrain, all by himself, a terrain on the margins of traditional politics, yet posed to intervene in the formal political process. This is exactly my definition of insurgent politics: politics that rises from outside the system to include in the process citizens who were previously marginalized by making them believe – and hope – in the possibility of change. This kind of politics, regardless of what happened later under President Obama, requires a space of communicative autonomy that only the internet can provide, without underestimating the obvious role of the mass media in the campaign, and the grassroots mobilization that anchored the online campaign.

Thus, the space of the new social movements and insurgent politics of the Information Age is not a virtual space. It is a composite of the space of flows and of the space of places, as I tried to argue in my general analysis of the network society. Social movements and insurgent politics escaped their confinement in the fragmented space of places and seized the global space of flows, while not virtualizing themselves to death, keeping their local experience and the landing sites of their struggle as the material foundation of their ultimate goal: the restoration of meaning in the new space/time of our existence, made of both flows and places and their interaction. That is building networks of meaning in opposition to networks of instrumentality.

Conclusion: the public space of the network society

Societies evolve and change by deconstructing their institutions under the pressure of new power relationships and constructing new sets of institutions that allow people to live side by side without destroying each other, in spite of their contradictory interests and values. Societies exist as societies by constructing a public space in which private interests and projects can be negotiated to reach an always unstable point of shared decision-making towards a common good, within a historically given social boundary. In an industrial society this public space was built around the institutions of the nation-state that, under the pressure of democratic movements and class struggle, constructed an institutional public space based on the articulation between a democratic political system, an independent judiciary and a civil society connected to the state.

The twin processes of globalization and the rise of communal identities have challenged the boundaries of the nation-state as the relevant unit to define a public space. Not that the nation-state has disappeared (quite the opposite), but that its legitimacy has dwindled as governance is global and governments remain national. And the principle of citizenship conflicts with the principle of self-identification. The result is the observed crisis of political legitimacy.

The crisis of legitimacy of the nation-state involves the crisis of the traditional forms of civil society, since the forms of civil society, in the Gramscian sense, are largely dependent upon the state. But there is no such a thing as a social and political vacuum. Our societies continue to perform socially and politically by shifting the process of formation of the public mind from political institutions to the realm of communication, largely organized around the mass media. To a large extent, political legitimacy has been replaced by communication framing of the public mind in the network society, as Amelia Arsenault and myself tried to argue empirically in our article on the communication strategy of the Bush Administration concerning the Iraq war (Arsenault and Castells 2006).

I am extending this analytical perspective to the historical dynamics of counter-power, as new forms of social change and alternative politics emerge by using the opportunity offered by new horizontal communication networks of the digital age, the technical and organizational infrastructure that is specific of the network society. Therefore, not only has public space become largely defined in the space of communication, but this space is now a contested terrain, as it expresses the new historical stage in which a new form of society is being given birth, as all previous societies, through conflict, struggle, pain and often violence. New institutions will eventually develop, creating a new form of public space, still unknown to us, but they are not there yet. What we have now is an attempt by the holders of power to reassert their dominance into the realm of communication, once they realized the decreasing capacity of institutions to channel the projects and demands from people around the world. This attempt at new forms of control uses primarily the mass media, but it is confronted by the social movements, individual autonomy projects, and insurgent politics that I have discussed above, using the means of mass self-communication.

Under such circumstances, a new round of power-making in the communication space is taking place, as power-holders understand the need to enter the battle for control in the horizontal communication networks. The outcome of this unfolding battle will largely determine the future of democracy – a democracy that will have to be reinvented in the communication environment that characterizes the network society.

References

Arsenault, A. and M. Castells (2006), 'Conquering the Minds, Conquering Iraq: the Social Production of Misinformation in the United States: A Case Study', *Information, Communication and Society*, 9 (3): 284–308.

Banet-Weiser, S. (2007), *Kids Rule!: Nickelodeon and Consumer Citizenship*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Bennett, L. W. (1990), 'Toward a Theory of Press–state Relations in the United States', *Journal of Communication*, 40 (2): 103–27.

Bennett, W. L. (2007), *News: The Politics of Illusion*, 7th edn, New York: Longman.

Bennett, W. L. and R. M. Entman, eds (2001), *Mediated Politics*, New York: Cambridge University Press.

Bennett, W., R. G. Lawrence and S. Livingston (2008), *When the Press Fails: Political Power and the News Media From Iraq to Katrina*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Bosetti, G. (2007), *Spin: Trucchi e Tele-imbrogli Della Política*, Venice: Marsilio.

Brough, M. (2008), 'The Saffron Revolution – Televised? The Politics of Protest on YouTube', unpublished paper written for the research seminar, Comm620Y on Communication, Technology, and Power, Annenberg School for Communication, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, Spring.

Castells, M. (2009), *Communication and Power*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Castells, M., M. Fernandez-Ardevol, Jack Linchuan Qiu and Araba Sey (2006), 'Electronic Communication and Socio-Political Mobilisation: A New Form of Civil Society', in M. Glasius, M. Kaldor and H. Anheier (eds), *Global Civil Society*, 266–85, London: SAGE Publications.

Castells, M., I. Tubella, T. Sancho and M. Roca (2007), *La transicion a la sociedad red*, Barcelona: Ariel.

Chalaby, J. K. (2004), 'Scandal and the Rise of Investigative Reporting in France', *American Behavioral Scientist*, 47 (9): 1194–1207.

Costanza-Chock, S. (2006), 'Horizontal Communication and Social Movements', unpublished manuscript. Los Angeles: University of Southern California.

Curran, J. (2002), *Media and Power*, London: Routledge.

Damasio, A. R. (2003), *Looking for Spinoza: Joy, Sorrow, and the Feeling Brain*, Orlando, FL: Harcourt.

Delli Carpini, M. and Bruce A. Williams (2001), 'Let Us Infotain You: Politics in the New Media Environment', in W. L. Bennett and R. M. Entman (eds), *Mediated Politics*, 160–81, New York: Cambridge University Press.

Eco, U. (1994), 'Does the Audience Have Bad Effects on Television?,' in U. Eco and R. Lumley (eds), *Apocalypse Postponed*, 87–102, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Ginsberg, B. and M. Shefter (1999), *Politics by Other Means: Politicians, Prosecutors, and the Press from Watergate to Whitewater*, New York: W. W. Norton.

Hallin, D. C. and P. Mancini (2004), 'Americanization, Globalization, and Secularization', in F. Esser and B. Pfetsch (eds), *Comparing Political Communication: Theories, Cases, and Challenges*, 25–43, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Himanen, P. (2002), *The Hacker Ethic and the Spirit of the Information Age*, New York: Random House.

Hollihan, T. A. (2008), *Uncivil Wars: Political Campaigns in a Media Age*, New York: Bedford St. Martin's.

Inglehart, R. and G. Catterberg (2002), 'Trends in Political Action: The Developmental Trend and the Post-honeymoon Decline', *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, 43 (3–5): 300–16.

Juris, J. S. (2008), *Networking Futures: The Movements against Corporate Globalization*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Lakoff, G. (2008), *The Political Mind: Why You Can't Understand 21st-century Politics with an 18th-century Brain*, New York: Viking.

Marks, S. (2007), *Confessions of a Political Hitman: My Secret Life of Scandal, Corruption, Hypocrisy and Dirty Attacks that Decide Who Gets Elected (and Who Doesn't)*, Naperville, IL: Sourcebooks.

McChesney, R. W. (2008), *The Political Economy of Media: Enduring Issues, Emerging Dilemmas*, New York: Monthly Review Press.

Morin, R. and C. Deane (2000), 'Why the Fla. Exit Polls Were Wrong', *Washington Post*, 8 November, A10.

Renshon, S. A. (2002), 'The Polls: The Public's Response to the Clinton Scandals, Part 2: Diverse Explanations, Clearer Consequences', *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 32 (2): 412–27.

Sey, A. and M. Castells (2004), 'From Media Politics to Networked Politics: The Internet and the Political Process', in M. Castells (ed.), *The Network Society: A Cross-cultural Perspective*, 363–81, Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar.

Thompson, J. B. (2000), *Political Scandal: Power and Visibility in the Media Age*, Cambridge: Polity.

Treisman, D. (2000), 'The Causes of Corruption: A Cross-national Study', *Journal of Public Economics*, 76: 399–457.

Tumber, H. (2004), 'Scandal and the Media in the United Kingdom', *American Behavioral Scientist*, 47 (8): 1122–37.

Tumber, H. and S. R. Waisbord (2004a), 'Introduction: Political Scandals and the Media Across Democracies: Volume I', *American Behavioral Scientist*, 47 (8): 1031–39.

Tumber, H. and S. R. Waisbord (2004b), 'Introduction: Political Scandals and the Media Across Democracies: Volume II', *American Behavioral Scientist*, 47 (9): 1143–52.

Williams, B. A. and M. X. Delli Carpini (2004), 'Monica and Bill All the Time and Everywhere: The Collapse of Gatekeeping and Agenda Setting in the New Media Environment', *American Behavioral Scientist*, 47 (9): 1208–30.

Part II

MEDIA SYSTEMS, PRODUCTION AND PLATFORMS

Chapter 6

HAVE DIGITAL COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES DEMOCRATIZED THE MEDIA INDUSTRIES?

David Hesmondhalgh

Introduction: some key terms

In media, communication and cultural studies these days, as in much of the rest of life, it's more or less impossible to avoid the term 'digital'. One important question, often raised but rarely explored in depth, is whether digitalization has *democratized* the media industries and media production. In order to consider this question, we need to seek clarity concerning the main terms.

The term **media industries** refers to those industries involved in the production and circulation of cultural products via communication media such as television, radio, film, newspapers, magazines, recorded music and others. The various processes of **media production** that are pursued by these industries matter because they shape the kinds of knowledge, culture and entertainment that we are most likely to experience.

Digitalization here refers to electronic storage and transmission that involves converting images, words, sounds and so on into binary code that can be read and stored by computers – including those embedded in mobile phones. Digital communication technologies are simply communication devices based on such electronic storage and transmission, and computerization – including computers interconnected by the internet – is essential to the idea of digitalization.

The term **democratization** is the trickiest of the three terms in my question. Etymologically, democracy of course refers to rule by and for 'the people' (*demos*, in ancient Greek). More specifically, it involves the idea that participants in something (a society, a city, an organization) exercise collective decision-making over that thing in a relatively equal way (Christiano 2018). In the context of the media, and media industries, then, democratization is often used simply to refer to an increase in access, either to making or consuming media products. There is a more radical sense of the term, though, where it is used to refer to change that might improve or reform the media by bringing about greater levels of equality in collective decision-making over the operations of the media. This matters, because undemocratic media processes are – at least according to the proponents

of democratization – to lead to problems in media products, such as inadequate representation, voice and visibility for less powerful, marginalized groups, and this can have negative effects on participation, equality, justice and democracy across all kinds of other spheres in society. Yet the question of the degree of democracy in media *production* (as opposed to the degree to which media *content* might be considered democratic or progressive) has been neglected in recent years.

New media technologies as democratizing forces

Over the last century and more, since the rise of commercial media industries in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, there have been many hopes that various new communication technologies would democratize the media (e.g., Brecht 1978/1932). Such hopes are only part of a larger history of aspirations for the transformative capabilities of machines and systems, including railways and electricity. But when applied to the communication media, such hopes have a particular significance, because the very idea of communication itself concerns the limits and possibilities of connection between humans (see Peters 1999).

Even the use of supposedly transformative communication systems such as radio by Nazis and other authoritarians failed to dent the idea that new technologies might change information, knowledge and communication for the better. In the period following the Second World War, computers became a new basis for such utopian hopes, because of the possibility that their potentially vast storage and processing capacities would make it much easier for large numbers of people to access massive bodies of information, cheaply and conveniently, thereby democratizing knowledge – in the sense of broadening its availability (Turner 2004). The rapid development of computers in the post-war era was fuelled by government expenditure on research in an era where the USA-led world of 'liberal democracies' and the Soviet Union-led bloc of Communist countries competed for supremacy. As early as the 1950s and 1960s, it seemed clear that computers would transform societies and economies, and this generated a flurry of theories and predictions concerning transitions towards 'the information society' or 'the knowledge economy' (Garnham 2005).

The idea that technologies in themselves can have effects on *anything*, whether media production or human happiness, needs to be qualified. Technologies, as Thomas Streeter (2011: 8) puts it, 'are deeply embedded in and shaped by social processes and choices and so should not be thought of as something outside of or autonomous of society'. While technological objects and systems have 'affordances' – qualities that define how they might be used – discussion of the affordances of technologies always needs to involve consideration of other factors shaping their use: economic, political, cultural, psychological.

Such important qualifications to simplistic 'technological determinism' should not, however, blind us to the fact that the development of complex technological systems do tend to have pretty major consequences – though always in interaction with other forces. And there can be little doubt that digitalization, the incursion of

computing into communication on a massive scale, has had considerable effects on media, and on media industries. For example, we can point to ways in which our access to communication is now far more ubiquitous, mobile and pervasive than in the past, with various consequences for how we act and behave. These consequences are important in their own right, but my focus here is specifically on the extent to which digitalization has led to democratization, in the sense of a meaningful opening-up of the means of media production to greater democratic control.

Media industries in the twentieth century: four major characteristics

To explore this question, I want to begin by identifying *four main sets of characteristics of the media industries in the late twentieth century*. The industrialization of culture and communication brought a new degree of cultural abundance and choice to many sections of modern societies and forged new forms of community and solidarity. But the media industries were hardly democratic, in the sense I mooted above, where collective decision making over how the media operate is exercised in some relatively equal way by those affected by them. In outlining some of these characteristics, I'll also explain briefly how some commentators, whom I'll label 'digital optimists' (a term I take from Turner 2010, though many others have used it), felt that these features could be democratized by the development of digital networks.[1] The rest of the chapter will then explore the degree to which those hopes were realized.

My approach here is underpinned by the idea that, when considering the effects of digitalization, we need to place the changes associated with digital networks in long-term historical context. Seeing digitalization through cultural and historical lenses can help us to avoid widespread errors in discussions of the effects of new technologies: a tendency to overstate the importance and depth of recent changes, and a failure to spot underlying dynamics that remain in place, even in periods of seemingly chaotic transformation.

1. Mix of state and private ownership – and the rise of corporations

By the middle of the twentieth century, in most countries where significant industrialization had occurred, the media industries were dominated by three main types of organization: large state-owned and state-funded organizations, such as the British Broadcasting Corporation, China Central Television and India's Doordarshan; private companies, often controlled by families or wealthy individuals; and 'public' corporations – businesses whose ownership shares were listed on stock exchanges, and therefore in principle open for anyone to buy, but in

fact almost entirely owned by wealthy institutions such as banks. In some countries, notably the United States, these public corporations had a legal obligation to make profits and accrue assets on behalf of shareholders. Large firms, especially in industries such as recorded music and book publishing, coexisted with many smaller 'independent' companies supplying particular niches, from horror fiction to rhythm and blues. While at times some of these companies could serve audiences and even workers well, such small businesses could be as crudely commercial and exploitative as the bigger companies.

Driving the process whereby larger and larger companies gained greater control over the media industries were certain systemic features of media markets under capitalism. The media industries were relatively high-risk ventures for businesses and investors, but ones where the rewards for market dominance could be considerable – including fame and glamour, as well as profits. The high levels of risk derived in part from the fact that it is hard for anyone to know which media products will succeed, because it is hard to predict what pleasures and rewards media audiences might have, as tastes and fashions change. Even audiences themselves do not know for sure what pleasures and rewards a media product will offer because each product tends to be somewhat different from others. All this favoured companies who could produce large catalogues, to spread the risk.

Systems that mixed state, private and public ownership and control sometimes created many media products that were entertaining, informative, and enriching, and many where such qualities seemed subsumed by commercial intent. Some owners used profits to subsidize high-quality investigative journalism, for example. The global recording industry from time to time enabled (and at the same time appropriated) the sharing of wondrous music across national borders (Denning 2015). Sometimes such content was available to working-class and marginalized groups as well as the bourgeoisie. But this system was not in any meaningful sense democratic. In the large companies that came to dominate media in most countries (for reasons outlined below), power was mainly exercised by managers acting on behalf of wealthy owners and senior executives. Justifications of this market system of media production rested on the idea that profits could be achieved only by 'giving people what they wanted', and therefore a profit-based system encouraged the satisfaction of people's desires. But there were some major problem with this claim. For one thing, what people wanted was to some extent shaped by the communication media themselves. For another, people's desires exist in complex relations to their needs and their well-being.

Organizations representing the interests of citizens, workers and marginalized groups made massive efforts to create alternative systems, resulting in significant networks of media variously termed 'independent', 'alternative', 'radical' and 'underground' (see Downing 2000) but such networks frequently lacked the resources to compete with the for-profit companies and state institutions. Where the latter were run by fascist and Stalinist governments, there could be little hope of the media being operated on democratic grounds. In some so-called 'liberal democracies', pressure from groups representing the interests of workers led to some state organizations making efforts to serve publics in a relatively egalitarian

way, but they were paternalist – authoritarians with a conscience (Williams 1968: 131). Control over, and access to these organizations, was mostly limited to an elite of white, privileged, highly educated men – the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) is the paradigmatic example. But the same was even more true of many of the for-profit businesses.

By the 1980s and 1990s, as advertising budgets grew, and as global markets became more interconnected in an era of media regulation, media markets became bigger and more international. Many of the state-owned companies were privatized. The rest had to compete with commercial firms that had access to greater financing from other firms. A series of mergers led to the creation of vast multinational media corporations.

Critique of such arrangements was widespread from the earliest days of the media industries, often as part of concerns about the quality of 'mass culture' in an era where an abundance of commercially-oriented media products seemed to be swamping older cultures associated with religion and art. It was in this context that leftist commentators in particular began to hope that new technologies (such as radio) might allow communities and political parties to forge their own media, separately from the media industries system just outlined. By the 1980s and 1990s, a distrust of 'mainstream media' had crossed political lines in many countries, and there was a hope that digitalization would be the ultimate democratizing tool for fighting the domination of media-industry corporations and media control by authoritarian governments (de Sola Pool 1983).

2. The importance of copyright; poor compensation and inequalities for media workers

Underpinning modern systems of wealth accumulation is *property*, and the growing media industries of the twentieth century were dependent on systems of intellectual property, especially copyright, that had developed significantly from their origins in the eighteenth century. One way of understanding the importance of copyright is to see that media industries deal in what economists call 'public goods' – goods that are not used up in consumption. If I watch a film, that does not stop anyone else being able to watch it, whereas if I drink a beer or a medicine, no-one else can. This meant that as the media developed, there was a need to create 'artificial scarcity' in order for businesses to accrue revenues, either by direct sales, advertising or subscriptions. Such artificial scarcity was achieved by copyright law and practice, which penalized organizations and individuals who reproduced or otherwise used protected words, images and sounds without the permission of the copyright owner. While originally formulated as a way of protecting creators (such as authors), most rights came to be owned by large businesses, and as copyright grew in importance, those businesses became highly effective at lobbying governments to increase the scope and duration of copyright, and to monitor infringements more rigorously.

This system of copyright law and practice enabled the growth of the media industries, but it was hardly democratic: it protected corporate owners more than

creators or users. Nor were the media labour systems of which copyright formed a central part. The revenues from sales or use of copyrighted products went to 'rights owners'. Who owned the rights in particular works was determined by contracts between the various parties involved, in which bigger companies generally had the upper hand. Creative workers, operating as freelancers, would often be paid on the basis of royalties, calculated as a percentage of revenues. The media industries became notorious for poor contract practices, and often it was people from communities with little access to formal legal knowledge or advice that suffered, such as African-American musicians. Other workers were salaried, but had little or no stake in ownership, or access to royalties. What's more, as the media industries became associated with glamour and celebrity, this helped to feed an oversupply of willing workers, suppressing wages and working conditions for most workers, and feeding inequalities of class, sex and ethnicity, because it tended to be better-off and better-educated people who were able to find means to cope with the long periods of insecure employment necessary to gain access to worthwhile media work. These features were challenged only by a small, idealistic cooperative and 'alternative' sector (Downing 2000) and even this sector sometimes reproduced the dynamics of class inequality, racism and sexism apparent in the 'mainstream'.

By the 1990s, digital optimists were hopeful that the increasing ability of networked computers to share information, knowledge and entertainment would lead to an erosion of the problematic copyright system outlined above, permitting greater degrees of collective or public ownership and access to media products (Lessig 2002 was one major participant in such debates). Many digital optimists, however, paid little attention to questions of working conditions and inequalities in working life, or to how media industries might be owned and managed in the new environment, and this limited their capacity for understanding democratization.

3. *Media production by the few, distributed to the many*

Across the media industries, there developed massive *asymmetry* between, on the one hand, audiences, by the early twentieth century existing on a scale unimaginable before industrialization, and on the other, a relatively small (though steadily growing) group of professional producers (Williams 1981). In the highly centralized media systems of the late twentieth century, it was possible for relatively small numbers of media producers and celebrities to command enormous degrees of attention – and wealth. Of course nearly everyone has the ability to be a cultural producer, to sing a song, tell a story, or draw a picture. The spread of technologies such as photography and cheap musical instruments amplified this human capacity, and developed a mass of 'amateurs'. But very few of those amateurs were ever able to reach a substantial audience.

Digital optimists hoped that digital networks would allow this mass of empowered amateurs to communicate with each other, bypassing professional systems and gatekeepers (Leadbeater and Miller 2004; Shirky 2008). But as we shall see, they failed to appreciate the resilient nature of certain features of the

media industries. The problems for audiences of knowing what pleasures and rewards might be available from media products (see Characteristic 1 above) means that there is huge incentive for companies to control the marketing and publicity of media products, so that audiences can be persuaded to spend their money or time on a particular product. This consistently leads to vertical integration, whereby large firms gain control over distribution or circulation, as well as production. While digitalization enabled more and more people – including 'amateurs' – to create cultural products independently of the mainstream system outlined in Characteristic 1, the problem remained of how to allow sufficient people to be *aware* of such products that they might experience them.

4. Overproduction and blockbusters

In a situation where it was so hard to predict which products will succeed, there was an incentive for companies to create lots of product, and try them out by releasing them to the public, publicizing some more than others, but hoping that even the less publicized might find an audience. This helped fuel the growth of larger media companies through the twentieth century, as the most successful companies grew quickly and swallowed up smaller ones. It also brought about an overproduction of media goods. To make products stand out from this abundance, larger firms devote resources to creating 'blockbuster' products, often with high budgets for recognizable star talent, and for promotion and marketing. Because of the risky nature of predicting audience demand, even blockbusters often fail, but the ones that succeed can be hugely profitable, because of another fundamental feature of media industries: it is quite expensive to develop a media product, but relatively cheap, and sometimes extremely cheap, to *reproduce* it (e.g., making extra copies of a book or newspaper or recording). This meant that profits grew exponentially if a product was a hit: once the initial costs were covered, each extra sale of products or audiences could be very lucrative. Both strategies (big catalogues and blockbusters) favour the large companies, but the blockbuster tendency or syndrome tends to be the main way in which the big corporations exercise and maintain their power (Grant and Wood 2004). They are sometimes brilliantly entertaining and imaginative and sometimes even politically progressive (such as Disney/Marvel's *Black Panther*, 2018). In order to achieve a wide audience, they often strive to appeal across different communities (classes, ethnicities, nations). Yet blockbusters are in many respects deeply undemocratic. They are only producible by large corporations with huge financial backing. They tend to take up a disproportionate amount of cultural attention, often on an international scale, thereby 'crowding out' more localized, quirky, lower-budget offerings.

Digital optimists were, as we shall see, hopeful that digitalization would see the end of the twentieth century's 'blockbuster syndrome', leading to an implicitly more egalitarian and therefore possibly more democratic system based on serving media niches (Anderson 2006). Unfortunately, like so many other optimistic predictions about the effects of digitalization, this didn't transpire.

The development of digital networks in the context of marketization: four consequences

In the last quarter of the twentieth century, two notable developments occurred, which in many respects intensified the features outlined above, but which also seemed to offer the possibility of significantly disrupting them. One development was that governments began to open up media markets to much greater levels of national and international competition. Some have referred to this tendency in media and communication policy as 'deregulation', but perhaps a more accurate term is 'marketization' (Hesmondhalgh 2019: 135–74): an increasing tendency to see the media as best organized via the buying and selling of products and services (i.e., via 'markets'). While this allowed incumbents to be challenged by new entrants, it hardly altered the nature of the system, it simply made it more profit-oriented. State-run companies in telecommunications, broadcasting and other sectors were sold off, creating new business opportunities for investors and companies, who began to see the media industries as a promising source of returns. Because of the centrality of television to contemporary culture and to cultural business, the development of multi-channel television and radio, via cable, satellite and eventually digital television, was a particularly important fulcrum of change.

The second development was the rise of the digital networks that are the main way in which digitalization has manifested itself in media. While audio-visual technologies such as cable and satellite dominated many predictions of the media future in the 1970s and 1980s, at the same time, developments in computing and digital networks were beginning to appeal to policy-makers. In North America and Europe, businesses and policy-makers were increasingly attracted to ICTs because they offered the potential to gain advantage over 'newly industrializing' non-western nations and businesses (notably Japan, Korea, Singapore, Malaysia) that had increasingly come to dominate manufacturing industries. From the 1970s, as computers rapidly became smaller, cheaper, faster and more accessible, replacing the giant mainframe computers of an earlier period, they began to be connectable in *networks* (Campbell-Kelly and Aspray 2004). There was a growing prospect that computers would enable faster and more reliable communication, and this added greatly to excitement – and anxiety – about ideas of 'the information society' and 'the knowledge economy'. Initially, access to networked computers by those outside the military-industrial complex, including the early internet, and much of the passion surrounding them, was confined to academic communities and amateur enthusiasts. Both these groups saw computers as contributing to the emancipation and democratization of information and knowledge (Turner 2004; Streeter 2011). A vital development was the rapid growth of the World Wide Web, which built on and embodied the principles of open-ness crucial to the development of the internet. As policy decisions paved the way for the opening up of digital networks beyond academic communities in the 1990s, the Web's open-ness inadvertently provided the basis for an increasing use of the internet for commercial ends (Keen 2015: 34–74). Not much later, mobile telephony systems reached a point where they began to operate in effect as networks of connected micro-computers.

At the turn of the century, digital networks had only just begun to have effects on the main communication media of the twentieth century, upon which the above account is based: television, radio, film/cinema, newspapers, magazines and musical recordings. Between 1990 and 2010, there was a frenzy of prophecies as commentators and analysts extrapolated futures, on the basis of what was at that time only just emerging. Many of the predictions were about how digital technologies would enable businesses to make profits more effectively – a strand of writing that continues to this day. But the legacy of understandings of computers as a basis for democratization of knowledge and information, meant that there was also considerable optimism about the impact of digital technologies on media and cultural production (see Mosco 2004).[2] The optimistic predictions had a 'performative' role, regardless of their accuracy or otherwise: they played a vital part in legitimating government, business and consumer decisions, by making the onset of digital networks in a particular form seem not only desirable, but inevitable. It is only now, nearly twenty years on, with digital networks as an embedded aspect of everyday life, that we can discuss what has actually happened, rather than what people thought might emerge from the confusion of constant innovation. I want to do so here by asking to what extent the major characteristics outlined in the previous section have really changed, and whether there has been any change that we might call 'democratization' in the sense outlined earlier, i.e. meaningful democratic control. I do so by analyzing four *outcomes* (or sets of outcomes) of digitalization: 1) challenges to the copyright system, and to the main ways in which media industries gain revenues; 2) the phenomenon of user-generated content and the degree to which it overturned the 'few-to-many' system outlined above; 3) the continuing power of corporations, and the rise of a new set of titans based on information technology; 4) a continuation of the few-to-many and blockbuster systems outlined above.

Outcome one: initial erosion of media industry revenues but limited challenge to copyright and labour systems

The costs of producing relatively high-quality images and sounds, at least in some media and genres, had already declined rapidly with the digitalization of production in the 1980s and 1990s. Key technologies included desk-top publishing, high-quality digital video and editing software, and computer-based music recording software that allowed musicians in certain genres to create 'bedroom studios'. From the early 2000s onwards, digital networks, now enhanced by third-generation mobile telephony, enabled not only cheaper production, but also relatively easy and inexpensive distribution, potentially on an international scale.

2. Among examples of those who, criticized such optimism from a more realistic position, see Mosco 2004. Until around 2010, the voices of pessimists were much less widely heard, and this in itself is revealing of the way that the digital was embraced and even fetishized in the early twenty-first century. See Curran, Fenton and Freedman (2016) for an excellent critical overview of many claims about the internet.

In these circumstances, it seemed possible, even probable, that digitalization was threatening the domination of media corporations that had marked the late twentieth century (see Characteristic 1 above). On the news and journalism side, it was frequently claimed that large news organizations would diminish in power, and that digital networks would bring about the rise of a wider and more diverse range of sources, including 'citizen media' (Rosen 2006; see also Anderson in this volume, on the early interest in blogging and in ventures such as Indymedia). The great English rock star David Bowie was by no means alone in predicting that 'the absolute transformation of everything we thought about music will take place in the next ten years', including the elimination of copyright and the rapid decline of record labels (Pareles 2002).

The first major developments took place in music, partly because music requires less digital capacity than many other cultural forms. Peer-to-peer file-sharing sites such as the first incarnation of Napster (1999–2001) were used primarily to share content that had been created professionally within the music industries system, rather than to share the work of amateurs and emerging professionals. Their main impact was to damage the artificial scarcity that sustained the sale of recordings to consumers (see Characteristic 2). Unsurprisingly, they met with a furious response from rights owners, especially the major music recording and publishing companies, whose clumsy efforts to control file-sharing through legal action against 'ordinary' downloaders and to develop systems that would limit copying led to them being treated even in mainstream media accounts either as doomed dinosaurs, or as vindictive defenders of their privilege and power, or both (Gillespie 2007; Morris 2015).

Many people felt that what happened in recorded music augured changes in other industries primarily dependent on sales of goods made artificially scarce through copyright controls, such as book publishing, games and feature films; and even television was worried, as the valuable secondary market of DVD sales began to be eroded. The amounts that could be charged for 'legal' (i.e., non-pirate) physical sales of artefacts plummeted from the artificially high levels that had sustained excessive profits for many years.

The most immediate impact of online distribution on media industries was on 'bricks and mortar' retailing, i.e., bookshops, record shops and so on, and the key player here was Amazon, which between 1995 and 2005 became the dominant international force (alongside eBay) in online shopping. Retailers selling records and books, or selling and renting games and videos, closed down across the world (Herbert 2014). Many of the people running these enterprises were completely uninterested in questions of cultural democratization, and record and book stores could be intimidating spaces for the uninitiated. But such shops, perhaps especially independents, operated as 'gathering places that allow people oriented to culture to meet and connect' (Timberg 2015: 64), providing an informal cultural education for generations of producers and audiences. What's more, this was a sector in which cooperative and independent ownership had sometimes thrived (see Fraser 1992: 67 on feminist bookstores as meeting places for 'subaltern counterpublics'). While many such shops struggle on, and some even manage to flourish, they have

often disappeared from places where they might be needed most – towns beyond the metropolitan cores (*The Economist* 2011).

From the early 2000s onwards, digitalization also began to have significant impacts on advertising revenues, and this had especially strong effects on newspapers and magazines. Many publications set up online sites, keen not to be left behind in the transition to digital, but often making their products freely available, and thereby damaging sales of their core product. What's more, these online versions of newspapers and magazines had to compete with new 'born digital' news sites and new cultural activities such as social media, for audiences' attention to information and entertainment. This also meant even more competition for declining advertising expenditure, especially as many of the new digital companies (especially Google in search, and Facebook in social media) claimed to be able to target audiences much more effectively as a result of their ability to collect huge amounts of data and to join up different datasets. Advertising expenditure on newspapers and periodicals fell from around 2006–07 onwards, as internet expenditure soared (Hesmondhalgh 2019: 303) and employment in newspapers fell rapidly in many countries, leading to discussion of a crisis in journalism and even 'the death of news' (Kamiya 2009; McChesney and Nichols 2010; see also C.W. Anderson and Michael Schudson's essays in this volume).

There is no doubt that digitalization had damaging effects on media-industry revenues and on the retail sector. But these effects hardly represented democratization. Although there was a certain freeing-up of the way in which people used copyrighted material, for example in phenomena such as mash-ups and memes, systems of copyright law and practice remained intact. The rise of digital streaming services (see also Outcome Four below) represents the main way in which the challenge of digitalization to such notions of intellectual property has been contained. In music, online music streaming services such as Spotify, Apple Music and those operated by China's Tencent represent the new core of global music business revenues, offering consumers instant availability of vast catalogues of music (tens of millions of tracks on the largest services), either for free, i.e., paid for on the basis of advertising, or for a monthly subscription fee. Similarly, in television, subscription video-on-demand (SVOD) streaming services, sometimes called 'over the top' services because they bypass the cable systems that dominate US television, have challenged the linear, scheduled viewing that dominated television even in the era of the digital video recorder (Holt and Sanson 2013). The content on such streaming services is abundant and convenient, available 'anytime, anywhere', at least where there is a wi-fi connection for those who can afford the relevant equipment and subscriptions. But in the era of streaming, the system of rights and ownership underpinning the media industries system are if anything more deeply embedded in technological systems (Gillespie 2007) and more removed from democratic debate than ever.

This also applies to the unjust and undemocratic systems of labour and compensation which are, as we saw in Characteristic 2 above, underpinned by copyright law and practice (as well as by general labour law and regulation, and by political and socio-cultural values regarding work). It is hard to see that

digitalization has had positive effects here; in fact digital labour in general is strongly associated with exploitation and poor working conditions. Undoubtedly a major factor here was the backlash against labour that gained ground with the electoral successes of the right-wing political parties (crucially supported by conservative media) in the 1980s and 1990s, and of a centre-left no longer committed to the democratization of labour or to justice in working lives. This meant that during the period in which the IT industries exploded, from the 1990s onwards, there was an increasing expectation or assumption that young workers should have to suffer very challenging working conditions (long hours on poor pay, with constantly changing demands), including prolonged and often unpaid internships, and multiple temporary jobs. Such working conditions in fact prevailed in *artistic* labour markets for decades before digitalization (Menger 2006) and the influence of the more glamorous and expanding IT sector (Neff 2012) seems only to have made things worse in artistic labour markets and in the media industries with which they are partly intertwined (Hesmondhalgh 2019: 350–71).

Even hopeful developments such as crowdfunding often lead to misunderstandings between audiences and producers, and to self-exploitation on the part of the latter (Powers 2015). But the issues concerning the new digital culture in which many of us now live are not just a matter of quality of working life. Digital culture also involves the way that 'users', in return for an admittedly convenient abundance of entertainment and information on many subjects, are required to devote enormous amounts of time and energy to learning systems, and to updating apps and profiles, in order to keep up with the social competition of modern societies. But might societies be over-valuing convenience at the expense of other good things?

Outcome two: the rise of 'user-generated content'

Although 'pirate' sites have continued to play a significant role in current media systems, more lastingly important in terms of claims about democratization was the way in which digital networks seemed to afford the opportunity for non-professionals to have their voice heard beyond small and immediate circles of friends and acquaintances, thus supposedly threatening Characteristic 3 of twentieth-century media industries above (media production by the few, not the many). In this respect, blogging was a particularly notable phenomenon in the early 2000s, helping to fuel digital-optimist claims about the erosion of distinctions between amateur and professionals, producers and consumers (e.g., Bruns 2008 on the concept of 'produsage',) but also more thoughtful accounts of how the media presence of amateurs on a huge scale threatened traditional notions of journalism as a profession (e.g., Shirky 2008). Even more significant was the onset of 'Web 2.0' sites that allowed uploading, labelling and sharing of content produced by amateurs and non-professionals. For example, three globally important sites that grew rapidly in the first years of the century were Flickr, for sharing photographs, YouTube for sharing video, and Myspace for sharing just about anything. A term widely used at the time for the rising phenomenon of users uploading content that they had created themselves to

such platforms was 'user-generated content' or UGC. When the phenomenon of 'crowdfunding' emerged around 2007–08, along with specialist web-based funding sites such as Kickstarter, it was embraced by small and semi-professional cultural producers (and by digital optimists) as a potential way of bypassing established media businesses, and weakening the grip of media-industry gatekeepers (a key feature of Characteristic 3) (Scott 2015). UGC sites continued to proliferate, even in the midst of financial crisis and austerity policies, including music sites such as SoundCloud, launched in Berlin in 2007, which hosts a vast array of musical and sound content, with special strengths in electronic dance music and hip hop.

There can be little doubt that for those relatively privileged consumers who had access to the new digital networks, the developments just outlined rapidly led to greater choice, abundance and (that word again) convenience, including the availability of many products for 'free'. Some would interpret this as a kind of democratization, as a spreading and multiplication of voices, but to do so would be to ignore concentrations of power and attention, and fails to get at the crucial question of democratic *control*. Even the seeming 'free-ness' of such services often reflected a business model based on sustaining huge initial losses via massive financing, in order to later reap the rewards of market dominance, as was the case with YouTube and indeed many of the 'pirate' sites. Such abundance for better-off audiences did not equate to democratization. Nor did it fundamentally change the major characteristics of media industries in the twenty-first century, outlined above. We can see this by scrutinizing a major aspect of Characteristic 1 above – the presence of corporations in the cultural sphere.

Outcome three: continuing power of corporations – including a new set of IT giants

Rather than unshackle media industries from the control of corporations, digitalization meant that the multinational media corporations that had for some decades (especially since the 1980s) dominated the production and distribution of culture in industrialized countries have now been joined by a new set of corporations from the IT industries. These corporations rapidly grew as vast financing rushed towards digital from the 1990s onwards, especially after they recovered from the bursting of the 'dot-com' bubble in 2000–01. The idea that the rising world of IT start-ups would be a major threat to corporate control soon evaporated. A critical moment was 2005–06, when the UGC sites referred to above were all acquired by vast IT or media corporations: Yahoo bought Flickr, Google bought YouTube and News Corporation bought Myspace. Flickr and Myspace declined rapidly as the social media giants Facebook, Twitter and Instagram grew, and absorbed many of the functions of those early social networks, supported by enormous amounts of financing and eventually advertising. This also resulted in the decline of many more local or national rather than global UGC sites that were popular before Facebook. Crucially, these corporations benefited from an extraordinary lack of democratic oversight and regulation – a product of the neo-liberal flavour of the times, and awe on the part of governments at the economic potential of the IT industry.

The best known of the new IT giants are of course Google, Amazon, Facebook and Apple, the famous GAFA tech oligopoly, sometimes including Microsoft to make up GAFAM. These companies are extremely diverse, to the point where some commentators understandably question whether there is value in the concept of GAFA(M) at all. It certainly is essential to look beyond these four or five corporations when understanding the new and expanding role of IT businesses in media industries. But the giants of GAFA do have something important in common: their massive, visible and branded presence in people's everyday acts of computer-mediated communication, as opposed to IT corporations such as Intel (who make chips) or Palantir (data analytics), whose presence is less immediately evident in everyday life. They are also supplemented by the vast Chinese corporations that operate behind, and increasingly beyond, the digital 'Great Firewall of China'.

The GAFA corporations, and the IT sector in general, were crucially involved in the unfolding of digitalization in the second decade of the twenty first century. The further developments they have played a major part in bringing about make it clear that hopes that digitalization would lead to media democratization did not transpire. Again, recorded music was in the vanguard of change. In the wake of the crisis in that industry, Apple, which had established itself as a major player in music with the launch of the iPod in 2001, began to work closely with the major record companies to develop a site for selling 'legal' digital files of music and to some extent video, via its iTunes site. In fact, the iTunes era proved to be rather short-lived, because Apple made a much more lasting intervention in cultural distribution via the launch of its iPhone in 2007 and of the App Store in 2008, the latter of which made third party software easily available to 'early adopter' consumers. Combined with an equivalent venture by Google for its Android platform (eventually known as Google Play) that soon followed, Apple's app store provided a chance for various emerging IT companies to gain access to the new world of digitally-networked devices, including smartphones, tablets and laptops, and eventually smart TVs.

It is in the context of the rise of streaming services (see Outcome 1 above) that we see most clearly the way in which media digitalization has opened the way for IT corporations to collaborate and/or compete with media corporations. Outside the Chinese market, Apple and Spotify currently dominate music streaming. It is difficult to equate their extraordinary global presence in this new crucial arena of music-industry activity with democratization, in fact their operations are extremely opaque, the subject of endless speculation on the part of musicians, audiences and other music businesses, including controversies over rates of payment (Marshall 2015).

From 2010 onwards, Netflix and Amazon Prime, both of them essentially IT companies, rapidly became dominant forces in video streaming internationally, supplemented by online streaming services established by media companies such as HBO; Disney and Apple are set to join them as I write in 2018. In the television industry in many countries, on-demand streaming represents a threat to previously dominant cable and satellite companies, and to free-to-air 'broadcasters', including

the public service media that have generally served the public interest well in many countries (Evens and Donders 2018). Importantly, the IT corporations are now very heavily involved in the commissioning of content – Netflix led the way in this respect, and other, bigger tech companies (notably Amazon and now Apple) have followed. The vast resources being poured into television as IT and media corporations jockey for advantage has led to a proliferation of expensive audio-visual 'television-like' programming that some have referred to as 'peak TV' (Press 2018). Once again, though, we should not confuse financial resources and abundance with genuine diversity and a socially just media system. The IT corporations are set to become the major players in the digitalized media-industries ecology, and this is not a matter of democratization.

Outcome four: continuation of the blockbuster and few-to-many system

The profusion of music, television and film enabled by digitalization and streaming may be considered a blessing, especially for highly educated audiences, and as the number of corporations involved in music and television has grown to include IT companies as well as media corporations, some economists have interpreted this as increased competition (see Noam 2016 for a comprehensive examination of such issues). But even if this is the case, does it represent democratization? Admittedly, in relation to Characteristic 3 (media production by the few not the many), more people than ever before can now share cultural products that they have been involved in creating, for example in the form of blogs, vlogs and social media postings. Sometimes such products can be circulated internationally. Are we now in a many to many media system, rather than the few-to-many system of the twentieth century? Is this threatening the blockbuster syndrome that sustains corporate domination and international inequality (Characteristic 4)?

The concept of 'the long tail' allows us to consider evidence about such questions. This was journalist and author Chris Anderson's idea that media and the media industries (and indeed modern economies in general) were moving away from a situation whereby hits generate most of the attention and profit (cf. Characteristic 3) towards one where millions of niche markets add up to a market that matches or exceeds that of the hits, partly because of the ability of online digital services to provide immense catalogues (Anderson 2006). But studies have shown that on digital retail sites (such as iTunes, nearly defunct as of 2018), most music available digitally was not purchased at all, and that on streaming sites, most music remains more or less unheard; big hits remain the source of the vast majority of income (Page and Garland 2009; Elberse 2014). Digital music streaming platforms contain vast catalogues, but much of the material remains unaccessed, for the simple reason (presumably) that people don't know it's there. For example, Spotify reported in 2013 that 20 per cent of its 20 million track catalogue had never been accessed (Epstein 2017). What's more, the blockbuster syndrome remains alive and well (Elberse 2014), partly because firms need to spend more money than ever on marketing in order to break through the clutter of abundance to make their products known. Those corporations that can spend that money are set to maintain

dominance, though in a context of much greater corporate rivalry than in previous years. For example, just fourteen Disney films accounted for one-fifth of global film revenue in 2016 (Epstein 2017).

Some would claim in response that some aspects of digital networks have led to some democratization in Characteristic 3, because a greater number of creators are now able to bypass media industry gatekeepers, and break through from anonymity to success and fame. For example, it is common to read and hear about musical acts breaking through into the mainstream media industries via YouTube, such as Canadian pop superstar Justin Bieber. It would be a mistake to confuse such mobility with democratization. Bieber's manager, Scooter Braun, discovered him while searching YouTube for another artist. At the time, Bieber 'had only 'six or eight' videos on his account, with a few thousand views each' (Herrera 2010). The ambitious Braun had experience at a fairly high level in music industry marketing and once Bieber and his mother moved to Atlanta to join him, Bieber was soon signed to a major record label, Island-DefJam (part of Universal, the world's biggest record company). In effect, YouTube (and less prominent sites such as SoundCloud) now operate as online versions of the kinds of informal and semi-professional economies from which creators and artists have for a long time emerged. It is true that social media and UGC sites such as YouTube have paved the way for new modes of celebrity such as beauty vloggers and gaming commentators, who establish their reputations on the basis of constructing a sense of authenticity and an ability to form a relationship of trust and intimacy with their viewers. But in order to reach beyond a rather small community, such celebrities are absorbed into institutions that pursue PR, promotion and branding, and when knowledge of this leaks out to fans, this can threaten the sense of authenticity that has been so carefully constructed (Jerslev 2016). Audiences are increasingly savvy about how this works, but such savviness hardly seems to undermine the existing system.

Conclusions: Reasons for concern, reasons for hope

I have shown that the hopes invested in digitalization as a means of media democratization have generally not been realized. Perhaps this was always a case of optimistic commentators investing too much hope in technology, and failing to engage with all the other economic, political and cultural factors that might be at work. And with the developments outlined above, new problems and new concerns have arisen. One particular area of increasing disquiet is the way in which powerful corporations can make use of data, and related issues of surveillance (Andrejevic 2007; van Dijck 2014; see also Alison Powell's contribution to this volume). Not all uses of data by organizations and businesses are equally problematic (see Kennedy 2016). However, entering into the new digital media eco-system now regularly involves submitting information about oneself to the most powerful data-gathering forces on the planet. The actual and potential power of IT corporations to harness and analyze data is extremely opaque. There has been extraordinarily little

democratic regulation of it, though this is beginning to change (for example, with the European Union's 2016 General Data Protection Regulation, implemented in 2018). Yet some digital optimists treat the gathering and analysis of data as if its main function is to allow companies such as Netflix to serve customers better through the refinement of algorithmic systems (Smith and Telang 2016). It is hard to assess this notion of a trade-off of privacy for convenient abundance, partly because there needs to be much greater social debate about what 'serving customers well' might actually mean, and also because the ability of companies such as Netflix to use data as a basis for programming decisions is often celebrated, but rarely specified. Another concern is the degree to which it is even possible to opt out of the new digital systems of communication and culture (Mejias 2013). And I have already discussed above the worrying implications for work, for how we spend our time, and for quality of life.

A couple of cynical friends, when I told them the title of this chapter, commented that the chapter could be kept much shorter by simply typing the word 'no'. Their humorous implication was that intelligent people now recognize that the dream of digital democratization was a sad delusion. But the effects of digital networks should not be understood entirely as a matter of corporate capture and commercialization, undermining any hopes of democratization. Wikipedia is not perfect (see Ford and Wajcman 2017 on its problematic gender politics) but it has been a rare example of a UGC site where the ideals of the computing cultures of academics and enthusiasts held firm: rather than take advertising, it adopted a non-profit model based on donations. What's more, the crisis in journalism has led to a proliferation of new ways in which journalism that serves the public interest and the common good might be funded (Konieczna 2018).

We need also to recognize the cultural complexity of YouTube and other 'corporate' digital platforms, and avoid over-reacting against naïve digital optimism by implying that our understanding of the digital realm can be reduced to corporate ownership. As a valuable book on YouTube points out (Burgess and Green 2018: vii, 151), participatory culture remains YouTube's core business, founded on 'cultural logics of community, openness, and authenticity'. YouTube is a vast hybrid platform, combining all kinds of amateur and professional content. Arguably it has been the main force in developing a new cultural mode, 'social media entertainment', which some analysts consider to be more varied and diverse than corporate media.

Cunningham and Craig (2019), for example, argue that Asian American and LGBTQ creators have greater visibility and influence in this emergent industry than in mainstream television. It is possible for disempowered groups and communities – some of them with relatively democratic ways of conducting their business – to make use of web television to seek audiences, bypassing the control of 'legacy' television, as Aymar Jean Christian (2018) recounts in a recent book. In this volume, Punathambekar and Mohan show how YouTube has become a space where programming in the 'regional' languages of India has been used to challenge the hegemony of Hindi and English in that country.

Yet even taking into account such examples, there are limitations in how YouTube and other UGC platforms can be understood as a democratization of the

production and consumption of media and culture. As Burgess and Green (2018: 151) recognize, cultural logics of community and open-ness on YouTube are in tension with corporate logics. Advertising abounds on the platform, and participatory culture itself now means something very different from what it did in 2005, in a world where the effects of social media on sociality and democracy are widely seen as at best troubling, and at worst dangerous.

There is no doubt that digitalization has offered abundance, convenience and mobility of information and entertainment. An urgent question facing students and researchers of media and culture is whether that should be at the expense of democratic oversight of, and social justice within, culture and communication. As more and more people become aware of the downsides of seductive systems of digital media, the case for greater democratic control of, or oversight of, the media industries and related tech industries grows stronger. What forms such democratization might take must be the subject of other essays, other books, hopefully building on some of the earlier research on democratization cited above (e.g., Downing 2000). Marketized media do not per se guarantee media freedoms any more than state-owned media (see Baker 2002). Of course, some would argue that any significant change is impossible, that the nature of the capitalist system is so entrenched that democratization in the sense that I've used it here simply cannot happen. But my view is that we should not give up on the idea that it is possible or desirable for citizens to exercise much greater control over modern economic, political, technological and other systems, in spite of their complexity and the undoubted difficulties of collective decision-making. To give up on such collective deliberation is to abandon something vital about how people might live together. Only by challenging the main ways in which media industries are owned and controlled are we likely to see a major improvement in how they represent and mediate the world, and we cannot now go back to the twentieth-century system. We need new democratic media systems for a digital age.

References

Anderson, C. (2006), *The Long Tail*, New York: Hyperion.

Andrejevic, M. (2007), *ISpy: Surveillance and Power in the Interactive ErA*, Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas.

Baker, C. E. (2002), *Media, Markets, and Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Brecht (1978/1932), 'Radio as an Apparatus of Communication', in J. Willett (ed.), *Brecht on Theatre*. London: Methuen.

Bruns, A. (2008), *Blogs, Wikipedia, Second Life and Beyond*, New York: Peter Lang.

Burgess, J. and J. Green (2018), *YouTube*, Malden/Cambridge, MA: Polity.

Campbell-Kelly, M. and W. Aspray (2004), *Computer*, Oxford: Westview Press.

Christian, A. J. (2018), *Open TV*, New York: New York University Press.

Christiano, T. (2018), 'Democracy', *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.* [Online. Accessed 25 September 2018] https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/democracy/

Cunningham, S. and D. Craig (2019), *Social Media Entertainment*, New York: NYU Press.

Curran, J., N. Fenton and D. Freedman (2016), *Misunderstanding the Internet*, 2nd edn, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Denning, M. (2015), *Noise Uprising*, London: Verso Books.

Downing, J. (2000), *Radical Media,* London: SAGE Publications.

de Sola Pool, I. (1983), *Technologies of Freedom*, Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Elberse, A. (2014), *Blockbusters*, New York: Henry Holt and Co.

Epstein, G. (2017), 'Mass Entertainment in the Digital Age is still about Blockbusters, not Endless Choice'. [Online. Accessed 18 September 2018.] Retrieved from https://www.economist.com/special-report/2017/02/11/mass-entertainment-in-the-digital-age-is-still-about-blockbusters-not-endless-choice

Evens, T. and K. Donders (2018), *Platform Power and Policy in Transforming Television Markets*, London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Ford, H. and J. Wacjman (2017), 'Anyone Can Edit', Not Everyone Does', *Social Studies of Science*, 47(4):511–27.

Fraser, N. (1992), 'Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy', in C. Calhuon (ed.), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, 109–42, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Garnham, N. (2005), 'The Information Society Debate Revisited', in J. Curran and M. Gurevitch (eds), *Mass Media and Society*, 4th edn, 287–302, London: Hodder Education.

Gillespie, T. (2007), *Wired Shut*, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Grant, P. S. and C. Wood (2004), *Blockbusters and Trade Wars*, Vancouver, BC: Douglas & McIntyre.

Herbert, D. (2014), *Videoland: Movie Culture at the American Video Store*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Herrera, M. (2010), 'Justin Bieber: The Billboard Cover Story'. [Online. Accessed 18 September 2018.] Retrieved from https://www.billboard.com/articles/news/959001/justin-bieber-the-billboard-cover-story

Hesmondhalgh, D. (2019), *The Cultural Industries*, 4th edn, London: SAGE Publications.

Holt, J. and K. Sanson (eds) (2013), *Connected Viewing*, London: Routledge.

Jerslev, A. (2016), 'In the Time of the Microcelebrity: Celebrification and the YouTuber Zoella', *International Journal of Communication*, 10: 5233–52.

Kamiya, G. (2009), 'The Death of the News'. [Online. Accessed 18 September 2018.] Retrieved from https://www.salon.com/2009/02/17/newspapers_2/

Keen, A. (2015), *The Internet is Not the Answer*, London: Atlantic Books.

Kennedy, H. (2016), *Post, Mine, Repeat*, London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Konieczna, M. (2018), *Journalism without Profit*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Leadbeater, C. and P. Miller (2004), *The Pro-Am Revolution*, London: Demos.

Lessig, L. (2002), *The Future of Ideas*, New York: Random House.

Marshall, L. (2015), '"Let's Keep Music Special. F–– Spotify": On-demand Streaming and the Controversy Over Artist Royalties', *Creative Industries Journal*, 8 (2): 177–89.

McChesney, R. W. and J. Nichols (2010), *The Death and Life of American Journalism*, Philadelphia, PA: Nation Books.

Mejias, U. A. (2013), *Off the Network*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Menger, P.-M. (2006), 'Artistic Labor Markets: Contingent Work, Excess Supply and Occupational Risk Management', in V. Ginsburgh and D. Throsby (eds), *Handbook of the Economics of Art and Culture*, 765–812, Oxford: Elsevier.

Morris, J. W. (2015), *Selling Digital Music, Formatting Culture*, Oakland, CA: University of California Press.

Mosco, V. (2004), *The Digital Sublime*, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Neff, G. (2012), *Venture Labor*, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Noam, E. M. (2016), *Who Owns the World's Media?* Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

Page, W. and E. Garland (2009), *The Long Tail of P2P*, London: PRS for Music.

Pareles, J. (2002), 'David Bowie, 21st-Century Entrepreneur'. [Online. Accessed 18 September 2018.] Retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com/2002/06/09/arts/david-bowie-21st-century-entrepreneur.html

Peters, J. D. (1999), *Speaking into the Air*, Chicago University of Chicago Press.

Powers, D. (2015), 'Intermediaries and Intermediation', in A. Bennett and S. Waksman (eds), *The SAGE Handbook of Popular Music*, 120–34, London: SAGE Publications.

Press, J. (2018), 'Peak TV Is Still Drowning Us in Content, Says TV Prophet John Landgraf'. [Online. Accessed 18 September 2018.] Retrieved from https://www.vanityfair.com/hollywood/2018/08/peak-tv-fx-john-landgraf-tca-donald-glover-chris-rock

Rosen, J. (2006), 'The People Formerly Known as the Audience'. [Online. Accessed 26 June 2018]. Retrieved from http://archive.pressthink.org/2006/06/27/ppl_frmr.html

Scott, S. (2015), 'The Moral Economy of Crowdfunding and the Transformative Capacity of Fanancing', *New Media & Society*, 17 (2): 167–82.

Shirky, C. (2008), *Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing Without Organizations*, London: Penguin.

Smith, M. D. and R. Telang (2016), *Streaming, Sharing, Stealing*, Cambridge: The MIT Press.

Streeter, T. (2011), *The Net Effect*, New York: New York University Press.

The Economist (2011), 'American Bookshops in Decline: Beyond Borders'. [Online. Accessed 18 September 2018.] Retrieved from https://www.economist.com/prospero/2011/03/21/beyond-borders

Timberg, S. (2015), *Culture Crash*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Turner, F. (2004), *From Counterculture to Cyberculture*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Turner, G. (2010), *Ordinary People and the Media*, London: SAGE Publications.

van Dijck, J. (2014), 'Datafication, Dataism and Dataveillance: Big Data Between Scientific Paradigm and Ideology', *Surveillance & Society*, 12 (2): 197–208.

Williams, R. (1968), *Communications*, Harmondsworth: Pelican.

Williams, R. (1981), *Culture*, London: Fontana.

Chapter 7

THE MEDIATIONS OF DATA

Alison Powell

From 'big data' to 'data-driven decision making', we often hear claims about how data are reshaping our world. The process of datafication – rendering areas of life that were previously unmediated into streams of digital data – is now a recognized phenomenon that many people believe is transforming economic, social and cultural life. This chapter argues that datafication is a form of mediation (a concept I define below). This means we can look at it in terms of the dialectical relationships between technological change and social interpretations of what and how things might become meaningful. Experiences of the world don't 'become data' by themselves or automatically. Technical processes of data collection need to be set up, and the data needs to be considered valuable or important enough to collect. At the same time, ideas unfold about how or in which ways 'big' or 'small' data provide different ways to understand the world, which influence how institutions organize data collection and take advantage of what data analysis makes possible. This chapter introduces data and datafication, provides an outline of the concept of mediation, and then examines how data systems illustrate processes of mediation, reflecting as well as rebuilding social and cultural values and political-economic power structures.

Understanding data as traces

While some might think of data as 'numbers', it might be better to think of them in the contemporary context as 'traces' – of relationships, locations, attention or engagements. In the digital space, this might include records of visits to websites, clicks, 'likes', up-votes or down-votes, time spent watching a video or the links that one shares or likes. It might also include information about one's social network: connections to other people as 'friends' or 'followers', number of likes or shares of a particular link. Collecting these traces means building systems that store these traces in databases. The rationale for the companies and governments who carry out this kind of data collection (or 'data mining') is that it can provide new insights into the social world that are valuable for commercial or public purposes.

Relationships, likes, clicks, posts and movement around the Web build up large repositories of traces that illustrate how people spend their time, what they like and who they are connected to. José van Dijck (2014) describes all of this as part of an ecosystem of digital data tracking, where personal data are combined, shared and moved across digital space.

The idea of 'big data' can also be understood from this perspective. This buzzword is most productively understood as referring to a qualitative change in the *volume, velocity* and *variety* of data being produced (Mayer-Schönberger and Cukier 2013). It is often used in relation to the supposed economic potential of data – but in fact there is nothing magical about these Vs in and of themselves – the value of greater amounts of data depend on the systems and frameworks already being in place to gather, store and interpret it. So the traces and the ecosystem that has evolved to manage them are more significant than 'volume, velocity and variety' on their own.

Many people have become accustomed to the idea that these traces influence what kind of things we see or read online, whom we might meet or chat with through a social app, or, in some places, whether we will be able to travel, get credit for a purchase or achieve a certain professional position. These concerns turn around the idea that data traces produced as a result of our actions, or about us without our consent, might create impacts that are unjust, unfair or socially distorting (Gangadharan 2012). The production of these traces, though, and their connections to power relations, economic structures and social shifts are currently being scrutinized via the concept of *datafication*.

Datafication

Datafication is the process of transforming more of the world into digital data, permitting at least two things. The first is quantification. This refers to the transformation of experiences into numbers, and the use of numbers where before other kinds of interpretation might be used. For example, measuring the significance of a news story in relation to a number of 'likes' quantifies what might otherwise have been a qualitative interpretation of its significance. Likewise, a bar graph recording hours of sleep on an app represents a quantification of sleep time, which might otherwise have been described in terms of bodily experience or self-perception. Technological advances in sensor systems that can be embedded in fitness trackers or mobile phones mean that it's possible to have these experiences re-presented as graphs, charts and numbers provided by the numerical measurements accumulated by sensors. In the case of online media, the numerical measures might be of the number of likes of any post or page over a period of time, and they might be combined with measures of other kinds of data such as location data, past search results, or demographic and social network data drawn from social media sites.

The second is real-time analysis. Digital data can be collected and analyzed in real time, so that things like responses to online content are immediately used by

online platforms to determine what content is receiving attention. This is what configures which stories come next in a social media feed – and it also makes it possible for online media companies to experiment with real-time testing (sometimes called A/B testing) to see which version of a website gets the most attention. A/B testing means that two different people looking at the same site at the same time might see different versions of it – and the real-time data on where they click, how long they stay on the site and what they look at can be used by the sites' creator.

Proponents see datafication as permitting an expansion of understanding and analysis (Mayer-Schönberger and Cukier 2013). This raises questions about whether it is legitimate to appeal to quantifiable measures to 'access, understand and monitor people's behavior' (van Dijck 2014) and whether beginning to use these measures renders features of life more *objectively* evident. If so, what kind of consequences would this objective state have? To address these questions, I propose understanding datafication as a form of *mediation* – a way that technological and social processes structure and influence our ability to communicate and make meaning of our world. Analyzing datafication in this way allows us to step away from the tempting prospect of seeing these processes as fundamentally different to, or disruptive of, other mediating processes. Equally though, it allows us to employ some well-established critical perspectives to examine the political-economic and social impact of datafication processes. This chapter introduces datafication and shows how mediation provides ways to understand its economic, political and cultural implications. The chapter concludes by reflecting on other ways to think about datafication and about mediation.

Datafication as mediation

We can understand datafication as an instance of mediation. Mediation is the fact of having our experience of the world shaped by the tools and institutions that manage our ability to communicate and the interpretations we can make. I understand it here as 'a component of social communication, but an increasingly central one; it also presumes that the 'real reality of the mass media [is] the communications that go through them" (Luhmann 2000: 3, cited in Silverstone 2005: 190). This means that mediation implies both a concern for how communication is made possible and how messages and their meanings get to us, and are able to be interpreted.

Mediation allows us to examine the economic, social and cultural aspects of datafication. Compared to the concept of representation, which looks at how messages are presented and interpreted, mediation focuses on the sociomaterial space where messages about, and experience of the world, are produced.

Mediation developed as a concept in the 1990s, at first as a way of bridging gaps in the media and communications field between studies of interpersonal and mass media, and subsequently to connect with studies of the ways that technologies and their social contexts and uses are co-created. Early in the history of media

and communications there was an implied separation between the process of communication as it might take place face-to-face (which was often called 'interpersonal' communication), and studies of propaganda, persuasion and other forms of 'mass' media (Lievrouw 2009). With the technological changes that came from the massive expansion of first 'computer-mediated' communication and then 'perpetual connectivity' the concept of mediation appeared to provide a way to explain how the capacities of new technologies mix together modes of communication that scholars used to think of as separate, as well as the fact that communication technology is part of our everyday life. This last point, described by Silverstone as 'domestication', stresses that every new way of communicating gets folded into the cultures, practices, and ways of acting that we perform from day to day, and that this in turn influences the future development of technologies. Dating apps do change dating, for example, but there is also potential for apps to present pictures and log preference based on how we interact with them put records of our previous swipes in the middle of the dating process – and that these new considerations then change how apps might be designed in future.

When mediation first took hold as a concept, scholars worried that it might simply describe that 'the media mediate', comparing this perspective to the older 'media effects' research that ascribed more power to media and assumed that people were primarily passive audiences who would absorb these 'pre-set' mediated versions of reality (Lievrouw 2009). Different threads of the theory emerged: Joshua Meyrowitz's book *No Sense of Place* (1986) used the 'medium theory' approach from Canadian communication theorists Harold Innis and Marshall McLuhan to draw out how the particular qualities of television shift the experience of 'places' – both locations and the cultural practices that are performed there. In this understanding of mediation, social relations shift as the result of different technological capacities provided by new communication technologies – and these capacities appear to transform, in Meyrowitz's example, how we relate to each other in public places.

Although these changes appear to be significant, other scholars think about them as stemming from a different source – the interconnection between social practice and technological change. Scholars like Raymond Williams (2004) connect concerns about technological change with a profound respect for and curiosity about how we make meaning in our lives. Pablo Boczkowski and Leah Lievrow (2008) built on these ideas and connected them to scholarship in Science and Technology Studies (STS) that examines the social processes through which technologies are built and subsequently influence society through 'mutual shaping'. As Leah Lievrouw writes, 'the mutual-shaping perspective from STS has become a core concept in new media studies. It holds that society and technology are co-determining and articulated in the ongoing engagement between people's everyday practices and the constraints and affordances of material infrastructure (e.g., Boczkowski 2004; Jouet 1994)' (2009: 310).

This perspective on mediation shows why it is helpful for understanding substantive changes to the communicational world such as the move towards datafication.

Consider Roger Silverstone's (2005) definition of mediation. He writes: 'mediation is a fundamentally dialectical notion which requires us to address the processes of communication as both institutionally and technologically driven and embedded. Mediation, as a result, requires us to understand how processes of communication change the social and cultural environments that support them as well as the relationships that participants, both individual and institutional, have to that environment and to each other' (2005: 189).

Let's unpack this definition in relation to the process of datafication. Already, the process of rendering human life through and in relation to data is clearly both institutionally and technologically driven, and already it is possible to see that data, like other forms of media, need to be understood 'at the conjunction of the economic, political and symbolic' (Thompson 1995: 170). Being able to measure our sleep using an app or smartwatch or click a button to have our response to a news article recorded and responded to in real time shape our capacity to understand our bodies and our social worlds in different ways. In order for these capacities to come to us, institutions need to play a role. Facebook, for example, measures attention to its platform through our 'likes', and has extended its model of social media buttons across the entire web (Gerlitz and Helmond 2013). By instituting 'like' buttons as a means of commenting, Facebook and other platforms transform interest in a particular post into a numerical metric measuring interest and integrated into sophisticated systems of attention monitoring across the Web. The commercial logic of transforming 'likes' into data doesn't work without social practices – 'liking' also becomes a way to understand relationships and to determine what is valuable or important. Taina Bucher (2012) describes how references to 'likes' turn up in other media and create forms of cultural legitimacy. Other scholars have noticed that datafication has influenced a range of social spaces, including professional encounters (such as LinkedIn; see van Dijck 2014), loose 'follower' relationships (Twitter; Kwak et al. 2010) and amateur video production (YouTube; Ding et al. 2011). These platforms all transform what previously were processes of human connection or attention into collections of data traces, often mere numerical measures.

Mediatization?

Looking at the changes to processes of mediation in relation to data starts to show how mediation has social, political and economic aspects. There are still some questions about whether this is the best way of describing how things 'get in between' messages and their audiences or people and their experiences. In 2009 Sonia Livingstone speculated on 'the mediation of everything' and tried to describe the centrality of this concept. Her understanding of mediation as processes and dynamics that get 'in between' and are the modes through which meaning is created allow us to examine changing dynamics including datafication. These may be very appropriate for situational and structural changes to the nature of our mediated world, such as the shift towards data, but they may not be as appropriate

to describe the broad historical shifts that place us in the situation where more and more of what we experience appears to be oriented towards communicational ends. She writes 'for a growing body of European theorists . . . "mediation" is too broad a term, referring not only to the socially constitutive importance of media but also to other mediations – transport, money, narrative, and, the paradigmatic case, language' (2009: x). She points to a new term – and a new research programme (Livingstone and Lunt, 2014) – that might examine *mediatization* instead (see also Cushion's essay in this volume). This programme could examine and query to what extent the idea of mediation as a central feature of modernity might be compared with other broad historical forces of modernity like globalization or industrialization.

In Livingstone's problematization of the idea of mediation and the beginnings of her musing on mediatization, she wonders about how 'mediated communication is subordinated to, shaped by, the inexorable logic of global capitalism – commodification, standardization, privatization, co-option, surveillance, and the rest'. These are of course aspects of the process of datafication too. The aim here is not to overstate the influence of datafication and place it on the level of these meta-processes, but to see how they unfold within the mediating processes that datafication brings.

Data and the 'double articulation' of mediation

Silverstone wrote that mediation creates a 'double articulation' (2006) where media are both commodities as well as mechanisms, tools, sites of presences that provide the stories and experiences that shape our lives and experience. Commodities are materials that generate value in exchange in a market – things bought and sold, whose value can be exploited. In Silverstone's terms, this means that stories and narratives in the media are things we can buy and sell, as well as messages that might mean things for us. This insight is helpful to keep in mind as we try to understand datafication. Once data is collected about everything that happens in our informational world, it's no longer only the case that we 'buy' media stories to entertain or inform ourselves, but that we 'pay' with the data collected about how long we are watching, where we are, and what we have seen before, in ways that can be analyzed at levels of precision and for the purposes of predicting future actions.

Together, our attention is commodified in ways that can be sold to advertisers (for a classic discussion of this, see Smythe 1981 (2001)). For example, data from mobile devices provides a set of information about where we are that permits location – in real time – to be a factor that can be considered as part of a consumer profile. Data is captured by mobile providers who either use it within their own companies or sell it as part of bundles of personal data. Big data about customers is more valuable to advertisers if it has more information from more sources, which legitimates a constant expansion of data collection. In addition, under conditions of massive data collection or datafication, there are far more complex mechanisms that mean our attention can be commodified individually – and that

audience commodities are not only valuable in terms of measurement of present attention, but in terms of the prediction and shaping of future attention. This changes the 'double articulation' that Silverstone proposed. It focuses more on the personalization of media, but also on the fact that collections of data traces can become very valuable when they are used to train automated systems to predict future behaviour. This raises the possibility of much tighter connections between what has been recorded about us and what we are expected to do in future. This normalizes observation of many parts of life (surveillance, as I discuss below) and transforms traces and observations into commodities that can be bought, sold and traded.

Information about individuals can be commodified through the collection and presentation of data about them as individuals and as entries in 'big data' databases. As Balka and Star (2016) describe it, information systems produce 'shadow bodies' by emphasizing some aspects of their subjects and overlooking others. 'These shadow bodies persist and proliferate through information systems, and [there is] slippage between the anticipated user and the user themselves that they represent' (Gillespie 2014: n.p). So for example, data tracking on mobile phones might create a profile of an individual based on which parts of a store she lingered in, building up a profile of what merchandise she might want to buy. This information profile is both highly personal and not very specific, since it doesn't say anything about the person's experience of her movement through the shop. This brings out some of the qualities, and political problems, of mediation. First, the 'shadow bodies' being presented as a result of data collection and analysis are based on the data that it is possible, desirable, or commercially interesting to collect, rather than the things that might fully represent us. This is of course a way that these systems mediate – get in between – people and their experience of the world. Second, the 'data bodies' are commodities. Lumped together, they can be bought, sold and traded as stores of value that companies can analyze to understand how best to market future offerings. Thinking of these two things together, we can see that data traces representing attention to particular kinds of media content (from people with particular consumer preferences) might generate commercial decisions about producing more of that content, and less of other types. Or they might intensify the view that people's consumer preferences, as inferred from past data collected about them, are more significant than people's right to be informed or ability to communicate freely about what matters.

For example, let's look at how Netflix has used data to decide what kinds of shows to produce. This example shows how the personalization of content is presented as a desirable good, how this depends on detailed surveillance of people's media use, and how this impacts culture. Netflix collects data including when people stop and start viewing programmes, what time of day they view, and what they view before and after a particular show. Specific viewing patterns, including when people stop and start watching shows and how they respond to prediction, may therefore be able to be used to determine how plots unfold and which kinds of shows go into development. This data-based mode of cultural creation may influence how culture is understood – the other side of the double articulation.

Investigating the early phases of Netflix's data-based development process, which included a contest promising a prize to data-mining companies who could improve their recommendation system by 10 per cent, Hallinan and Striphas (2016) discuss how this contest didn't only influence the function of the recommender system, it also influenced how culture was understood. They write:

> With the Netflix Prize, it appears as though questions of cultural authority are being displaced significantly into the realm of technique and engineering, where individuals with no obvious connection to a particular facet of the cultural field (i.e. media) are developing frameworks with which to reconcile those difficult questions. Moreover, issues of quality or hierarchy get transposed into matters of fit.
>
> Hallinan and Striphas 2016: 123

In this example, 'improvement' of the prediction based on the assessment of mathematical models for data analysis also has an impact on what is considered to be interesting material within cultural production. Recommendations that 'fit' the model are 'better', much as shows that 'fit' how Netflix viewers usually behave would be considered 'better'. As Andrejevic (2015) points out, this 'fit' is often presented as evidence of care or value for the individual, even as it depends on detailed surveillance of everyone's viewing, and even when it fundamentally shifts which stories and programmes are considered worth producing.

The slippage in the double articulation of mediation that datafication presents starts with the creation of the audience commodity and intensifies when data become valuable because they can be put together in ways that suggest they could be used to design better systems for future commodification. Many of our online interactions are now 'training data' for automated systems – but these 'shadow bodies' of data may have less connection to how we interpret the symbolic world around us than even the advertising profiles of the past.

Consequences of data-based mediation

Commodification of life

Trade in personal data and aggregation of different type of data to create detailed consumer profiles has a long history, but datafication has specific and new features. Oscar Gandy's concept of the *panoptic sort* identifies that observations based on data do three things: first, they create a 'panopticon' where a few entities have the power to observe many details about others. Second, the use of these details then provides the more powerful entities to sort individuals into categories based on many different kinds of personal data taken together. Finally, the sorting comes to have consequences for the relationship between the individuals and the institutions.

Gandy wrote that the panoptic sort 'considers *all* information about individual status and behaviour to be potentially useful in the production of intelligence

about a person's economic value' (1993: 133). He argues that the potential for this kind of action is constructed through both the technological and ideological apparatus that make possible both collection of myriad strands of data but also the classification, differentiation, segmentation and targeting of that result.

Gandy was one of the first scholars to identify the social consequences of these datafied processes; he noted that the panoptic sort prevented the possibility for consenting to data collection since data collected for one purpose might be aggregated and traded on to be used for a different one. He was also concerned that the kinds of categorization that the sort created could be discriminatory in new ways. For example, he reflected on how 'gay lists' directed to marketers interested in accessing wealthy gay men as consumers raised the potential that data about HIV status would be shared inadvertently.

Gandy's work is important because it reveals the political economy of personal data, including the risks of profiling, the normalization of surveillance, the power differentials between individuals whose data is collected without consent and the institutions who are able to profile, predict, create and manage different kinds of markets (see Matteos-Garcia and Bakshi 2012). Joseph Turow's book *The Daily You* (2012) illustrates how personal data has become a key material for use in behavioural advertising. Data collected at every stage in web browsing processes, for example, contribute to more detailed segmentation-based targeting. So does the expansion of data collection and the creation of 'big data'. Data collection is as old as society – some of the earliest forms of recording are records of sheep ownership from present-day Iran (Ifrah 2000). But the amount of data collected, its capacity to be used in real time, and the increasingly sophisticated ways that data can be put together in relationships mean that activities such as profiling can be based on differently mediated experiences, shifting the nature of categorization of people, the practice of surveillance and indeed the ways that social life is experienced in place and time.

Couldry and Turow (2015) raise concerns about how data-based profiling might threaten the democratic social order, notably the 'public realm' where discussion of and deliberation about democratic life take place. Their argument rests on the idea that *personalization* has become one of the dominant media logics, and that if the tendencies first identified by Gandy continue to expand, the shared spaces of civic expression and negotiation would begin to fracture, with serious consequences for democratic life. Seeing parallels between segmentation in media environments such as the decline of national broadcasters and segmentation in advertising that creates personalization, they suggest that these threats to the civic sphere need to be addressed because of the risks of the loss of shared common knowledge.

Here the particular qualities of the mediation of data in particular become clear. With the increased measurement of different elements of life, personal data becomes a potential site of value that can be stored, traded or financialized. Gandy and the other scholars who analyze the political economy of segmentation, categorization and surveillance have seen some of their initial positions reinforced as the expanded variety, velocity and volume of data introduced the use of

algorithmic systems to predict possible future states from past data. This has had a reinforcing effect on the ways that we encounter each other as well as information about our world: search engines on the Web use this logic to determine who sees which information, and their business models are beginning to shift to become based more on the data collected about searches than only on the advertising sold to audiences (van Couvering 2017). Social media sites and personal assistants like Alexa develop this political economic model further: by collecting vast amounts of personal information over time from millions of people they can develop more effective automated systems. The unfolding of this economic model produces new political and cultural consequences. These include the normalization of surveillance and the expansion of surveillance capitalism, both elements of an increasingly mediatized world, and experienced as part of a set of mediations through data.

Normalization of surveillance

Extensive collection of data has cultural consequences, as a number of scholars have argued. Sarah Esposito (2014) considers that observing data in our social media practice is equivalent to surveilling our private dwellings. What we do online is, in her view, as private as what we do at home. Surveillance, the process whereby some person or entity is constantly observing others, is now a nearly constant feature of life. CCTV cameras and other physical apparatus of surveillance monitor our lives, but data collection does too: in 2011 whistle-blower Edward Snowden revealed that the United States government collected data about what millions of people did on the internet, without their permission or knowledge. The rationale for this mass surveillance was to protect national security interests, but as Snowden and others have pointed out, having states undertake these kinds of practices makes them more legitimate for companies to pursue as well, leading to experiences of exploitation and alienation. As Mark Andrejevic puts it:

> each form of intentional user-generated content – a blog post, a Facebook update, a Tweet, is redoubled in the form of 'cybernetic commodities' (Mosco 1989). These commodities are distinct from the tweets, posts, uploaded videos and so on, and yet they are the result of user activity. They are commodities with market value and while they are created by users, they are not controlled by users, who have little choice over how and when this data is generated and little say in how it is used.
>
> 2011: 286

Shoshanna Zuboff (2015) argues that the inequities in control and use of personal data are a major political concern, and that what is referred to as the 'big data' phenomenon is 'above all the foundational component in a deeply intentional and highly consequential new logic of accumulation [called] *surveillance capitalism*'. This logic of accumulation combines commodification with surveillance to modify human behaviour to produce both revenue and social control. Zuboff regards this as the result of a fundamental shift – not just towards increased observation – but

towards thinking of each instance of data recording as a transaction. In her view, these transactions can then be *extracted*. After extraction data products can be sold and traded. When these kinds of terms are used, data starts to more closely resemble a 'natural resource' like oil – these arguments are part of what has led commentators to describe 'big data' as 'the new oil'.

Beyond the hype and buzzwords, the principle of 'surveillance capitalism' is that value can be extracted from the very fundamentals of everyday life, and that this value is not generated solely by selling audiences to advertisers but by selling data analysis products to all kinds of intermediaries. The work of data-based intermediaries is part of the commodifying logic of mediation, and some of the important features of this mediation depend on the assumptions built into the mathematical models used to analyze digital data. Different kinds of machine learning algorithms, for example, draw on different mathematical assumptions about generality and particularity (Mackenzie 2015). These assumptions are used to generate models that are used to predict or direct individual behaviour, and to continually 'train' these models as more data become available.

Once again, it is impossible to separate the social shifts here from the ways that data 'get in between' relationships between people. The data-based model of surveillance capitalism explicitly transforms 'the everyday' into digital traces, and those traces into 'big data' that is used to develop automated systems. These automated systems choose music, news and shows for us (Spotify, Facebook and Netflix) but also identify where we should eat dinner (OpenTable), and whether we will be able to access credit (Equifax, Sesame Credit). As Helen Kennedy (2015: 13) points out, these profound mediations are under the control of only a few companies (see also boyd and Crawford 2012). While small companies may collect data without assuming that it will be precise or meaningful (as Kennedy describes in her investigation of local governments and their data use), large companies like the ones I have mentioned can collect data in real time, perform analysis with it and feed this into predictive decision-making systems. Governments can also do this, as I discussed in the case of the surveillance by the US National Security Agency (which was also supported by agencies in the UK, Canada, New Zealand and Australia).

Elsewhere, China's social credit system has created legislation that permits local government to collect and process social credit data, leading to concerns about the risks to individual freedom of movement and collective justice if the legal system remains uncoordinated (Chen and Cheung 2017). This credit system is fortified by advanced data-collection technologies such as facial and voice recognition, whose results train artificial intelligence (AI) systems to more effectively identify faces and allow police or government officials to act. Here, data mediates social and geographical movement in a new way: by constantly collecting face or voice transactions without permission, the systems create a situation where people can no longer choose what to share or what to keep private – and contribute their own personal data continuously to a system that they do not necessarily understand.

This surveillance has new qualities, according to some. For Andrejevic, the main difference in these new forms of surveillance is the fact that feelings are measured

and the measurements acted upon. (2015). For Zuboff, the difference is that the powerful entities in the space of surveillance capitalism (which she calls 'Big Other') no longer coerce people to behave in a particular way in a particular space. Instead, the change of behaviour comes from within and becomes normalized. She writes: 'conformity now disappears into the mechanical order of things and bodies, not as action but as result, not cause but effect. Each one of us may follow a distinct path, but that path is already shaped by the financial and, or, ideological interests that imbue Big Other and invade every aspect of "one's own" life. False consciousness is no longer produced by the hidden facts of class and their relation to production, but rather by the hidden facts of commoditized behaviour modification' (n.p.). It may be that this claim is overstated, since it hardly examines at all any capacity for people to appropriate or interpret data critically or creatively.

Intermediary power

These dystopian perspectives suggest that datafication drives surveillance capitalism and different forms of power exploitation. In 2012, danah boyd and Kate Crawford expressed concerns that the insights provided by data were more likely to be of benefit to large organizations such as corporations, governments or academics with strong connections to industry. They identified that there was a profound inequity in the ways that data could be made meaningful or valuable, because the particular sorts of mediations exercised through data needed intermediary work. This raises the question about who is able to perform this intermediary work, and therefore who is able to exercise power in defining and enacting mediation.

If data are best understood as traces, then this means that in order to mean anything they need to be interpreted. This analysis happens through the work of specialists. Although discussions of 'big data' usually celebrate large stores of unstructured data, the processes used to make spreadsheets and tables of numbers into meaningful or useful points of view require the work of intermediaries with particular expertise. As Louise Amoore (2013) writes about this process, 'the allure of unstructured data is that it is thought to contain patterns heretofore unseen and, therefore, a wealth of previously hidden insight. The growing use of analytics capable of reading and making sense of data, of unlocking its potential, is tightly interwoven with a "world of promise and opportunity" thought to be buried in a text in need of an index (Inmon and Nasaevich, 2007)' (9). Intermediaries are the entities who come in between – in data systems, they are the ones who amass and process data. The best known and arguably most powerful intermediaries are companies like Google, whose core business model consists of managing and brokering data in order to create more sophisticated advertising models. Other organizations like health care trusts, local governments and others might also get in between, as might civic groups who wish to interpret data in relation to their ability to speak and be heard. Claims about the ability to use data to 'give voice' try to sever the necessary link between datafication and commodification and provide a more democratic view of the mediating power of data.

Helen Kennedy examines data-based intermediation as it 'becomes ordinary' – that is, as local governments and small companies begin to undertake data mining as part of their regular operations. She identifies that for many organizations a 'desire for numbers' is borne out of the idea that data analysis might provide new insights that would otherwise not be available, as well as the greater accessibility of data.

This 'desire' is not only exploitative: it transforms work practices and assumptions, but Kennedy maintains that data-based labour in a number of places including local governments and commercial data brokers is not only of value for those who own its outputs but 'involves a series of judgements based on the values of workers themselves' (111). Her detailed assessment of such 'everyday' data practices leads her to reiterate, following Marx, that 'people are able to make history, but not in conditions of their own making' (54). This capacity to make change and to engage with the sociotechnical processes of data-based mediation suggests that there may be space for 'bottom-up' data mediations, although these are shaped by the sociotechnical dynamics I described above.

Having voice in public and being able to participate in communication has often involved the capacity for people to 'tell their own stories'. Under datafication, this extends to 'collecting your own data'. This can include environmental data, data about noise, pollution or other shared civic issues, or visualizing already available data in new ways. For example, consider the Air Quality Egg project, which invited participants to install a pollution-sensing 'egg' outside their homes, and share the locations of the eggs with others through a website. This allowed individuals and groups to see whether this air quality data was different than the official data, although this project did not provide the egg hosts with any capacity to analyze their data (Air Quality Egg 2018). By contrast, the Citizen Sense project, which helped residents of a Barcelona neighbourhood address issues of night-time noise, included a process where noise sensing data was analyzed and compared to published noise regulations, allowing the citizens to lobby their local government to address noise in a new way (Liu et al. 2019). Such sensing and mapping projects suggest that collecting civic data, analyzing and presenting the results publicly might create new and different conversations.

These bottom-up processes also follow the logic of datafication; instead of telling stories through the production of media narratives the Citizen Sense activists collect and visualize data. Working in this way opens up the potential for a form of voice through data, but it also means that the civil society organization is following the same pattern as the other data intermediaries – collecting, curating, calculating and predicting using data. Some scholars and practitioners suggest thinking about 'data activism' as a means of redefining how data might contribute to telling stories. For example, Baack discusses how open data movements take up some of the cultural features of hacker culture in order to try to advocate for data as an open form of knowledge (2015). Milan and Treré (2017) outline a strategy to investigate Big Data from the South in order to move past assumptions about 'digital universalism' that might assume that the same dynamics accompany datafication in the Global South as well as the North. All of these positions struggle

with the fact that datafication shifts the terrain of social encounter by taking trace as evidence of voice, or trace as foundation for story.

Culture and identity

We have so far looked at how the logic of datafication builds on processes of personalization, and how the economies of data extraction and analysis operate to change expectations about the relationships between workers and companies. We've also seen that the mediation of everyday life is monopolized by a small group of powerful corporations, even if small companies and civil society organizations also seek to position their own forms of data-based mediation as part of their work or as a means of gaining voice. These help to characterize the first part of the 'double articulation' where data shift the production of audiences and the consumption of media products. The second aspect, where our experience of the world and its meaning is shifted by new 'things in between' deserves a bit of consideration as well.

Mediation, examined here using the example of datafication, is not a neutral process. Its influences depend on and are constitutive of different forms of power. For example, John Cheney-Lippold (2011) examines how gender identity is constructed online through data traces in ways that differ from the kinds of categorization previously used to mark out gender differences. As he explains, when people's movements around the Web are tracked and analyzed, new understandings of identity emerge that are shaped by the ways that these kinds of data are made meaningful. Whereas previously a person might possess a certain set of attributes that would lead them to be placed in the category of male, for example (beard, penis, deep voice), as data traces are used in the construction of identity gender is now built up as a probabilistic association between behaviours that have statistically previously been male, leading to a potential description of a person using a website as, for example, having an 80 per cent chance of being male. This new logic, which is sometimes described as being 'prospective' (that is, oriented towards what may happen in the future) changes how categorical decisions are made; these can now more easily be made based on whether data being collected show patterns that fit models predicting certain characteristics or likely behaviours. Louise Amoore considers that the results of these kind of prospective decisions enact a 'politics of possibility' where potential outcomes as conceived through data analysis shape experience. Her research describes how data analysis algorithms originally used in financial trading are repurposed for use in border control (2013). The application of these data analysis tools, she argues, is less important than the process through which they analyze data, meaning that the possibility of a stock being a 'good trade' is mathematically similar to the possibility of a person being a 'good risk' to cross a border. The result of this mathematical logic is, arguably, a very different set of mediations of the experience of being judged or categorized in sensitive situations. Instead of being judged based on a set of static criteria, someone crossing a border will have their data patterns assessed against a statistical model of the potential qualities a risky subject might have.

Conclusion

As the idea of a datafied world driven by decisions related to probabilities has taken hold, the particular limitations it presents have become a focus of attention. Zuboff, for example, worries that datafication feeds into a logic that implicitly assumes that all behaviours can be predicted, and hence influenced. She writes: 'Data about the behaviors of bodies, minds, and things take their place in a universal real-time dynamic index of smart objects within an infinite global domain of wired things. This new phenomenon produces the possibility of modifying the behaviors of persons and things for profit and control' (2015: 85). This view sees the logic of datafication and commodification as inexorable and totalizing, with nothing left outside. Questions about how people might be capable of engaging with these systems, either as elements of data commodities or, more actively, as citizens are often left out of the discussion.

It certainly appears that a range of ways to engage with data might yet be possible, although as with other mediating technologies of life, data systems prioritize certain modes of information collection over others, certain kinds of (mathematical) meaning-making, and certain kinds of political-economic relationships. However, this discussion of the mediating power of data systems should show that they, like the other socio-technical systems that get in between the various ways that we live our lives, are mutually constructed by our social values and practices and by the kinds of capacities they provide to make things meaningful, given technical constraints and social and economic expectations. Some of the consequences of widespread datafication include the normalization of surveillance and the incursion of commodification deep into daily life. Yet a 'desire for numbers' may yet provide other ways of mediating voices and individual and collective discussions of things that matter to people, although these need to be considered in relation to the powerful structuring forces of the analysis mechanisms and intermediaries. Perhaps, as Milan and Treré suggest, we might wish to examine emerging alternatives, especially from within the Global South, not because these are better, but because they might produce different ways of thinking about the potential mediations of data.

Finally we may wonder whether datafication is actually providing a new framework or space for the broader, world-historical process of mediatization, which refers not only to the dialectic relationships between technological change and institutional shifts that influence meaning-making, but the large-scale integration of media logics into the broader function of society (Hjarvard 2013). Thinking of datafication as a mediating process encourages us to think about how technological processes contribute to what we know about the world and how we communicate within it.

Datafication, as a dynamic impacting everyday life has certainly had great influence on the kinds of articulations or connections we make between our everyday cultural experience, our experiences of work, dating, socializing or engaging in activism, and the political and economic power structures around us. Data mediate, and thinking about how this happens allows us to revisit, develop and extend some of the most significant ideas in our field.

References

Air Quality Egg (2018), *The Egg* [Online.] Available at: https://airqualityegg.wickeddevice.com/egg (accessed 12 November 2018).

Amoore, L. (2013), *The Politics of Possibility: Risk and Security Beyond Probability,* Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Andrejevic, M. (2011), 'Surveillance and Alienation in the Online Economy', *Surveillance & Society*, 8 (3): 278–87.

Andrejevic, M. B. (2015), 'Personal Data: Blind Spot of the "Affective Law of Value"?', *The Information Society*, 31(1): 5–12.

Baack, S. (2015), 'Datafication and Empowerment: How the Open Data Movement Re-articulates Notions of Democracy, Participation, and Journalism', *Big Data & Society*, 2 (2). Available at: http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/2053951715594634

Balka, E. and S. L. Star (2016), 'Mapping the Body Across Diverse Information Systems: Shadow Bodies and How they Make us Human', in G. Bowker, S. Timmermans, E. Balka and A. Clarke (eds), *Boundary Objects and Beyond: Working with Leigh Star,* 417–30, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Boczkowski, P. and L. A. Lievrouw (2008), 'Bridging STS and Communication Studies: Scholarship on Media and Information Technologies', in E. J. Hackett, O. Amsterdamska, M. Lynch and J. Wajcman (eds), *The Handbook of Science and Technology studies,* 949–77, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

boyd, d. and K. Crawford (2012), 'Critical Questions for Big Data: Provocations for a Cultural, Technological, and Scholarly Phenomenon', *Information, Communication & Society*, 15 (5): 662–79.

Bucher, T. (2012), 'Want to Be on the Top? Algorithmic Power and the Threat of Invisibility on Facebook', *New Media & Society*, 14 (7): 1164–80.

Chen, Y. and A. S. Y. Cheung (2017), 'The Transparent Self under Big Data Profiling: Privacy and Chinese Legislation on the Social Credit System', *The Journal of Comparative Law* 12 (2): 356–78. Available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2992537

Cheney-Lippold, J. (2011), 'A New Algorithmic Identity: Soft Biopolitics and the Modulation of Control', *Theory, Culture & Society*, 28 (6): 164–81.

Couldry, N. and A. Powell (2014), 'Big Data from the Bottom Up', *Big Data & Society*, 1 (2). Available at: http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/2053951714539277

Couldry, N. and J. Turow (2015), 'Advertising, Big Data and the Clearance of the Public Realm: Marketers' New Approaches to the Content Subsidy', *International Journal of Communication*, 8: 1710–26.

Ding, Y., Y. Du, Y. Hu, Z. Liu, L. Wang, K. Ross and A. Ghose (2011, November), Broadcast yourself: understanding YouTube uploaders. In Proceedings of the 2011 ACM SIGCOMM Conference on Internet Measurement Conference (pp. 361–70). ACM.

Esposito, S. D. (2014), 'When Big Data Meets Dataveillance: The Hidden Side of Analytics', *Surveillance & Society*, 12 (2). Available at: https://ojs.library.queensu.ca/index.php/surveillance-and-society/article/view/analytics/analytic

Gangadharan, S. P. (2012), 'Digital Inclusion and Data Profiling', *First Monday*. Available at: http://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/3821/3199

Gandy Jr, O. H. (1993), *The Panoptic Sort: A Political Economy of Personal Information.* Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Gerlitz, C. and A. Helmond (2013), 'The Like Economy: Social Buttons and the Data-intensive Web', *New Media & Society*, 15(8): 1348–65.

Gillespie, T. (2014), 'The Relevance of Algorithms', in T. Gillespie, P. Boczkowski and K. Foot (eds), *Media Technologies: Essays on Communication, Materiality, and Society,* 167–93, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Hallinan, B., and T. Striphas (2016), 'Recommended for You: The Netflix Prize and the Production of Algorithmic Culture', *New Media & Society*, 18 (1): 117–37.

Hjarvard, S. P. (2013), *The Mediatization of Culture and Society*, London: Routledge.

Ifrah, G. (2000), *The Universal History of Numbers: From Prehistory to the Invention of the Computer,* New York: Wiley.

Kennedy, H. (2015), *Post, Mine, Repeat: Social Media Data Mining Becomes Ordinary*, London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Kwak, H., C. Lee, H. Park and S. Moon (2010), 'What is Twitter, a Social Network or a News Media?', *Proceedings of the 19th International Conference on World Wide Web*, pp. 591–600.

Lievrouw, L. A. (2009), 'New Media, Mediation, and Communication Study', *Information, Communication & Society*, 12 (3): 303–25.

Liu, C., M. Balestrini and G. N. Vilaza (2019), 'From Social to Civic: Public Engagement with IoT in Places and Communities', in A. Soro, M. Brereton and P. Roe (eds), *Social Internet of Things,* Cham: Springer.

Livingstone, S. (2009), 'On the Mediation of Everything: ICA Presidential Address 2008', *Journal of Communication*, 59 (1): 1–18.

Livingstone, S. and P. Lunt (2014), 'Mediatization: An Emerging Paradigm for Media and Communication Studies', in K. Lundby (ed.), *Mediatization of Communication*, 703–24, Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.

Mackenzie, A. (2015), 'The Production of Prediction: What Does Machine Learning Want?', *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 18 (4–5): 429–45.

Matteos-Garcia, J. and H. Bakshi. (2012), *Rise of the Datavores: How UK Businesses Can Benefit from Their Data,* London: NESTA.

Mayer-Schönberger, V. and K. Cukier (2013), *Big Data: A Revolution that will Transform How We Work, Live, and Think,* Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.

Meyrowitz, J. (1986), *No Sense of Place: The Impact of Electronic Media on Social Behavior,* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Milan, S. and E. Treré. (2017), 'Big Data from the South: The Start of a Conversation we must have' [Online.] Available at: https://data-activism.net/2017/10/bigdatasur/ (accessed 8 November 2018).

Silverstone, R. (2005), 'The Sociology of Mediation and Communication', in C. Calhoun, C. Rojek and B. Turner (eds), *The SAGE Handbook of Sociology,* 188–207, London: SAGE Publications.

Silverstone, R. (2006), 'Domesticating Domestication: Reflections on the Life of a Concept', in T. Berker, M. Hartmann, Y. Punie and K. J. Ward (eds), *The Domestication of Media and Technology,* 229–48, Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Smythe, D. W. (2001), 'On the Audience Commodity and Its Work', in M. G. Durham and D. Kellner (eds), *Media and Cultural Studies Keywords,* 230–56, Malden: Blackwell.

Thompson, J. B. (1995), *The Media and Modernity: A Social Theory of the Media,* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Turow, J. (2012), *The Daily You: How the New Advertising Industry Is Defining Your Identity and Your Worth*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

van Couvering, E. (2017), 'The Political Economy of New Media Revisited', *Proceedings of the 50th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences*. Available at: https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/ff55/570f14f9e27d93e42bc00ee52a69b3e1d1f8.pdf

van Dijck, J. (2014), 'Datafication, Dataism and Dataveillance: Big Data Between Scientific Paradigm and Ideology', *Surveillance & Society*, 12 (2): 197–208.

Williams, R. (2004), *Television: Technology and Cultural Form,* London: Routledge.

Zuboff, S. (2015), 'Big Other: Surveillance Capitalism and the Prospects of an Information Civilization', *Journal of Information Technology*, 30 (1): 75–89.

Chapter 8

APPROACHES TO THE SOCIOLOGY OF NEWS

Michael Schudson

This essay, in its original 1989 appearance and in several subsequent published revisions, proposed that there are three distinct approaches to explaining how news is produced: political-economic, sociological and cultural perspectives.

In the 2005 revision, I abandoned the category of 'political economy' because I had come to believe that its use in communication studies had developed from a Marxist presumption that economics is fundamental and political structures secondary. Most studies in a 'political economy' tradition did not take political institutions, legal institutions, parties or political conflicts seriously but sought to look through them to the economic fundamentals they presumably expressed. The ways different political institutions structure media institutions and media markets differently rarely became a topic of interest. This was a profound weakness that, happily, has been remedied by Daniel Hallin's and Paolo Mancini's *Comparing Media Systems* (2004).

Today, nonetheless, the ways that economic structures long taken for granted organize or pre-structure news organizations and set their boundaries and possibilities (without determining how effectively they push at the boundaries or what they do with those possibilities) are more visible than ever. The economic and technological underpinnings of the news industry have been shaken around the world.

In 2005, I raised another issue that earlier versions of the essay had simply not noticed at all. Previous iterations of this chapter took it for granted that the analytical approaches it discusses together exhaust the factors that contribute to the production of news. Although I still think that economic, political, social and cultural forces structure news production, it is important to acknowledge that they do not produce news out of nothing. They act on 'something' in the world. The 'something' they work on are events, happenings, occurrences in the world that impress journalists and their audiences with their importance or interest. The forces of journalism act on these things but do not (necessarily) produce them. Journalism can and does produce noteworthy events in press conferences, interviews, and so forth. Journalists construct these events or the presence of journalists leads others to construct such events for the express purpose of attracting and influencing journalists. But journalists do not create hurricanes

or tornados, elections or murders. They do not create Christmas or rock concerts or the Olympics. They shape them, but they do not shape them just as they choose. Michelangelo created 'David', and there are political, economic, social and cultural factors that would help explain how he did so. But Michelangelo did not create the statue out of nothing. He made it out of marble. And even though he carefully selected which marble to use, he was in some measure the servant of that marble and its distinctive features. The marble's own properties placed limiting conditions on what the artist could do and so influenced in essential ways what he arrived at.

It is common for social scientists who study news to speak of how journalists 'construct the news', 'make news' or 'socially construct reality'. 'News is what newspapermen make it', according to one study (Gieber 1964: 173). 'News is the result of the methods newsworkers employ', according to another (Fishman 1980: 14). News is 'manufactured by journalists' (Cohen and Young 1973: 97), in the words of a third. Journalists make the news just as carpenters make houses and scientists make science. News is not a report on a factual world but 'a depletable consumer product that must be made fresh daily' (Tuchman 1978: 179).

This point of view does not make much headway with professional journalists. 'News and news programmes could almost be called random reactions to random events', a British reporter told sociologist Graham Murdock. 'Again and again, the main reason why they turn out as they do is accident – accident of a kind which recurs so haphazardly as to defeat statistical examination' (Murdock 1973: 163). This journalist makes a good point. Journalists confront the unexpected, the dramatic, the unprecedented, even the bizarre. In fact, they very likely confront more of this 'event-driven' news today than they did a generation ago (Lawrence 2000). This calls for social scientists to alter an almost exclusive preoccupation with 'institution-driven' news. Understanding how the institutions and practices of news-making interact with 'events' is a leading challenge for the sociology of news.

But what structures or explains these institutions and practices? Four perspectives on news-making are commonly employed. The first two relate the outcome of the news process to the structures of the economy and the state respectively. The third approach comes primarily out of sociology, especially the study of social organization, occupations and professions, and the social construction of ideology. This perspective tries to understand how journalists' efforts on the job are constrained by organizational and occupational demands. Fourth, a 'cultural' approach emphasizes the constraining force of broad cultural traditions and symbolic systems, regardless of the structure of economic organization, politics or the character of occupational routines. Each of the perspectives may be more useful with some questions about news than with others; all are necessary components to any general understanding.

The economic organization of news

The link between the larger structures of state, market, and society and day-to-day practices in journalism is, as Graham Murdock has observed, 'oblique' (Murdock

1973: l58). Even the link between ownership of news organizations and news coverage, a topic of perennial interest, is not easy to determine – and it grows more difficult by the day as public and commercial systems of ownership mix and blend and intersect (Noam 199l). In Europe, it is not clear that public and private broadcasters differ systematically in the ways they present political and current affairs news (Brants 1998: 328). In some cases, however, patterns of ownership can be tied to specific habits of reporting. Curran et al. (1980) ask why elite and mass-oriented newspapers in Britain provide such different fare even though reader surveys find that different classes prefer to read similar materials. They explain that advertisers find value in papers that attract a small, concentrated elite audience; the expense of reaching an 'upscale' audience is lower if a large share of this audience can be addressed through a single publication without having to pay the expense of reaching thousands of extraneous readers.

In other cases, a link between ownership or market structure and news content is not apparent. Despite the commercialization of news organizations in Europe in the past several decades, and a consequent shift toward more dramatic forms of news discourse, the total political content of news remains high and in some instances has even increased (Hallin and Mancini 1984: 281). In the United States, research on the impact of chain ownership compared to independent ownership of newspapers on news content has been inconclusive (Demers 1996) or 'tepid' (Baker 1994: 19). There is no consistent support for the belief that independent news outlets offer more diverse content than those run by corporate conglomerates or that locally owned media are better for diversity than national chains. 'Sometimes corporate media giants homogenize, and sometimes they do not. Sometimes they shut people up and stifle dissent, and sometimes they open up extra space for new people to be visible and vocal … because diversity sometimes serves their interests …' (Gamson and Latteier 2004).

Some scholars hold that corporate ownership and commercial organizations necessarily compromise the democratic promise of public communication (McChesney 1997), but, in a global context, the evidence is more nearly that the *absence* of commercial organizations, or their total domination by the state, are the worst case scenarios. In Latin America, government officials benefited more from state-controlled media than did the public; for Latin American policy-makers in the recent wave of democratization, 'strong control, censorship, and manipulation of the mass media during authoritarian and democratic regimes have deeply discredited statist models' (Waisbord 1995: 219). South Korean journalism is freer since political democratization began in 1987 than it was under the military regime of the early 1980s when 700 anti-regime journalists were dismissed, the Minister of Culture could cancel any publication's registration at will, security agencies kept the media under constant surveillance, and the Ministry of Culture routinely issued specific guidelines on how reporters should cover events (Lee 1997). Still, in the new Korean media system, market considerations create new forms of internal censorship, while old expectations of politicians – that they should receive favourable media treatment – persist, and cultural presuppositions of deference to a king-like president weaken the capacity of the media to exercise its putative liberties.

Not that market-dominated systems and state-dominated systems are always easy to distinguish. Yuzhei Zhao offers a detailed and persuasive account of the blending of commercial and state-controlled media in post-Tiananmen Square China (Zhao 1998). After Tiananmen Square, the government tightened controls on the media, closed down three leading publications whose coverage it judged too sympathetic to the protesters, replaced editors at other newspapers, and required all news organizations to engage in self-criticism. The state continues to monitor political news, but tolerates coverage of economics, social, and environmental issues so long as direct criticism of the Communist Party is avoided. Self-censorship rather than direct party control is frequently the operating system; newspapers, it is said, 'swat flies but don't beat tigers' (Polumbaum 1994: 258). In contrast, state surveillance of internet traffic and shutting down of websites judged too critical of the state is heavy-handed, even as internet use contributes to the growth of an emerging civil society in China (Yang 2009; Lei 2017). Despite party controls, a proliferation of sensational, entertainment-oriented tabloids has offered the established press serious competition for advertising revenues. Media outlets in the 'commercial' sector remain political organs, catering to the Party's propaganda needs but trying to 'establish a common ground between the Party and the people' through its choice of what topics to cover (Zhao 1998: 161). The commercial media have grown while the circulation of the traditional Party organs has dropped. Party control of the media remains powerful everywhere, but even at Central China Television, the most influential station in the country, innovative news shows have tested the limits and sought to please the public as well as the Party leadership. The journalists are 'dancing with chains on' (Zhao 1998: 121). Zhao's later evaluation (2008) was more pessimistic; she then saw the market-based proliferation of media outlets offering less of a democratic opening for Chinese media than she had anticipated. Capitalism came to China without party control significantly receding.

In China, news sources routinely pay for journalists' travel, hotel accommodation and meals when they report out-of-town events ('three-warranty reporting'), some journalists moonlight as public relations agents for businesses, and journalists and news organizations receive cash, negotiable securities, personal favours and gifts not only from business clients but even from government clients seeking positive coverage (Zhao 1998: 72–93). Journalists' salaries are low and 'few . . . can resist the temptation offered by one paid news report that can bring in a red envelope with as much as a whole month's salary, not to mention an advertising deal worth years of salary' (Zhao 1998: 87).

In the United States, fewer and fewer corporations control more and more of the news media (Bagdikian 1983). Major media conglomerates control more and more of the world's media. Where media are not controlled by corporations, they are generally voices of the state. Under these circumstances, it would be a shock to find the press a hotbed of radical thought. But, then, critical or radical thought in any society at any time is exceptional. In the perennial debates about whether the news media in liberal democratic societies are 'lapdogs' of power or 'watchdogs' for the public, holding power accountable, there is growing reason to seek out a new

model or metaphor since so many news organizations serve both roles. Susan Pharr's analysis of the Japanese media proposes that the news media have taken on the role of 'trickster' once played by jesters, diviners and minstrels, the insider-outsider whose independence makes its relationship to state and society complex and ambivalent. The trickster is by no means simply a megaphone for ruling elites, but neither is it an unbridled critic of power. The media tricksters do not simply reproduce existing power, their overall effect as critics is 'to disperse, dissipate, or fragment any effort on the part of the audience to agree on a systematic critique of the established order or to forge an alternative construction of reality that calls for profound political and social change' (Pharr 1996: 35).

A rigid view that sees media organizations working hand-in-glove with other large corporations to stifle dissent or promote a lethargic public acceptance of the existing distribution of power (Herman and Chomsky 1988) is inconsistent with what most journalists in democratic societies commonly believe they are doing. It also fails to explain a great deal of news content, especially news critical of corporate power (Dreier 1982) or news of corporate scandals, conflicts, illegalities and failures.

A more flexible theoretical stance is that the media reinforce the 'cultural hegemony' of dominant groups; that is, that they make the existing distribution of power and rewards seem to follow from nature or common sense and so effectively make oppositional views appear unreasonable, quixotic or utopian. But 'hegemony' as a theoretical framework does not take analysis very far. It offers no account of how progressive social change happens when it does, despite 'hegemonic' media. The concept of 'hegemony' requires subtle deployment if it is to be used at all. It would need to handle the fact that the ability of a capitalist class to manipulate opinion and create a closed system of discourse is limited, that ideology in contemporary capitalism is openly contested, and that the capacity of capitalist elites to establish ideological closure faces legal and political obstacles that socialist bureaucracies rarely confront.

A strictly economic explanation of news is in some respects as obvious to working journalists as to critical scholars. Reporters often think that publishers would rather please Wall Street investors than serve conscience or the public, that under economic duress editors more than ever are seeking news that will sell, and that nothing is so corrupting of journalism as the dictatorship of the bottom line. Work on American television and print news by James Hamilton uses quantitative data imaginatively to argue that trends toward 'soft news' content are a direct result of news organizations' efforts to reach elusive demographic groups that advertisers try to attract (particularly women aged between eighteen and thirty-four) (Hamilton 2004: 189). At the same time, some news organizations resist sensationalism and minimize 'soft news', catering to audiences with a taste for critical and analytical news reporting. This variation emerges within the field of profit-seeking news organizations, stemming from what Rodney Benson (2013) calls 'audience adjustment'.

Financial considerations are normally decisive in news organizations' adoption of new technologies. But there has been little academic attention to the concrete

consequences of the technological transformation of news production, both in print and in television. Beginning in the 1970s, newspapers saw the introduction of personal computers, pagination (the electronic assembly of pages), online and database research, remote transmission and delivery, digital photo transmission and storage. The technologies were generally introduced to reduce labour costs and to provide the technical capability to make the newspaper more 'user-friendly', with more interesting and attractive page design. What influence did this have on the news product? We know that new technologies have moved elements of newspaper production from the 'backshop' to the newsroom, increased the amount of time editors spend on page make-up, and improved spelling. Some observers suggest that the ability of foreign correspondents to send copy home by satellite has led to more and shorter stories on timely events rather than fewer, longer, more analytic, and less time-bound work (Weaver and Wilhoit 1991: 158–59). On the other hand, several studies suggest that in US newspapers there has been a long-term trend (from around the 1890s to a century later) towards longer and more interpretive news reporting (see Fink and Schudson 2013: 3–7).

In a study of CNN international news from 1994 to 2001, Livingston and Bennett found that new technologies like the videophone – and other mobile, convenient, hand-held equipment for live reporting from remote locations – increased the amount of event-driven rather than institution-initiated news but that official voices inserted into these stories continued to dominate CNN reporting (Livingston and Bennett 2003). The new technologies enable TV anchors to speak live to correspondents in the field; improved technology thus stimulated new informal, conversational discourse on television and an improvisational style that has risks as well as audience appeal (Montgomery 2006).

None of the recent technological changes that have affected news-gathering practices, important as they have been, compare to the revolution still in progress that has made the World Wide Web the extraordinary carrier of news and information to the hundreds of millions of people around the world with internet access that it has become almost overnight. For journalism, it has been a mixed blessing: on the one hand, it makes news from news organizations around the world available to anyone with internet access – and it has led millions of people to start their own blogs, to post comments on the websites or blogs of traditional news organizations, and to cooperate with a variety of 'pro-am' news-gathering activities where professional journalists ask amateurs – ordinary citizens – to assist them (Rusbridger 2009). On the other hand, the drift of personal and classified advertising to free online services and away from newspapers coupled with the failure of most commercial newspapers to find a way to 'monetize' their online products has undermined the longstanding economic model for commercial news media in which news organizations sell audiences to advertisers. In the United States, this has led some venerable daily newspapers to cease publishing altogether, others to drop their print edition on the least lucrative days of the week, and others to move to online-only publication, while hundreds more have cut their budgets for news, laying off reporters and editors, closing foreign and national bureaus, and reducing allowances for travel. Although the crisis is particularly severe in the US,

where newspapers have been especially dependent on classified advertising, it is also causing serious problems with the economics of news publishing in Australia, the United Kingdom and elsewhere. More about the internet and its impact on news in the epilogue.

The political context of news-making

Economic perspectives in Anglo-American media studies have generally taken liberal democracy for granted, and so have been insensitive to political and legal determinants of news production. Increasingly, economic determinism has been recognized as a seriously flawed perspective. In the 1980s in Europe, in the face of threats to public broadcasting from conservative governments sympathetic to commercialization, scholars came to see in public broadcasting a pillar of a free public life (Garnham 1990: 104–14). Increasingly, there have been efforts to articulate a view of 'civil society' where the media hold a vital place and attain a degree of autonomy from both state and market – as in the best public service broadcasting (Keane 1991).

This correctly suggests that, within market societies, there are various political forms and constitutional regimes for the press. The distinction between 'market' and 'state' organization of media, or between commercial and public forms of broadcasting, masks important differences within each category. Public broadcasting may be a quasi-independent corporation or directly run by the government, its income may come from licence fees only (Japan, Britain and Sweden), or also from advertising (Germany, France and Italy), or from the government treasury (Canada). In Britain, Cabinet ministries determine fee levels while in Japan, France and Germany, parliament makes the decision (Krauss 2000). Each of these variations creates (and results from) a distinct politics of the media. In Norway, since 1969, and in Sweden, France and Austria since the 1970s, the state has subsidized newspapers directly, especially to strengthen newspapers offering substantial political information but receiving low advertising revenues. These policies have sought to stop the decline in the number of newspapers and so to increase public access to a diversity of political viewpoints. A review of the Swedish case indicates this has been very successful. The size of the subsidies has fallen off in recent years as governments have come to place more faith in market principles and the virtues of economic efficiency (Skogerbø 1997; Murschetz 1998).

From time to time there is serious ideological contestation in liberal democracies. Just how it takes place differs depending on the political institutions that govern the press. Hallin and Mancini (2004) distinguish broadly among three media systems in the eighteen European and North American democracies they examined. The Mediterranean or southern European media system has relatively low newspaper penetration: that is, the print media have been largely oriented to elites, they tend to emphasize advocacy or highly politicized rather than neutral and professional styles of journalism, they have strong formal and informal links to political parties, and their commercial orientation is generally weak. Hallin and

Mancini trace this pattern to political systems of high ideological diversity, strong and often authoritarian states, and a weak or delayed development of liberal institutions and rational-legal authority.

In contrast, northern and central European democracies typically have a 'democratic corporatist' system, characterized by much higher newspaper penetration, a quasi-autonomous profession of journalism more differentiated from political careers and political parties, a moderately developed commercialism, and, like northern Europe, relatively high levels of state regulation of private media. However, where state regulation in southern Europe has periodically meant state censorship, regulation in northern Europe has typically been state subsidies on behalf of press freedom or in pursuit of increasing ideological diversity in the press.

Finally, there is the North Atlantic or liberal model, to be found in its extreme form in the United States and in more moderate form in the United Kingdom and Canada. Newspaper penetration is intermediate between the highs of northern Europe and the lows of southern Europe, professional autonomy is high and jealously guarded, and the favoured journalistic model centres on providing information rather than providing commentary or advocacy, although the British model welcomes commentary more than the American. The *Guardian*, for instance, advertises itself as 'the world's liberal newspaper', a political identity that a leading American newspaper like the *Washington Post* or *New York Times* would never claim. Commercialism is highly developed and powerful, and there is a greater divorce between the media and political parties than in the other systems. The role of the state is more limited in the liberal model than in the other models; where public broadcasting is powerful, as in Britain, it is relatively well insulated from political control by the state.

There are signs of the spread of the liberal model in the recent past. In northern Europe, the close ties of newspapers and parties have declined. In Denmark in 1960, only fourteen of eight-eight newspapers were independent of political parties; by 2000, it was twenty-four of thirty-three (Hallin and Mancini 179). Finnish newspapers with political affiliation controlled 70 per cent of the market in 1950, but only 15 per cent by 1995 (Hallin and Mancini 252). Systems dominated by public broadcasting have become mixed systems with commercial broadcasting making major inroads. The impact of the American model elsewhere in the world has been large, both in the intensity of its commercialism and in the influence of its institutions for journalism education, promoting an information-centred, autonomous professionalism. Even so, Hallin and Mancini argue that a number of factors, including the persistence of important differences in the political and legal systems of the European democracies, will keep the diversity of media/political models from collapsing into variants of the liberal model.

All of this concerns journalism in societies with strong and relatively stable states; the problems of journalism in societies with weak states are of a different order. Where states are weak or disintegrating, and where journalists nonetheless dare to report on paramilitary organizations, drug cartels, or government corruption, reporters and their news organizations become the targets of harassment, threat, and assassination (Waisbord 2002).

The social organization of newswork

In an influential essay (1974), Harvey Molotch and Marilyn Lester created a typology of news stories according to whether the news 'occurence' is planned or unplanned and, if planned, whether its planners do or do not also promote it as news. If an event is planned and then promoted as news by its planners, this is a 'routine' news item. If the event is planned by one person or organization but promoted as news by someone else, it is a 'scandal'. If the event is unplanned, it becomes news as an 'accident'.

For Molotch and Lester, it is a mistake to try to compare news accounts to 'reality' in the way journalism critics ordinarily do, labelling any discrepancy 'bias'. Instead, they reject the assumption that there is a real world to be objective about. For them, the news media reflect not a world 'out there' but rather 'the practices of those who have the power to determine the experience of others' (1974: 54).

In 1974 this strong conviction of the subordination of knowledge to power was a liberating insight. More than forty years later, it looks very much overstated, failing to recognize that one of the constraints within which journalists operate is the need to write 'accurately' about actual – objectively real – occurrences in the world, whoever planned them and however they came to the media's notice. The reality-constructing practices of the powerful will fail (in the long run) if they run roughshod over the world 'out there'. If the hypotheses of Livingston and Bennett (2003) and Lawrence (2000) are correct, it is increasingly true that event-driven news is important and that it can displace even the most carefully orchestrated institution-driven grabs for media attention (Schudson 2011; Schudson 2008).

Still, an emphasis on the social organization of journalism and on the interaction of journalists and their sources has reinforced economic and political perspectives that take news-making to be a reality-constructing activity governed by elites. One study after another agrees that the centre of news generation is the link between reporter and official, or, to say it a little differently, the interaction of the representatives of news bureaucracies and government bureaucracies. And one study after another concludes that government voices dominate the news (Gans 1979: 116; Cohen 1963: 267; Fishman 1980; Bennett 1994: 23–29; Dorman 1994: 76, Schlesinger and Tumber 1994; Zaller and Chiu 2000). 'The only important tool of the reporter is his news sources and how he uses them,' a reporter covering state government in the United States told Delmer Dunne (1969: 41). Stephen Hess confirmed this in a study of Washington correspondents that found reporters 'use no documents in the preparation of nearly three-quarters of their stories' (Hess 1981: 17–18). Hess does not count press releases as documents – these are, of course, another means of communication directly from official to reporter. It is clear that the reporter–official connection makes news an important tool of government and other established authorities. Some studies, accordingly, examine news production from the viewpoint of the news source rather than the news organization (Cook 1989) or focus on the links between reporters and their sources in 'source-media analysis' (Schlesinger and Tumber 1994: 28).

A corollary to the power of the government source or other well legitimated sources is that 'resource-poor organizations' have great difficulty in getting the media's attention (Goldenberg 1975). If they are to be covered, as Todd Gitlin's study of American anti-war activities in the 1960s indicated, they must adjust to modes of organizational interaction more like those of established organizations (Gitlin 1980). While online media now can provide immediate and inexpensive access to resource-poor individuals and organizations, most news organizations continue to afford disproportionate access to the already wealthy, powerful and famous.

Reporter/source studies have implications for evaluating the power of media institutions as such. Media power looms especially large if the portrait of the world the media present to audiences stems from the preferences and perceptions of publishers, editors and reporters unconstrained by democratic controls. However, if the media typically mirror the views and voices of democratically selected or democratically accountable government officials, then the media are more nearly the neutral servants of a democratic order. In one well studied instance, policy experts blamed graphic scenes of starving people shown on American television news for what they judged a hasty and unwise military intervention in Somalia in 1992. But the networks picked up the Somalia story only after seven senators, a House committee, the full House, the full Senate, a presidential candidate and the White House all publicly raised the issue. When the media finally got to it, they framed it very much as Washington's political elites had framed it for them (Mermin 1997; Livingston and Eachus 1995). This does not mean the TV stories made no difference; they rallied public interest and public support for intervention. But where did the TV story come from? From established, official sources.

Despite the academic consensus that official opinion dominates in the news, several studies suggest that this conclusion has been overdrawn. An instructive study of *New York Times'* coverage of the US–Libya crisis of 1985–86 finds that the news diverged from mirroring official US government opinion in two respects. News over-emphasized Congressional views that challenged the administration's position – a journalistic attraction to finding conflict and representing alternative views gave critics of the administration more weight in the pages of the newspaper than they actually held in the Congress. Moreover, there was more citing of foreign sources, many of them critical of the US position, than the researchers expected, and they concluded that in a 'decentered, destabilized international political system', this is likely to endure (Althaus et al. 1996: 418).

Regina Lawrence's account of how the news media cover police brutality finds that more voices and more critical voices enter into the construction of news stories when the stories originate in events rather than institutions (accidents, rather than routines, in the terms of Molotch and Lester). As she writes, 'Event-driven discourse about public issues is often more variable and dynamic than institutionally driven news, ranging beyond established news beats and drawing on a wider variety of voices and perspectives' (2000: 9). Although she acknowledges that institutionally driven problem construction remains predominant, she sees a trend toward event-driven news. The latter has problems of its own – it is often

'sensationalized, hyperbolic, and overheated'. Even so, it can often be the mechanism (as in a number of prominent cases of police brutality) whereby public officials and public institutions are scrutinized and held accountable (Lawrence 2000: 187).

In the digital era, citizen journalists, bloggers and other online monitors of world events and of conventional news outlets themselves have introduced new voices into public discourse. Efforts to monitor both government decision-making and government actions have proliferated and have become widely accessible. This includes websites sponsored by governments themselves, like recovery.gov in the United States that was designed to make it possible for citizens to see on a map what organizations have received federal funds for projects to stimulate the economy, or fixmystreet.com in Britain, a site established in 2007 by the non-profit group mySociety, that provides a convenient mechanism for citizens to report to a website potholes and other deterioration in public services. The idea has spread around the world since 2012, when mySociety provided through open software the platform for others to adopt the same system.

There has been more attention in sociological studies to reporter-official relations than to reporter–editor relations, a second critical aspect of the social organization of newswork.

Despite some suggestive early work on the ways in which reporters engage in self-censorship when they have an eye fixed on pleasing an editor (Breed 1955: 80), and case studies of newswork that note the effects – usually baleful – of editorial intervention (Crouse 1973: 186; Gitlin 1980: 64–65; Hallin 1986: 22), few studies look at the social relations of newswork from the editor's desk. Randall Sumpter (2000) offers a useful review of literature on editors' role in constructing news, suggesting that, as newspaper audiences shrink, editorial decisions are guided increasingly by anxiety to please the audience. Today, when news organizations are cutting staff, news appears in print or online with fewer editorial eyeballs examining it first; in the fledgling online-only news organizations, even those run by professional journalists, the organizations are so small that the editorial process of review and critique is necessarily foreshortened.

Future work on the relations of reporters and editors inside the newsroom can learn much from the comparative studies initiated by Wolfgang Donsbach and Thomas Patterson and reported by Donsbach (1995) and further developed in a careful British–German comparison by Esser (1998). Where there are many job designations in a British newsroom, all personnel in a German newsroom are 'Redakteurs', editors or desk workers, who combine the tasks of reporting, copy-editing, editorial or leader-writing and commentary. Where editors read and edit the work of reporters in a British or American newspaper, what a Redakteur writes goes into print without anyone's exercising supervision. Different historical traditions have led to different divisions of labour and different understandings of the possibility and desirability of separating facts from commentary.

Who are the journalists in news organizations who cover beats, interview sources, rewrite press releases from government bureaus, and occasionally take the initiative in ferreting out hidden or complex stories? If organizational theorists are correct, it does not matter. Whoever they are, they will be socialized quickly into

the values and routines of daily journalism and will modify their own personal values 'in accordance with the requisites of the organization' (Epstein 1973: xiv). A cross-national survey implicitly supports this view: despite different national cultures, despite different patterns of professional education, and despite different labour patterns of journalists (some in strong professional associations or unions, some not), the stated professional values of the journalists do not differ greatly (Sparks and Splichal 1989). Surveys conducted in Germany likewise found relatively modest differences in journalists' occupational norms between those trained in the West and those who entered the field through the state and party-run schools and media organizations of the former German Democratic Republic (East Germany) (Hagen 1997: 14).

It is best to be cautious about this survey data. Twice as many East Germans as West Germans (25 per cent to 11 per cent) say a journalist should be a 'politician using alternative means' (Hagen 1997: 14). But even when journalists uphold the same nominal values, they may do for different reasons. In communist Poland, journalists were strongly attached to professionalism, not out of occupational autonomy but as a refuge from 'the unpleasant push and pull of political forces' (Curry 1990: 207). Professionalism protected the Polish journalist from manipulation by the Communist Party, government bureaucrats and the sponsoring organization of each newspaper. Even so, it has proved difficult for journalists in Eastern Europe to shed a sense of journalism as a form of political advocacy (Jakubowicz 1995: 136–37). We may simply not comprehend the discrepancy between 'professional values' revealed in surveys and actual journalistic practice (de Smaele 1999: 180).

Journalists at mainstream publications everywhere accommodate to the political culture of the regime in which they operate. Still, ideals of journalistic professionalism may incline journalists toward acting to support freedom of expression. In China, some journalists have developed a professional devotion to freedom of expression and have been a pressure group for the liberalization of press laws (Polumbaum 1993; Zhao 1998). In Brazil under military rule in the 1960s and 1970s, reporters grew adept at sabotaging the government's efforts at censorship (Dassin 1982: 173–76).

Some American scholars have insisted that professional values are no bulwark against a bias in news that emerges from the social backgrounds and personal values of media personnel. S. Robert Lichter, Stanley Rothman and Linda S. Lichter (1986) made the case that news in the United States has a liberal 'bias' because journalists at elite news organizations are themselves liberal. Their survey of these journalists finds that many describe themselves as liberals and tend to vote Democratic, although their liberalism was much more pronounced on social than on economic issues.

This approach has been criticized for failing to show that the news product reflects the personal views of journalists rather than the views of the officials whose positions they are reporting (Gans 1985). American journalists, more than their counterparts in Germany, are committed to their ideology of dispassion, their sense of professionalism, their allegiance to fairness or objectivity (Donsbach

1995). They have a professional commitment to shielding their work from their own political leanings. Moreover, their political preferences tend to be weak. American journalists typically are not so much liberal or conservative as apolitical (Gans 1979: 184; Hess 1981: 115) – although the introduction of advocacy journalism in US cable television in the 1990s may have altered this a bit. Still, the liberalism of the US elite media on social issues like abortion and LGBTQ rights seems clear, at least, the *New York Times'* ombudsman agreed on this point with conservative critics of his newspaper (Okrent 2004). The source of that liberalism, however, if Hamilton (2004) is right, may be less the views of the journalists than the news organizations' efforts at 'audience adjustment' (Benson 2013) when they have reached an audience advertisers desire among population groups whose views on these topics tend to be liberal.

Critics and activists who advocate the hiring of more women and minorities in the newsroom share the intuition that the personal values journalists bring to their jobs will colour the news they produce. While this has been an especially hot issue in the United States, there are comparable concerns about the unrepresentativeness of newsrooms elsewhere, as in Robin Jeffrey's documentation of the absence of Dalits (untouchables) in Indian news organizations. (Jeffrey 2001). Hiring priorities to develop a newsroom more representative of the population by gender and ethnicity should thus transform the news product itself. News should become more oriented to groups often subordinated or victimized in society. Anecdotal evidence (Mills 1990) suggests that a changing gender composition of the newsroom does influence news content, although other reports from both the US and Israel suggest that this has not dramatically changed definitions of news. (Beasley 1993: 129–30; Lavie and Lehman-Wilzig 2003).

Social constraints on news work come not only from the news organizations reporters work for directly, but also from patterns of news-gathering that bring reporters from different publications under the influence of one another. In the United States, there is criticism of 'pack journalism', where reporters covering the same beat or same story tend to emphasize the same angle and to adopt the same viewpoint. In Japan, a kind of bureaucratized 'pack journalism' has become entrenched. 'Reporters' clubs' are organizations of reporters assigned to a particular ministry, and most basic news comes from reporters in these clubs. Since most clubs are connected to government agencies, news takes on an official cast. The daily association of reporters at the clubs contributes to a uniformity in the news pages; reporters are driven by what is described as a 'phobia' about not writing what all the other reporters write (Feldman 1993: 98, 120–23; Krauss 2000; Freeman 2000). Foreign correspondents from different countries congregate in the same capital cities and the same hotels in those cities, in another brand of pack journalism. In the past two decades, a set of African cities have been the gateways for journalists to get quickly to the latest African crisis point where their stories regularly affirm an 'Afro-pessimism' (Hannerz 2004: 129). With the internet providing a universalism of its own, providing easy global access to news product that once rarely reached across national borders, new forms of convergence may be emerging, notably an irreverence, informality and shorthand style and tone in the news.

Little has been said here about the differences between print and television news. There is much to say, of course, but most television news stories come from print sources, especially the wire services (Krauss 2000). Despite the global prominence of CNN, it has far fewer correspondents and bureaus outside the United States than the leading global wire services – Agence France-Presse, Associated Press and Reuters (Moisy 1996). News outlets, television as much as print, rely overwhelmingly on these services.

American evidence suggests that, at least for national news, print and television journalists share the same professional values. Separate studies of how print and TV journalists use experts, for instance, reveal that in foreign policy coverage, both prefer former government officials to other kinds of experts (Steele 1995; Hallin, Manoff and Weddle 1993). What Janet Steele (1995) calls the 'operational bias' in TV news – selecting experts who personally know the key players, who have strong views on a limited range of policy alternatives, and who will make short-term predictions – are also characteristics print journalists seek. Television's preference for experts who can turn a good phrase is one that print journalists share.

Cultural approaches

In social-organizational approaches, the fact that news is 'constructed' suggests that it is *socially* constructed, elaborated in the interaction of the news-making players with one another. But emphasis on the human construction of news can be taken in another direction. Anthropologist Marshall Sahlins has written in a different context that 'an event is not just a happening in the world; it is a *relation* between a certain happening and a given symbolic system' (1985: 153). Social-organizational approaches do not focus on the cultural givens within which everyday interaction happens. These cultural givens, while they may be uncovered by detailed historical analysis, cannot be extrapolated from features of social organization at the moment of study. They are a part of culture – a symbolic system handed down over time, within which and in relation to which reporters and officials perceive the world, attend to it, and find meaning in it.

Most understandings of news merge a 'cultural' view with the social organizational view but the two perspectives are analytically distinct. Where the social organizational view finds interactional determinants of news in the relations between people, the cultural view finds symbolic determinants of news in the relations between 'facts' and symbols. A cultural account of news helps explain generalized images and stereotypes in the news media – of predatory stockbrokers or hard-drinking factory workers – that transcend structures of ownership or patterns of work relations. Foreign correspondents, whether American, Swedish, British or Japanese, tend to pick up and reproduce conventional story lines in their reporting: '. . . in Jerusalem reporting, conflicts between Arabs and Israelis and between the secular and the Orthodox; from Tokyo, stories of difference, even weirdness; from Johannesburg, apartheid and its undoing and, on a larger African

stage, perhaps tribalism, chaos, despots, and victims' (Hannerz 2004: 143). British mass media coverage of racial conflict has drawn on elements of the British cultural tradition 'derogatory to foreigners, particularly blacks. The media operate within the culture and are obliged to use cultural symbols' (Hartmann and Husband 1973: 274). Frank Pearce, in examining media coverage of homosexuals in Britain (1973), begins with anthropologist Mary Douglas's view that all societies are troubled by 'anomalies' that do not fit the pre-conceived categories of the culture. Homosexuality is an anomaly in societies that take as fundamental the opposition and relationship of male and female; thus homosexuals provide a culturally charged topic for story-telling that reaffirms the conventional moral order of society and its symbolic foundation. News stories about homosexuals may be 'an occasion to reinforce conventional moral values by telling a moral tale' (1973: 293).

A cultural account of this sort is useful but it can explain too much; after all, news coverage of homosexuality has changed enormously since the 1970s, a universal cultural anxiety about anomalous categories notwithstanding. A 1996 study of US news coverage concludes that gays and lesbians appear much more in the news than they did fifty years prior, and were covered much more 'routinely' as ordinary news subjects rather than moral tales (Alwood 1998: 315).

Journalists may respond to the same cultural moods their audiences share even if they typically know little about their audiences. Herbert Gans found that the reporters and editors he studied at US news weeklies and network television programmes 'had little knowledge about the actual audience'. They tended to assume that 'what interested them would interest the audience' (1979: 230). While the journalists thereby make some mistakes in what they assume about their audience, they also get some things right about the 'implied audience' they address, insofar as they share elements of a 'cultural air' with those they speak to.

A cultural account of news is relevant to understanding journalists' vague renderings of how they know 'news' when they see it. The central categories of newsworkers themselves are 'cultural'. Stuart Hall has observed that the 'news values' or 'news sense' that journalists regularly talk about 'are one of the most opaque structures of meaning in modern society. All 'true journalists' are supposed to possess it: few can or are willing to identify and define it . . . We appear to be dealing, then, with a "deep structure" whose function as a selective device is un-transparent even to those who professionally most know how to operate it' (1973: 181). Gaye Tuchman's observation on American journalists parallels Hall's on the British when she writes that 'news judgment is the sacred knowledge, the secret ability of the newsman which differentiates him from other people' (1972: 672). For a comprehensive review of the literature on news values, Harcup and O'Neill (2017) is especially valuable.

The cultural knowledge that constitutes 'news judgment' is not so organized and consistent as the term 'ideology' suggests, nor quite so general and unarticulated as 'common sense'. Its presuppositions are in some respects rooted deeply in human consciousness even if specifically adapted to the structure of the institutions of journalism. A specific example may illustrate the many dimensions of this problem.

Why, Johan Galtung and Mari Ruge (1970) ask, are news stories so often 'personified'? Why do reporters write of persons and not structures, of individuals and not social forces? They cite a number of possible explanations, some of which are 'cultural'. There is cultural idealism – the Western view (more in some Western societies than in others) that individuals are masters of their own destiny responsible for their acts through the free will they exercise. There is the nature of story-telling itself, with the need in narrative to establish 'identification'. There is also what they call the 'frequency-factor' – that people act during a time span that fits the frequency of the news media (daily) better than do the actions of 'structures' that are much harder to connect with specific events in a 24-hour cycle.

Is this last point a 'social structural' or a 'cultural' phenomenon? In some respect, it is structural – if the media operated monthly or annually rather than daily, perhaps they would speak more often of social forces than of individuals. But, then, is the fact that the press normally operates on a daily basis structural or cultural? Is there some basic primacy to the daily cycle of the press, of business, of government, of sleeping and waking, that makes the institutions of journalism inescapably human and person-centred in scale?

Of course, news definitions and news values differ across cultures. For instance, the Soviet media, in the days of the Soviet Union, like Western media, operated on a daily cycle, but much less of the Soviet than the Western news examined happenings in the prior twenty-four hours (Mickiewicz 1988: 30). Soviet news organizations operated according to long-range political plans and they stockpiled stories to meet political needs (Remington 1988: 116). The sense of immediacy Western media take to be a requirement of news is not, the Soviet case would suggest, an invariant feature of bureaucratic organization, occupational routines or a universal diurnal human rhythm. It is rooted instead in nation-specific political cultures.

So one need not adopt assumptions about universal properties of human nature and human interest (although it would be foolish to dismiss them out of hand) to acknowledge that there are aspects of news-generation that go beyond what sociological analysis of news organizations is normally prepared to handle. Richard Hoggart has written that the most important filter through which news is constructed is 'the cultural air we breathe, the whole ideological atmosphere of our society, which tells us that some things can be said and that others had best not be said' (Bennett 1982: 303). That 'cultural air' is one that in part ruling groups and institutions create but it is in part one in whose context their own establishment takes place.

The cultural air has both a form and content. The content, the substance of taken-for-granted values, has often been discussed. Many studies, in a number of countries, have noted that violent crimes are greatly over-reported in relation to their actual incidence (Katz 1987: 57–58). Over-reporting takes place not only in the popular press but (to a lesser degree) in the mid-market and quality press, too (Schlesinger and Tumber 1994: 185). Gans (1979) describes the core values of American journalism as ethnocentrism (surely a core value in journalism around the world although more pronounced in the US than in many places), altruistic

democracy, responsible capitalism, small-town pastoralism, individualism and moderatism. These are unquestioned and generally unnoticed background assumptions through which news in the United States is gathered and within which it is framed.

If elements of content fit conventional notions of ideology (Gans calls them 'para-ideology'), aspects of form operate more subtly. Assumptions about narrative, storytelling, human interest and the conventions of photographic and linguistic presentation influence news production. The inverted-pyramid form is a peculiar development of late nineteenth-century American journalism and one that implicitly authorized the journalist as political expert and helped redefine politics itself as a subject appropriately discussed by experts rather than partisans (Schudson 1982); a comparison of television news in Italy and the United States shows that formal conventions of news reporting often attributed to the technology of television by analysts or to 'the nature of things' by journalists in fact stem from features of a country's political culture (Hallin and Mancini 1984). News is a form of literature; among the resources journalists work with are the traditions of storytelling, picture-making and sentence construction they inherit from their own cultures, with assumptions about the world built in.

Reporters breathe a specifically journalistic, occupational cultural air as well as the air they share with fellow citizens. The 'routines' of journalists are not only social, emerging out of interactions among officials, reporters and editors, but literary, emerging out of interactions of writers with literary traditions. More than that, journalists at work operate not only to maintain and repair their social relations with sources and colleagues but also to sustain their cultural image as journalists in the eyes of a wider world. Television news reporters deploy experts in stories not only to provide viewers with information but to certify the journalist's 'effort, access, and superior knowledge' (Manoff 1989: 69). Reporters in American broadcast news establish their own authority visually and verbally by marking their personal proximity to the events they cover. Regardless of how the news was in fact 'gathered', it is presented in a style that promotes an illusion of the journalists' adherence to the journalistic norm of proximity (Zelizer 1990). The reality journalists manufacture provides not only a version and vision of 'the world' but of journalism itself.

Most research on the culture of news production takes it for granted that, at least within a given national tradition, there is one common news standard among journalists. This is one of the convenient simplifications of the sociology of journalism that merits rethinking. Reporters who may adhere to norms of 'objectivity' in reporting on a political campaign (what Daniel Hallin calls the 'sphere of legitimate controversy') will report gushingly about a topic on which there is broad national consensus (the 'sphere of consensus') or will write derisively on a subject that lies beyond the bounds of popular consensus (the 'sphere of deviance') (Hallin 1986: 117). It is as if journalists were unconsciously multilingual, code-switching from neutral interpreters to guardians of social consensus and back again without missing a beat. Elihu Katz and Daniel Dayan have noted how television journalists in Britain, the United States, Israel and elsewhere who narrate

live 'media events' rather than ordinary daily news stories abandon a matter-of-fact style for 'cosmic lyricism' (1992: 108). Yoram Peri shows that code-switching took place in Israeli print journalism in covering the martyred Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. In life, Rabin walked in the sphere of legitimate controversy, but in death, he was absorbed into the sphere of consensus (Peri 1997).

Although cultural explanations of news often overlap with social explanations, sometimes they conflict. The most striking example of this is research by Scott Althaus that challenges the view that news reproduces the array of elite opinion among the sources journalists rely on.

Althaus finds, to the contrary, that US news reporting on American foreign policy over-represents views critical of administration action. Why should this be? Not, Althaus concludes, because the media oppose a particular administration but because they are following occupational norms that emphasize balance as well as journalism's eagerness for drama and conflict (Althaus 2003).

Conclusions

Most studies of news, regardless of the approach they take, begin with a normative assumption that the news media *should* serve society by informing the general population in ways that arm them for vigilant citizenship. I agree that this is one goal the news media in a democracy should try to serve, but it is not a good approximation of what role the news media have historically played. The news media have always been a more important forum for communication among elites (and some elites more than others) than with the general population. In the best of circumstances, the fact that news reaches a general audience provides a regular opportunity for elites to be effectively embarrassed, even disgraced, as Brent Fisse and John Braithwaite show in their cross-national study of the impact of publicity on corporate offenders (1983). The combination of electoral democracy with a free press, economist Amartya Sen has argued, have prevented famines even when crops have failed (Sen and Dreze 1989). But even in these cases the 'audience' or the 'public' has a kind of phantom existence that the sociological study of news production has yet to consider in its theoretical formulations.

The four general approaches discussed here do not account for all that we might want to know. They help to explain historical changes in news, but to the extent that these changes emerge from broad historical forces, research focused exclusively on the news institutions themselves is likely to fall short. Take just one important example. There has been a shift over the past several decades, reported in studies from around the world, toward more informal, more intimate, more critical and more cynically detached or distanced styles of reporting.

British television interviewing changed from a formal and deferential approach toward politicians to one that was more aggressive and critical (Scannell 1989: 146); Japanese broadcasting became 'more cynical and populist' in the past several decades (Krauss 1998: 686); Swedish journalism became less deferential to power and more part of a culture of 'critical scrutiny' (Djerf-Pierre 2000); reporting in

Brazil, Argentina and Peru became more aggressive and more eager to report scandal (Waisbord 1997: 201). One can point to more melodramatic reporting in Norway (Eide 1997: 179) or a style both more critical and more intimate in the Netherlands (van Zoonen 1991) or, in many countries, more mocking and satirical. There is some evidence that the German press has resisted these trends (Wilke and Reinemann 2001) but the developments are remarkably widespread. This transformation of public culture around the globe, now accentuated in bloggers' inclination to informal, sassy, and snarky talk or in Twitter users' caustic or comic tweets marks a profound shift in the character of cultural authority, a change whose deeper roots and whose consequences have yet to be understood.

Epilogue

The study of news production over the last half dozen years has exploded in the area of digital news (see also C.W. Anderson's contribution to this volume). It is already impossible to review all that has been written or to integrate it into the main text of this article – not only because there is so much change and turmoil in journalism but also because of the rapid expansion in academic interest in journalism. In English language literature, there are not only longstanding journals like the *Journal of Communication* (1951) and *Media, Culture & Society* (1979) and *The Information Society* (1981) but a proliferation of journals that have emerged over the past twenty years: *Information, Communication, and Society* (1998), *New Media and Society* (1999), *Journalism Studies* (2000), *Journalism: Theory, Practice and Criticism* (2000), *International Journal of Communication* (2007), *Journalism Practice* (2008), *Digital Journalism* (2013), and more.

Multiple lines of inquiry have attracted attention. The central concern is whether or in what ways the online environment has fundamentally changed how news is produced, distributed and consumed. This is a huge topic that I can do little more than point to. I think it's fair to say that the central concern has been whether and to what extent the meaning of news changes when, online, it is consumed outside the context of placement in a news organization-produced product. As Carlson (2016) observes, a news story in a printed newspaper acquires meaning from (a) the fact that it is included in the newspaper in the first place, indicating that the reporters and editors have judged it to be of some general interest or importance, and (b) its placement relative to other news stories in the newspaper – indicated in the size of its headline, its location on the front page or on 'inside' pages, its placement at the top of the page or further down, and so on – all of which identifies to the reader what the journalists think the relative importance and interest of the story may be. While it is possible to reproduce a digital facsimile of the printed page where all this information is retained, the online environment has made it possible, indeed likely, that consumers will see a story shorn of its placement on the page and in a form that blurs its close connection to the news organization that produced it. A story may come to the reader's attention through its being forwarded in an email from a friend or from an organization the reader trusts or

from an individual or organization the reader does not know at all or from a 'news feed' from Facebook. How and how much does the impact of news so received differ from conventional news consumption?

Moreover, sharing, linking and forwarding then make the experience of news different and somewhat vague compared to news consumption of the past. What can be called 'shareability' has become a feature of news stories that news organizations take into consideration as they assign stories. News organizations focus more than they did in the past on the shareability of stories or what a Dutch study calls 'shareworthiness' rather than 'newsworthiness' (Trilling et al. 2017). As news organizations – both 'legacy' news organizations that have been in operation for a century or more and news organizations born online – grow eager to have their news products 'shared', they encourage their staffs to produce stories that consumers will be inclined to share. The reporters are then encouraged not only to write stories but to market them on Facebook and Twitter and other social media. We are witnessing some kind of shift in journalism from a professional focus on 'newsworthiness' to a somewhat more business-centered focus on 'shareworthiness'. But sharing is not an unmediated transaction online. Trilling et al. (2017) find in their study of Dutch online sharing that 'shareworthiness' differs depending on what platform one shares on – apparently, people use different platforms for different purposes, and what people judge to be shareable on email differs from what they find shareable on Facebook, and what they find shareable on Facebook is different from what is shareable on Twitter. For instance, news stories with a human interest emphasis are more widely shared on Facebook than on Twitter. My unresearched guess would be that a larger percentage of Twitter than Facebook users see Twitter as a place to share political news and political opinion, while Facebook is more family- and friend-centred. In any event, it seems that the term 'social media' covers a lot of territory and not all social media locations have the same audiences or the same affordances.

What has changed, and what hasn't changed, in journalism is easy to misjudge. Not long ago (2011), I wrote that in the digital era there has been a 'blurring' between once settled and stable divisions – between reader and writer; between the news or editorial side of the news organization and the business and advertising side; between producers and consumers of news; between professional and amateur news producers; between profit and non-profit and governmental news organizations; between different formats for transmitting news, from book to newspaper to news magazine to blog, to social media post to tweet; and between old media and new media. That was all true in 2011 and it is still true at the time of writing, but how transformative has this blurring been? Today, at least in the American case, the giants of the news-producing world remain those organizations that began in the nineteenth century as private, profit-seeking news enterprises, affiliated or not with political parties. These organizations became more and more professionalized and they have adapted to the digital era without changing their objectives or their values.

In the US, the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* in the early 1970s were the national leaders in covering the Vietnam war and the Nixon administration; in

2017 and 2018 they are still the national leaders in covering the corruption of the federal government in the hands of Donald Trump and his relative indifference to the dignity and sobriety of his office. Other news organizations have come to prominence, notably *ProPublica* and *Politico*, both of them prominent digital properties, but both have been led by veteran journalists from the *Washington Post*, the *Wall Street Journal* and elsewhere.

None of these operations is any longer exclusively in print. The *Times* and the *Post* continue to attract audiences who avidly read their print editions, but these readers – though still very important to the economic survival of these organizations – are far outnumbered by digital subscribers. At the same time, the economic discontinuities between the 1970s and the 2010s may be no more notable than the social-cultural continuities and the continued strength of journalists' commitment to the principled, public service tasks of their field. One small example: President Trump's Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, Tom Price, was forced to resign his post because of the work of two reporters at *Politico*. Learning from a 'tip' – the well-established pattern of an insider 'leaking' to a reporter – these reporters followed up on documenting how Secretary Price routinely travelled by expensive privately chartered jets rather than commercial air travel. But, getting no cooperation from Secretary Price's office, how could they track down information on these flights – how, how many, to where, for what purposes, and at what cost to the taxpayers? Private plane take-offs and landings are not recorded on publicly available databases. By the reporters' own account, it took them months of research and some 1,000 hours of effort before they felt the story to be secure, verified and ready to publish. They published three stories in the course of a week in late September 2017 and within days Price was forced to resign (Diamond and Pradhan 2017; Schudson 2018).

This was not citizen journalism. It was not made important by social media. It was not the work of amateurs. There was nothing blurred about it. It was news professionals following a story, backed by a digital-era news start-up built to its very core by news values and journalistic ideals that emerged in the nineteenth century, that were codified in the early twentieth century, that were revised in the late twentieth century, and that endure today, even amidst the transformative changes that new media technologies have brought to journalism (very much like higher education, in this respect) in our time.

Bibliography

Althaus, S. L. (2003), 'When News Norms Collide, Follow the Lead: New Evidence for Press Independence', *Political Communication*, 20: 381–414.

Althaus, S. L., J. A. Edy, R. M. Entman and P. Phalen (1996), 'Revising the Indexing Hypothesis: Officials, Media, and the Libya Crisis', *Political Communication*, 13: 407–21.

Alwood, E. (1998), *Straight News, Gay News, and the News Media*, New York: Columbia University Press.

Bagdikian, B. (1983), *The Media Monopoly*, Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Baker, C. E. (1994), 'Ownership of Newspapers: The View from Positivist Social Science', Cambridge, MA: Joan Shorenstein Center on Press, Politics, and Public Policy, Research Paper R-12, Harvard University.

Beasley, M. (1993) 'Newspapers: Is There a New Majority Defining the News?' in P. J. Creedon (ed.), *Women in Mass Communication*, Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Bennett, T. (1982), 'Media, "Reality", Signification', in M. Gurevitch, T. Bennett, J. Curran and J. Woollacott (eds), *Culture, Society and the Media*, 287–308, London: Methuen.

Benson, R. (2013), 'Institutional Form of Media Ownership and Their Modes of Power', in M. Eide, C. O. Larsen and H. Sjøvaag (eds), *The Journalistic Institution Reexamined: Digital Challenges and Professional Reorientations*, 27–48, Chicago: Intellect, University of Chicago Press.

Best, J. (1999), *Random Violence: How We Talk About New Crimes and New Victims,* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Blumler, J. G. (1997), 'Origins of the Crisis of Communication for Citizenship', *Political Communication*, 14: 395–404.

Blumler, J. G. (1999), 'Political Communication Systems All Change: A Response to Kees Brants', *European Journal of Communication*, 14: 241–49.

Blumler, J. G. and M. Gurevitch (1995), *The Crisis of Public Communication,* London: Routledge.

Brants, K. (1998), 'Who's Afraid of Infotainment?', *European Journal of Communication*, 13: 305–35.

Breed, W. (1952/1980), *The Newspaperman, News and Society*, New York: Arno Press.

Breed, W. (1955), 'Social Control in the Newsroom: A Functional Analysis', *Social Forces,* 33: 326–55.

Carlson, M. (2016), 'Embedded Links, Embedded Meanings: Social Media Commentary and News Sharing as Mundane Media Criticism', *Journalism Studies*, 18 (7): 915–24.

Cohen, B. C. (1963), *The Press and Foreign Policy*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Cohen, S. and J. Young, eds (1973), *The Manufacture of News: A Reader*, Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Cook, T. E. (1989), *Making Laws and Making News: Media Strategies in the U.S. House of Representatives*, Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.

Crouse, T. (1973), *The Boys on the Bus*, New York: Ballantine.

Curran, J., A. Douglas and G. Whannel (1980), 'The Political Economy of the Human-Interest Story', in Anthony Smith (ed.), *Newspapers and Democracy*, 288–342, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Curry, J. L. (1990), *Poland's Journalists: Professionalism and Politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dassin, J. (1982), 'Press Censorship and the Military State in Brazil', in J. L. Curry and J. R. Dassin (eds), *Press Control Around the World*, 149–86, New York: Praeger.

Demers, D. (1996), 'Corporate Newspaper Structure, Editorial Page Vigor, and Social Change', *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, 73: 857–77.

De Smaele, H. (1999), 'The Applicability of Western Media Models on the Russian Media System', *European Journal of Communication*, 14: 173–89.

Diamond, D. and R. Pradhan (2017), 'How We Found Tom Price's Private Jets', *Politico*, 4 Oct.

Djerf-Pierre, M. (2000), 'Squaring the Circle: Public Service and Commercial News on Swedish Television, 1956–99', *Journalism Studies*, 1: 239–60.

Donsbach, W. (1995), 'Lapdogs, Watchdogs and Junkyard Dogs', *Media Studies Journal*, Fall: 17–30.

Downie, L. and R. G. Kaiser (2002), *The News About the News*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002.

Dreier, P. (1982), 'Capitalists vs. the Media: An Analysis of an Ideological Mobilization Among Business Leaders', *Media, Culture & Society*, 4 (1982): 111–32.

Dunne, D. D. (1969), *Public Officials and the Press*, Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Eide, M. (1997), 'A New Kind of Newspaper? Understanding a Popularization Process', *Media, Culture & Society*, 19: 173–82.

Elias, N. (1996), 'Changes in European Standards of Behaviour in the Twentieth Century', in N. Elias, *The Germans*, 23–43. New York: Columbia University Press.

Epstein, E. J. (1973), *News From Nowhere,* New York: Random House.

Esser, F. (1998), 'Editorial Structures and Work Principles in British and German Newsrooms', *European Journal of Communication*, 13: 375–405.

Feldman, O. (1993), *Politics and the News Media in Japan*, Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Fink, K. and M. Schudson (2013), 'The Rise of Contextual Journalism, 1950s–2000s', *Journalism: Theory, Practice and Criticism*, 15 (1): 3–20.

Fishman, M. (1980), *Manufacturing the News*, Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

Fisse, B. and J. Braithwaite (1983), *The Impact of Publicity on Corporate Offenders*, Albany, NJ: State University of New York Press.

Freeman, L. A. (2000), *Closing the Shop: Information Cartels and Japan's Mass Media*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Galtung, J. and M. Ruge (1970), 'The Structure of Foreign News: The Presentation of the Congo, Cuba and Cyprus Crises in Four Foreign Newspapers', in J. Tunstall (ed.), *Media Sociology: A Reader*, 259–98, Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Gamson, J. and P. Latteier (2004), 'Do Media Monsters Devour Diversity?', *Contexts*, 3: 26–32.

Gans, H. J. (1979), *Deciding What's News: A Study of CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News, Newsweek and Time*, New York: Pantheon.

Gans, H. J. (1985), 'Are U. S. Journalists Dangerously Liberal?', *Columbia Journalism Review*, (November/December), 29–33.

Garnham, N. (1990), *Capitalism and Communication*, London: SAGE Publications.

Gieber, W. (1964), 'News is What Newspapermen Make It', in L. A. Dexter and D. H. White (eds), *People, Society and Mass Communications*, New York: Free Press.

Gitlin, T. (1980), *The Whole World Is Watching*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Goldenberg, E. (1975), *Making the Papers*, Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath.

Hagen, L. (1997), 'The Transformation of the Media System of the Former German Democratic Republic After the Reunification and Its Effects on the Political Content of Newspapers', *European Journal of Communication*, 12: 5–26.

Hall, S. (1973), 'The Determination of News Photographs', in S. Cohen and J. Young (eds), *The Manufacture of News: A Reader*, 176–90, Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Hallin, D. C. (1986), *The Uncensored War: The Media and Vietnam*, New York: Oxford.

Hallin, D. C. (1994), *We Keep America on Top of the World*, London: Routledge.

Hallin, D. C. and P. Mancini (1984), 'Speaking of the President: Political Structure and Representational Form in U.S. and Italian Television News', *Theory and Society*, 13: 829–50.

Hallin, D. C. and P. Mancini (2004), *Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hallin, D. C., R. K. Manoff and J. K. Weddle (1993), 'Sourcing Patterns of National Security
  Reporters', *Journalism Quarterly*, 70: 753–66.
Hamilton, J. T. (2004), *All the News That's Fit to Sell*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University
  Press.
Hannerz, U. (2004), *Foreign News: Exploring the World of Foreign Correspondents*, Chicago:
  University of Chicago Press.
Harcup, T. and D. O'Neill (2017), 'What Is News? News Values Revisited (Again)',
  Journalism Studies, 18 (12): 1470–88.
Hartmann, P. and C. Husband (1973), 'The Mass Media and Racial Conflict', in S. Cohen
  and J. Young (eds), *The Manufacture of News: A Reader*, 270–83, Thousand Oaks, CA:
  SAGE Publications.
Herman, E. S. and N. Chomsky (1988), *Manufacturing Consent*, New York: Pantheon.
Hess, S. (1981), *The Washington Reporters*, Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution.
Hess, S. (1984), *The Government/Press Connection*, Washington, DC: The Brookings
  Institution Press.
Jakubowicz, K. (1995), 'Media Within and Without the State: Press Freedom in Eastern
  Europe', *Journal of Communication*, 45 (4): 125–39.
Jeffrey, R. (2001), '(Not) Being There: Dalits and Indian Newspapers', *South Asia*,
  24: 225–38.
Kalb, M. (1998), 'The Rise of the "New News": A Case Study of Two Root Causes of the
  Modern Scandal Coverage', Cambridge, MA: Joan Shorenstein Center on Press,
  Politics, and Public Policy, Discussion Paper D-34.
Katz, E. (1998), 'And Deliver Us From Segmentation', in R. G. Noll and M. E. Price (eds),
  A Communications Cornucopia, 99–112, Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution
  Press.
Katz, E. and D. Dayan (1992), *Media Events: The Live Broadcasting of History*, Cambridge,
  MA: Harvard University Press.
Keane, J. (1991), *Liberty of the Press*, Cambridge: Polity.
King, G., J. Pan and M. E. Roberts (2013), 'How Censorship in China Allows Government
  Criticism but Silences Collective Expression', *American Political Science Review*, 107 (2):
  326–43.
Krauss, E. (1998), 'Changing Television News in Japan', *Journal of Asian Studies*, 57: 663–92.
Krauss, E. (2000), *Broadcasting Politics in Japan: NHK TV News*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell
  University Press.
Lavie, A. and S. Lehman-Wilzig (2003), 'Whose News? Does Gender Determine the
  Editorial Product?', *European Journal of Communication*, 18: 5–29.
Lawrence, R. G. (2000), *The Politics of Force: Media and the Construction of Police Brutality*,
  Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
Lee, J. (1997), 'Press Freedom and Democratization: South Korea's Experience and Some
  Lessons', *Gazette*, 59 (2): 135–49.
Lei, Ya-Wen (2017), *The Contentious Public Sphere*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University
  Press.
Lichter, S. R., S. Rothman and L. S. Lichter (1986), *The Media Elite: America's New
  Powerbrokers*, Bethesda, MD: Adler and Adler.
Livingston, S. and W. L. Bennett (2003), 'Gatekeeping, Indexing, and Live-Event News: Is
  Technology Altering the Construction of News?', *Political Communication*, 20: 363–80.
Livingston, S. and T. Eachus (1995), 'Humanitarian Crises and U.S. Foreign Policy: Somalia
  and the CNN Effect Reconsidered', *Political Communication*, 12: 413–29.

Mancini, P. (1991), 'The Public Sphere and the Use of News in a "Coalition" System of Government', in P. Dahlgren and C. Sparks (eds), *Communication and Citizenship*, 137–54, London: Routledge.

Manoff, R. K. (1989), 'Modes of War and Modes of Social Address: The Text of SDI', *Journal of Communication*, 39: 59–84.

Matthews, M. N. (1996), 'How Public Ownership Affects Publisher Autonomy', *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, 73: 342–53.

Mazzoleni, G. (1995), 'Towards a 'Videocracy'? Italian Political Communication at a Turning Point', *European Journal of Communication*, 10: 291–319.

McChesney, R. W. (1997), *Corporate Media and the Threat to Democracy*, New York: Seven Stories Press.

Mermin, J. (1997), 'Television News and American Intervention in Somalia: The Myth of a Media-Driven Foreign Policy', *Political Science Quarterly*, 112: 385–403.

Mickiewicz, E. (1988), *Split Signals: Television and Politics in the Soviet Union*, New York: Oxford.

Mills, K. (1990), *A Place in the News*, New York: Dodd, Mead.

Moisy, C. (1996), 'The Foreign News Flow in the Information Age', Cambridge, MA: Joan Shorenstein Center on Press, Politics, and Public Policy, Discussion Paper D-23.

Molotch H. and M. Lester (1974), 'News as Purposive Behavior: On the Strategic Use of Routine Events, Accidents, and Scandals', *American Sociological Review*, 39: 101–12.

Montgomery, M. (2006), 'Broadcast News, the Live 'Two-Way' and the Case of Andrew Gilligan', *Media, Culture & Society*, 28: 233–59.

Murschetz, P. (1998), 'State Support for the Daily Press in Europe: A Critical Appraisal', *European Journal of Communication*, 13: 291–313.

Murdock, G. (1982), 'Large Corporations and the Control of the Communications Industries', in M. Gurevitch, T. Bennett, J. Curran and J. Woollacott, *Culture, Society and the Media*, 118–150, London: Methuen.

Murdock, G. and P. Golding (1977), 'Capitalism, Communication and Class Relations', in J. Curran, M. Gurevitch and J. Woollacott (eds), in *Mass Communication and Society*, 12–43, London. Edward Arnold.

Noam, E. (1991), *Television in Europe*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Okrent, D. (2004), *Great Fortune*, New York: Penguin.

Pearce, F. (1973), 'How To Be Immoral and Ill, Pathetic and Dangerous, All At the Same Time: Mass Media and the Homosexual', in S. Cohen and J. Young (eds), *The Manufacture of News: A Reader*, 284–301, Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Peri, Y. (1997), 'The Rabin Myth and the Press: Reconstruction of the Israeli Collective Identity', *European Journal of Communication,* 12: 435–58.

Pharr, S. J. (1996), 'Media as Trickster in Japan: A Comparative Perspective', in S. J. Pharr and E. S. Krauss (eds), *Media and Politics in Japan*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

Polumbaum, J. (1993), 'Professionalism in China's Press Corps', in R. V. Des Forges, L. Ning and W. Yen-bo (eds), *China's Crisis of 1989*, 295–311, Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

Polumbaum, J. (1994), 'To Protect or Restrict: Points of Contention in China's Draft Press Law', in P. B. Potter (ed.), *Domestic Law Reforms in Post-Mao China*, 247–69, Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe.

Remington, T. F. (1988), *The Truth of Authority: Ideology and Communication in the Soviet Union,* Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Rivers, W. (1962), 'The Correspondents After 25 Years', *Columbia Journalism Review*, 1: 4–10.

Robinson, M. J. and M. A. Sheehan (1983), *Over the Wire and On TV*, New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Rosten, L. C. (1937), *The Washington Correspondents*, New York: Harcourt, Brace.

Rusbridger, A. (2009), 'I've Seen the Future and It's Mutual', *British Journalism Review*, 20 (September): 19–26.

Sahlins, M. (1985), *Islands of History*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Scannell, P. (1989), 'Public Service Broadcasting and Modern Public Life', *Media, Culture & Society*, 11: 135–66.

Schlesinger, P. and H. Tumber (1994), *Reporting Crime: The Media Politics of Criminal Justice*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Schudson, M. (1982), 'The Politics of Narrative Form: The Emergence of News Conventions in Print and Television', *Daedalus*, 111: 97–113.

Schudson, M. (1994), 'Question Authority: A History of the News Interview in American Journalism, l860s–1930s', *Media, Culture & Society*, 16: 565–87.

Schudson, M. (1995), *The Power of News*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Schudson, M. (2008), *Why Democracies Need an Unlovable Press*, Cambridge: Polity.

Schudson, M. (2011), *The Sociology of News*, 2nd edn, New York: W. W. Norton.

Schudson, M. (2018), *Why Journalism still Matters*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Sen, A. and J. Dreze (1989), *Hunger and Public Action*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Sigal, L. V. (1973), *Reporters and Officials*, Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.

Skogerbø, E. (1997), 'The Press Subsidy System in Norway', *European Journal of Communication*, 12: 99–118.

Sparks, C. (1991), 'Goodbye, Hildy Johnson: The Vanishing "Serious Press"', in P. Dahlgren and C. Sparks (eds), *Communication and Citizenship,* 58–74, London: Routledge.

Sparks, C. and S. Splichal (1989), 'Journalistic Education and Professional Socialisation', *Gazette*, 43: 31–52.

Starr, P. (2004), *The Creation of the Media: Political Origins of Modern Communications*, New York: Basic Books.

Steele, J. E. (1995), 'Experts and the Operational Bias of Television News: The Case of the Persian Gulf War', *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, 72: 799–812.

Sumpter, R. S. (2000), 'Daily Newspaper Editors' Audience Construction Routines: A Case Study', *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 17: 334–46.

Trilling, D., P. Tolochko and B. Burscher (2017), 'From Newsworthiness to Shareworthiness: How to Predict News Sharing Based on Article Characteristics', *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 94 (1): 38–60.

Tuchman, G. (1972), 'Objectivity as Strategic Ritual: An Examination of Newsmen's Notions of Objectivity', *American Journal of Sociology*, 77: 660–79.

Tuchman, G. (1976), 'Telling Stories', *Journal of Communication*, 26: 93–97.

Tuchman, G. (1978), *Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality*, New York: Free Press.

Underwood, D. (1995), *When MBAs Rule the Newsroom*, New York: Columbia University Press.

van Zoonen, L. (1991), 'A Tyranny of Intimacy? Women, Femininity and Television News', in P. Dahlgren and C. Sparks (eds), *Communication and Citizenship*, 217–35, London: Routledge.

Waisbord, S. (1994), 'Knocking on Newsroom Doors: The Press and Political Scandals in Argentina', *Political Communication*, 11: 19–33.

Waisbord, S. (1995), 'Leviathan Dreams: State and Broadcasting in South America', *Communication Review*, 1: 201–26.

Waisbord, S. (1997), 'The Narrative of Exposes in South American Journalism', *Gazette*, 59: 189–203.

Waisbord, S. (2000), *Watchdog Journalism in South America*, New York: Columbia University Press.

Waisbord, S. (2002), 'Anti-press Violence and the Crisis of the State', *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics,* 7: 90–109.

Weaver, D. and G. C. Wilhoit (1991), *The American Journalist*, 2nd edn, Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Wilke, J. and C. Reinemann (2001), 'Do the Candidates Matter? Long-Term Trends of Campaign Coverage – A Study of the German Press Since 1949', *European Journal of Communication*, 16: 291–314.

Yang, G. (2009), *The Power of the Internet in China*, New York: Columbia University Press.

Zaller, J. and D. Chiu (2000), 'Government's Little Helper: U.S. Press Coverage of Foreign Policy Crises, 1946–1999', in B. L. Nacos, R. Y. Shapiro and P. Isernia (eds), *Decisionmaking in a Glass House*, 61–84, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Zelizer, B. (1990), 'Where is the Author in American TV News? On the Construction and Presentation of Proximity, Authorship, and Journalistic Authority', *Semiotica*, 80: 37–48.

Zhao, Y. (1998), *Media, Market, and Democracy in China: Between the Party Line and the Bottom Line*, Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Zhao, Y. (2008), *Communication in China*, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Chapter 9

WESTERN MEDIA SYSTEMS IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

Daniel C. Hallin and Paolo Mancini

The comparative method has been fundamental to the development of social theory since the late nineteenth century. Curiously, however, it played little role in the field of communication until recent years. The old classic *Four Theories of the Press* (Siebert, Peterson and Schramm 1956: 1) set out to answer the question 'why does [the press] apparently serve different purposes and appear in widely different forms in different countries?' The limited progress communication scholars made in addressing the question is eloquently symbolized by the very fact that *Four Theories of the Press* was still widely used as a framework for comparison worldwide for decades after it came out, even though it contained little analysis of the way media systems actually operated, and only really addressed the media in the United States, the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union.

For many years, communication research developed in a context where professional education was dominant. Journalism schools were intended to pass on a model of how journalism 'ought' to be done, and comparative research seemed much too 'relativistic' and impractical from this point of view. American and British educators, especially, believed they knew right way to do journalism, and were more interested in passing this on to the rest of other media models. *Four Theories of the Press* reflected this normative approach, focusing on 'the authoritarian libertarian, social responsibility and Soviet communist concepts of what the press *should* be and do' (this was its subtitle, emphasis added), rather than on how the media actually interacted with other institutions, groups and interests in society. Most empirical research in the generation following *Four Theories of the Press*, moreover, was about how particular media messages affected attitudes and beliefs of individuals, not about the media as institutions within a wider social and political system. In recent years the field of communication has begun to shift away from the study of media effects to the study of media systems, focusing, for example, on the development of professional culture and the way in which mass media interact with the world of politics. As attention moves to the level of systems, institutions and culture, the need for analysis across national systems becomes increasingly evident.

Why comparative analysis?

Comparative analysis in social theory can be understood in terms of two basic functions: its role in concept formation, and its role in causal inference.

It is valuable, in the first place, because it sensitizes us to variation and to similarity, and this can contribute powerfully to the refinement of our conceptual apparatus. Traditionally most scholarship on the media has been highly ethnocentric, in the sense that it refers only to the experience of a single country, yet is written in general terms, as though the model that prevailed in that country were universal. This style of research has often held media researchers back from asking why media systems have the particular characteristics they do.

Important aspects of media systems are assumed to be 'natural', or in some cases are so familiar that they are not perceived at all. Because it 'denaturalizes' a media system that is familiar to us, comparison forces us to conceptualize more clearly what aspects of that system actually require explanation. Our own comparative work began with the experience of exactly this type of insight. Comparing US and Italian TV news in the early 1980s, familiar patterns of news construction, which we had to some extent assumed were the natural form of TV news, were revealed to us as products of a particular system, including, for example, the highly interpretive character of American compared with Italian TV news, a characteristic which contradicted common assumptions about 'objective' journalism in the American system (Hallin and Mancini 1984). Comparative analysis can protect us from false generalizations; but it can also encourage us to move from overly particular explanations to more general ones where this is appropriate. In the US, for example, media coverage of politicians has become increasingly negative over the past few decades. We typically explain that change by reference to historical events like Vietnam and Watergate, as well as changes in the conduct of election campaigns. This trend, however, is found across many Western democracies – which suggests that particular historical events internal to the US are not an adequate explanation.

The second reason comparison is important in social investigation is that it may allow us to test hypotheses about the interrelationships among social phenomena. Following Durkheim's (1965) principle that 'we have only one means of demonstrating that one phenomenon is the cause of another: it is to compare the cases where they are simultaneously present or absent', this has become the standard methodology in much of the social sciences, particularly among those interested in analyzing social phenomena at the system level, where variation will often not exist in a single-country study. This is a more advanced use of comparative analysis, since it assumes that the basic work of clarifying concepts and dimensions or 'variables' for comparison has already been done. Once this work has been done, comparative analysis has great potential to help us sort out relationships between media systems and their social and political settings.

Media system models

In this chapter, we present the results of a comparative analysis of media systems in eighteen countries of Western Europe and North America (Hallin and Mancini 2004). Although it is common to talk about 'Western' media in the abstract, as though a common model applied to all the advanced capitalist democracies of the 'West', we argue that several distinct patterns can be found in the development of Western media, and we organize the discussion in terms of three models, which we call the Polarized Pluralist or Mediterranean Model, the Democratic Corporatist or North/Central European Model and the Liberal or North Atlantic Model.

These 'models' are intended as analytical tools to understand particular historical patterns of development in the eighteen countries we studied, not as a set of universal categories to be applied to any media system. Our study is thus intended as an example of *how* to do comparative research on media systems, not as a general framework for comparison on a global scale. We will return, briefly, to the question of how our analysis relates to cases beyond North American and Western Europe in the concluding section.

Several additional qualifications are also important. The models are 'ideal types' in the sense that Max Weber used the term. We discuss a particular set of countries under each model. But none of the 'cases' corresponds exactly with the ideal type; the model is a conceptual tool that helps us to think about characteristic patterns, and also to pose questions about why certain countries do and do not fit those patterns. There is a graphic summary of the way we present the relation of individual cases to the ideal types represented by the three models that suggests many media systems, like those in France or Britain, can be considered as mixed cases, combining elements of more than one model. Some may also have changed position since we did our original analysis, as we will see subsequently.

Individual media systems are also not internally homogeneous. This was another limitation of *Four Theories of the Press*: it gave the impression that each media system had a certain philosophical core that was reflected in each element of the system. In fact, real media systems often involve elements that evolved in different historical or structural contexts and operate according to different logics, or divisions of labour between different parts of the system. It is common, for example, that print media, at least at the national level, reflect a logic of 'external pluralism', with different newspapers or magazines representing different political tendencies. Broadcast media, on the other hand, were typically characterized by very limited channel capacity in their early days, and have often been required by law to be internally pluralistic.

Finally, media systems are not static. Our models focus on Western media systems as they developed in the later part of the twentieth century. Clearly they have been transformed substantially in recent years, however. Commercialization of broadcasting and the decline of the strongly-rooted political parties of European history can be seen as moving European media systems toward the liberal model in important ways, for example, and some scholars have argued that certain countries we studied are closer now to the liberal model than to the models we

originally identified them with, including particularly Portugal and the Netherlands (Brüggemann et al. 2014). At the same time the liberal model itself is undergoing considerable change, as manifested, for example, in the re-emergence of partisan media in the US.

One factor that is also changing media systems is the rise of internet-based media. It is still too early to know for certain how this is changing the patterns that emerged through the eras of print and television. Three possibilities are worth keeping in mind. It might be that internet-based media would have a logic of their own, rooted in the technology, that would diminish differences among national media systems. It might be that the development of new media would be shaped by the existing media culture, and end up reinforcing dominant practices within a media system. Finally, it might be that new media would be shaped by the different systems in which they developed, but would develop *contrary to* rather than consistent with the dominant practices, filling niches in a particular media ecology that were *not* filled by the legacy media – recall here the point that media systems are not internally homogeneous. Some preliminary research gives support to each of these patterns.

Dimensions of comparison

In comparing the three media system models we will focus on four 'dimensions' or clusters of variables:

1. Media markets. One of the most obvious differences among the media systems we studied has to do with the fact that in some, newspapers developed as a part of mass culture and were central to the daily lives of most citizens, across social classes and also genders, while in others the press was directed at an educated, mostly male, politically active elite. Differences in the use and role of electronic media have been less marked, particularly since the introduction of commercial broadcasting in Europe. In other contexts, of course, other dimensions of media markets might distinguish media systems, including internet access and use.

2. Political parallelism. In some countries, the organization of the media system closely reflects the main lines of division within the political system; in others, the relation is looser. This is often referred to as 'party-press parallelism', though today, when few newspapers have clear identifications with a single political party, it is more useful to use the more general term 'political parallelism'. In the past, in Europe especially, many newspapers had *organizational ties* with political parties or trade unions. Party papers were not necessarily directly controlled by their respective parties, but often were owned by associations connected with them – groups of readers, for example, made up of supporters of a particular party. Party-press parallelism is also manifested in the character of *news content*, including the degree to which media discourses and discourses of partisan politics coincide, in *career patterns of journalists* and in the *patterns of readership or viewership*.

3. Journalistic professionalism. This is a tricky concept, and we will only be able in this chapter to touch on some of the issues that arise in trying to use it in comparative analysis. We define it in terms of three interrelated criteria: the degree to which journalists enjoy autonomy in exercising their functions; the degree to which journalism has developed distinct shared norms and standards of practice, separate from those of other social 'fields', to use Bourdieu's term (particularly the field of party politics); and, finally the degree to which journalists see themselves and are seen by society as serving the public as a whole rather than particular sectors or actors. Journalistic professionalism is sometimes, though not always, manifested in formal institutions like journalists' unions, professional associations and press councils.

4. The role of the state. Media systems vary significantly in the degree and kind of state involvement. Most European countries developed primarily public broadcasting systems, for example, while the US had no such system at the national level until 1967, and it remains only a small part of the media system. Some systems have extensive systems of press subsidies; others do not. In some, the broadcast regulators are relatively party-politicized; in others, they are more autonomous and professionalized, similar to a central bank.

In the following sections of this chapter we summarize the principal characteristics of the three models in terms of these four dimensions and explain why distinct systems arose in different groups of countries, connecting the development of media systems with historical patterns of political and social development.

The polarized pluralist model

Balzac once described the press as:

> The word adapted to express everything which is published periodically in politics and literature, and where one judges the works both of those who govern and of those who write, two ways of leading men.
>
> quoted in Fereczi 1993: 28

In Southern Europe the press developed as part of the worlds of literature and, above all, of politics, much more than of the market. This path of development produced a media system characterized by a lower-circulation, elite-oriented press, a lower level of professionalization of journalism, a high degree of political parallelism and strong involvement of the state in the media sector.

Political parallelism

As the quotation by Balzac suggests, the journalism of the region is historically more a journalism of ideas than of information or entertainment, and the most

distinctive characteristic of the polarized pluralist model is a high degree of political parallelism. If we express it in terms of Bourdieu's field theory, we could say that in the polarized pluralist model, the media field is particularly strongly influenced by the political field. The purpose of a newspaper has been to shape opinion among the politically active population and to advance the process of bargaining among political factions. In democratic periods, the media have been highly pluralistic, reflecting a wide range of political viewpoints. The party press, in the strict sense of the term, played an important role in France and Italy – the two countries in the region with the longest history of democracy and the ones with the most developed mass political parties, especially in the period just after the Second World War. And across most of southern Europe today, both newspapers and electronic media outlets tend to have strong partisan affinities and ideological identities.

Even though media have become more market-oriented since the 1970s, numerous attempts to create neutral, 'catch-all' media similar to those commonly found in liberal and increasingly common in democratic corporatist systems have failed. The style of journalism has emphasized commentary and an active role in shaping public opinion, rather than an emphasis on providing neutral information or entertainment; and although informational and styles of journalism have gained ground in recent years, newspapers in the polarized pluralist countries still mix commentary and reporting more than those of the other two systems. Individual journalists, like media outlets, frequently have strong partisan affinities and connections, and media audiences are politically stratified, with supporters of different political parties following different media. Public broadcasting is strongly influenced by partisan politics. In Italy it has been historically organized according to the *lottizzazione* which divides political power among the parties, while public broadcasting in the other countries of the region has been under the effective control of the political majority, with France moving in the 1980s toward a more independent public broadcasting system. One final, interesting manifestation of political parallelism is the fact that in Italy, journalists are equal to lawyers as the profession most represented in parliament, while in Britain and Germany they are well behind lawyers and other professions (Ciaglia 2013).

Media markets: elite political press, electronic mass media

Enzo Forcella, an Italian journalist, once wrote, 'a political journalist, in our country, can count on fifteen hundred readers: the ministers and subsecretaries (all of them), members of Parliament (some), party and trade unions leaders, the top clergy and those industrialists who want to show themselves well informed. . . . [T] he whole system is organized around the relation of the journalist to that group of privileged readers' (Forcella 1959: 451). The newspaper in Southern Europe has served primarily – and importantly – as a means of communication among a politically active minority, rather than as a part of mass popular culture; circulation rates have always been lower than in Northern Europe reflecting lower literacy

rates, a strong separation between urban and rural culture, and a more elite-centred pattern of political participation. In the 1970s more market-oriented newspapers began to emerge in Southern Europe. But Southern European newspapers still tend to be sophisticated products with relatively small, educated and often predominantly male readerships. Electronic media meanwhile, are strongly developed; they are the true mass media of Southern Europe.

Professionalization

The professionalization of journalism, meanwhile, has developed recently, and is not as strong as in the liberal or democratic corporatist systems. Nineteenth-century newspapers, as Ortega and Humanes (2000) put it for the Spanish case, 'valued more highly writers, politicians and intellectuals' than reporters, and journalism was 'a secondary occupation, poorly paid, and to which one aspired as a springboard to a career in politics'. The status of reporters has improved, and indeed is often quite high in Southern Europe, as is the quality of writing and political analysis at the best newspapers, which tend to be very sophisticated compared with the commercial mass press of other systems. Nevertheless, journalism is not professionalized in the sense we use the term here: not strongly differentiated as a distinct, unified, autonomous social group.

Journalistic autonomy is more limited than in northern Europe, reflecting the dependence of journalism on the world of politics. One comparative survey of journalists (Donsbach and Patterson 1992) found 7 per cent of German journalists reporting that 'pressures from editors and senior management' were an 'important factor' in their jobs, compared with 13 per cent in the US, 15 per cent in Britain and 27 per cent in Italy. The limited autonomy of journalists, or, at least the more extensive overlapping between journalism and politics in Southern Europe, in part reflects a history of 'instrumentalization', in which industrialists or politicians buy newspapers or other media outlets less for the purpose of making money than of intervening in the political world. In Greece, as Papathanassopoulos (2001) notes, 'give me a ministry or I'll start a newspaper' is a traditional political threat. There are exceptions to the pattern of low autonomy. Southern Europe has a history of greater conflict over control of the media than the other systems described here, and at times journalists have contended for outright control of news organizations. The most important example where this was actually achieved was the French paper *Le Monde*, which for many years was controlled by the journalists.

The polarized pluralist model is also marked by a lower level of consensus on standards of professional practice and ethics, as political divisions have tended to eclipse professional solidarity. In Italy, for example, even though it is the only country in Europe in which access to an official Order of Journalists is controlled by an entrance exam, a code of ethics was established only in the 1990s, and surveys show it still enjoys only limited agreement among Italian journalists. The only press council in Southern Europe is in Catalonia.

Role of the state

The state plays an important, and often interventionist role in the polarized pluralist system. In part, this is because media have been weak economically, and therefore have been dependent on the state, as well as on support from private interests desirous of a political voice. Through much of their history, the countries of Southern Europe have been under dictatorship, and the media have been censored or controlled. In democratic periods, too, however, the role of the state has been strong. France and Italy have the highest levels of press subsidy in Europe. In the late 2000s, when newspapers were hit with a severe financial crisis, one French response was a state-subsidized initiative to provide free subscriptions to youth aged eighteen to twenty-four. The state has often owned media enterprises, either in whole or in part, sometimes through parastatal companies (which have also been important advertisers). Political actors often become involved in organizing the financing of the sale of a media outlet or creation of a new one.

There is also, however, another side to the role of the state in Southern Europe. In many cases, its grasp exceeds its reach, as political factionalism and clientelism often undermine effective public service regulation of media industries. In Italy, for example, the political system failed to establish a regulatory system for broadcasting after the Italian Supreme Court invalidated the monopoly of public broadcasting in the 1970s. Berlusconi's empire was built in that regulatory vacuum. The exception is France, which has always had an effective central state: the Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel is a strong regulatory agency by world standards.

Political history, structure and culture

The historical roots of this model lie in the fact that the institutions of the *ancien régime* in Europe – feudalism and patrimonialism, the monarchy and the Catholic or Orthodox Church – were strong in Southern Europe, and as a result, the transition toward modernity and liberal institutions was long and conflicted. When democracy was established in the region, it tended toward the form Sartori (1976) called polarized pluralism, a kind of political system characterized by relatively large numbers of political parties with distinct ideologies spanning a wide spectrum, including parties opposed to the basic institutions of capitalism and of democracy. Not all the countries of southern Europe fit Sartori's classic model; Spain and Portugal, for example, have a smaller number of parties today than a classic polarized pluralist system. But all share the history in which Sartori's pattern was rooted, and much of its political style.

The development of the media system was profoundly shaped by this history. The strength of the *ancien régime* slowed the growth of the mass circulation press in a variety of ways: mass literacy was never a priority in the Counter-Reformation tradition, and patrimonialist patterns of social organization were associated with private control rather than public circulation of information. Political polarization was closely connected with political parallelism in the media: the wide spectrum of ideological perspectives that contended in Southern Europe meant that claims

of political neutrality or the idea that 'fact' could be separated from 'opinion' seemed naïve or opportunistic. Professionalization was limited by the strong politicization of the press, as actors outside journalism tended to remain in control, and differences within the profession made it difficult to achieve consensus on professional norms. The strong role of the state, both in society and in the media system – reflected both the relative weakness of the market and the bourgeoisie, and the politicization of society.

The democratic corporatist model

The forerunners of the modern newspaper originated in trading cities such as Amsterdam, Antwerp, Frankfurt and Cologne. The press developed early and strongly in Northern and North-central Europe for several reasons: the early development of merchant capitalism, which required a flow of public information; high literacy rates, encouraged by the Protestant Reformation; and a relatively early introduction of liberal institutions, including press freedom. The first official recognition of press freedom took place in Sweden in 1766. The democratic corporatist countries are characterized by high rates of newspaper circulation and many-layered print media markets, combining national, regional and in most countries strong local newspapers, and often both a tabloid and broadsheet press.

Political parallelism

In the polarized pluralist system, newspapers developed as part of the world of politics. In the liberal system, commercial newspapers displaced newspapers established to express the views of parties and other organized social groups. In the democratic corporatist system, a strong commercial press developed alongside a strong party press and other media connected to organized social groups. The religious and political divisions that began with the Reformation combined with divisions of language, class and ideology to create plural societies composed of highly organized social groups. One of the means by which these groups organized themselves and contended for influence in the public sphere was by creating their own newspapers and eventually, in some countries, other media. Party papers and others connected to organized social groups combined with the commercial press to develop the strong habits of newspaper reading that characterize the region. The social networks of these groups were important means of distributing newspapers, and the habit of newspaper reading in part reflected the culture of group solidarity. Concentration of newspaper markets began weakening party and other representative papers by the middle of the last century. But party papers were still important through the 1970s, particularly in Austria and in Scandinavia, and large percentages of journalists, particularly in the socialist press, were active in politics, holding party or public office.

Today, true party papers have almost disappeared. Denmark had fourteen Social Democratic Papers in 1960, and seven through the 70s and 80s, but the last

of these closed in 2001. These changes in newspaper markets went along with shifts in journalistic style towards more information-oriented reporting with considerable less mixing of commentary and reporting than in earlier years. Nevertheless, what many scholars refer to as residual political parallelism does persist in many of the media systems of Northern Europe. One principal purpose of the press subsidies of the Nordic countries is to keep alive some of the political diversity that has historically characterized media markets in those countries.

Another manifestation of the importance of parties and organized social groups in the democratic corporatist system lies in the fact that public broadcasting systems and councils that regulate commercial broadcasting are in some cases based on representation of such groups. In the Dutch case, social groups actually ran public broadcasting directly, with time allocated to broadcasting associations rooted in the four 'pillars' – the Protestant, Catholic, socialist and liberal communities. These associations still exist in public broadcasting, though their significance is much diminished in a world where commercial broadcasting is dominant. In Germany and Austria, parties and other 'socially relevant groups' are represented on broadcasting councils, and in Belgium – a bit more similar to the polarized pluralist system – the parties dominate public broadcasting. This contrasts with the liberal notion – reflected in the tradition of the BBC – that broadcasting should be 'above politics'. The British tradition holds that if public broadcasting is to serve the society as a whole, parties and organized social groups must be kept *out* of its governance; the continental European tradition often tends toward the view that all such interests must be allowed *in* to the process.

Professionalization

The democratic corporatist model combines media system characteristics that are often assumed to be incompatible – mainly because media studies has taken the liberal model as the norm. The combination of strong commercial newspapers with a strong political press is one manifestation of this. Another is the fact that in the democratic corporatist system a high level of political parallelism has coexisted with a high level of journalistic professionalization.

Journalistic autonomy is relatively high in the democratic corporatist system. Even at papers directly connected to political parties, journalists eventually shifted toward an attitude that they should 'not take orders from either politicians or organizations' (Hadenius 1983: 300). Many of the democratic corporatist countries have laws intended to protect the autonomy of journalists against interventions by media owners, and protections for journalists in public broadcasting are also strong. Consensus on journalistic ethics is also strong compared with other systems, cutting across political divisions and creating a culture in which the media are seen as institutions serving society as a whole, even where they also have political tendencies. Strong journalists' unions and professional associations developed early in democratic corporatist countries, and these introduced codes of ethics that enjoy high degrees of consensus. The democratic corporatist model has much more formal organization of the profession of journalism than other

systems. This is manifested in the fact that most of the democratic corporatist countries have press councils, and these are among the strongest such institutions in the world (though in countries like Austria and Germany, where an important sensationalist press exists, they are of limited use in regulating this sector).

The role of the state

Here again, there are two sides to the democratic corporatist model. A Swedish newspaper wrote in the 1970s:

> In our view the state has a responsibility for the mass media. Firstly, it has the responsibility to ensure that freedom of expression and freedom of the press are formally and in reality guaranteed by legislation. Journalists must be guaranteed the right to seek information and to disseminate their knowledge. However, the state's responsibility is wider than this. In the service of democracy and its citizens the state has a responsibility to create and maintain an information and press system that will accommodate many and diverse voices.
>
> Gustafsson 1980: 104

This conception combines the liberal principle of limited government and press freedom in the 'negative' sense that state control of media and information is restricted, with positive conception of state responsibility for developing the media as a social institution. Northern European countries were early adopters of press freedom as well as rights of access to public information. They also have strong welfare states, however, and this is manifested in media policy as in other areas. They have particularly well-funded and 'pure' public broadcasting systems, that is, systems with little or no advertising revenue. They also have relatively strong regulation of media industries, with rules, for example, on advertising to children or product placement. Many have systems of press subsidy, introduced in the 1970s to slow concentration of newspaper markets. These policies vary, however, and some scholars have suggested that the media systems of countries such as Austria, Germany and Switzerland, which have no press subsidies, should be distinguished from those of the Nordic countries, which do have them (Brüggemann et al. 2014), following a common distinction in political economy between social corporatist and liberal corporatist systems.

Political history, structure and culture

The history of Northern and North-central Europe is different from that of Southern Europe in two ways that matter to us here. First, the cultural tradition of the Reformation prevailed in much of the region, and this was more favourable than the Counter-Reformation tradition to the development of the press and the public sphere. Second, while the social structure of Southern Europe was dominated by large landowners (including the monarchy and Church), small independent producers had a much larger role in Northern and North-central

Europe, including merchants and artisans in cities of Germany, Switzerland and the Low Countries, and 'yeoman' farmers in Scandinavia. These differences meant that conservative forces were weaker in the north relative to the forces of liberalism, and the consolidation of liberal institutions happened earlier, without the protracted conflict that occurred in the south. The strength of small independent producers also encouraged the self-organization of subcommunities that we have seen is characteristic of this region.

In the 1920s, when economic crisis and political polarization produced a breakdown of democracy in much of Europe, the smaller countries of Northern Europe developed democratic corporatism as a means of preserving social solidarity. This involved institutionalizing a process of bargaining among organized social groups. Austria and Germany, whose social and political histories were somewhat more similar to those of Southern Europe, suffered extreme polarization during this period (the German Weimar republic is among the classic cases of polarized pluralism), but adopted much of the democratic corporatist model after the Second World War.

Democratic corporatism, and the historical pattern in which it developed, are closely connected with the media system we have examined. Protestantism and early liberalism contributed to the development of the mass circulation press. The strength of organized social groups also contributed to the development of the mass circulation press, and to the strength of political parallelism. At the same time, the democratic corporatist system offered fertile ground for the consolidation of journalistic professionalism. Journalists organized as did other subgroups in society. Democratic corporatism combined diversity of parties and organized social interests with a high degree on consensus on the rules of the political game and a sense of a common interest transcending ideological differences. In this context, it is not surprising that journalists, too, despite their relatively politicized role, were able to move towards consensus on their own rules of the game. The democratic corporatist bargain, finally, involved a major expansion of the welfare state, and this was manifested in state support for a diverse media system as it was in state support for other social objectives.

The liberal model

The most distinctive characteristic of the liberal model is the early development of commercial media and their eventual displacement of party papers and other forms of media based outside the market. A commercial newspaper industry began to develop earliest in the United States, which was also the only major industrialized country to develop a broadcasting system that was almost purely commercial, until the formation of a relatively small public broadcasting system in 1967. Britain also introduced commercial broadcasting in the 1950s, a generation before most of the rest of Europe. The dominance of commercial media combined with elements of political culture to produce lower levels of political parallelism in many cases, though the level of political parallelism varies in the liberal

model. Journalistic professionalism is relatively high, though not as formally institutionalized as in the democratic corporatist model. A smaller role for the state is another of the defining characteristics of the liberal model, though there are again important exceptions.

Development of the mass circulation press

In the US and Britain, literacy rates were high (though less so in the slaveholding South of the former), and press freedom, the market and representative political institutions were all developed early, creating favourable conditions for the early development of newspapers. In the US case, newspapers were primarily business enterprises from a very early date, and with the introduction of the penny press in the 1830s, a strong commercial mass circulation press began to develop; in Britain the same process began in the 1850s following repeal of taxes on the press. In all the liberal counties, the press became a major industry and a central part of popular culture.

Political parallelism

As in the other models examined here, the early development of the press in the liberal model was strongly connected with the world of politics. Early mass-circulation newspapers in all four countries usually had strong partisan affiliations. The commercial press, however, mostly displaced the kinds of media directly tied to parties and trade unions that remained so important in the polarized pluralist and democratic corporatist models. There is an important debate in media studies in the liberal countries about whether the triumph of commercial media should be seen as liberating the media from political control, or as enhancing the power of commercial interests within the public sphere.

In the US and Canada political parallelism declined substantially during the first half of the twentieth century. Journalistic culture came to be dominated by the principles of political neutrality and separation between the media and the institutions of political life, and 'catch-all' media which avoided identification with political parties or tendencies for the most part prevail. Patterson and Donsbach (1993) asked journalists in the US, Britain, Sweden, Germany and Italy to place parties and major news organizations on the political spectrum from left to right. European journalists located the media across a wide spectrum, while American journalists put them all in the centre, between the Republican and Democratic parties. The decline of political parallelism in North America resulted from a combination of changes in political culture and media markets. The dominance of liberal ideology means that ideological differences between parties are smaller in the liberal system than in the other systems examined here, and in the US case there was a shift at the end of the nineteenth century toward a negative view of the role of parties. At the same time, concentration of newspaper markets produced economic incentives for newspapers to avoid distinct partisan identities.

Commercialism and media partisanship can go together, however, and the liberal model should be seen as allowing a range of variation in media partisanship, depending on political alignments and media market conditions. In Britain, broadcasting is marked by strong norms of internal pluralism and political neutrality. But the press, particularly the tabloid press, remains strongly partisan. In this sense, the common notion of an 'Anglo-American model' of journalism is misleading. US and British newspapers do share an emphasis on information and narrative rather than continental-style commentary. But a much higher degree of political parallelism in the British press is probably due both to differences in political culture – British parties have been more unified and ideologically coherent – and differences in media markets. American newspaper markets are primarily local monopoly markets; Britain has a competitive national market in which newspapers have an incentive to differentiate their product through their political stances. In the US, as political polarization has increased and media markets have changed, partisan media have re-emerged primarily in the highly fragmented markets of radio, cable TV, and the internet, where partisan identity often is an effective way to find a market niche. The broadest mass circulation media still mostly avoid strong partisan identities, though strong partisan differences have emerged in recent years in the degree to which audience members trust different media sources – perhaps a function of the particular historical conjuncture of the Trump presidency, perhaps a harbinger of a larger change in political and media culture.

Professionalization

Professionalism of journalism developed relatively strongly in the liberal model. Commercialization of the media meant hiring large corps of reporters and editors; journalism developed into a distinct occupational group and also a distinct form of discourse, with its own rules different from those of partisan debate. At one time, instrumentalization of the press was common in the liberal system. Its form was a bit different from that of the polarized pluralist model, since media owners had their base of power within media industries, rather than outside them. But press 'barons' like Lord Beaverbrook or William Randolph Hearst clearly used their media properties to exercise influence in the political world. This pattern declined in the mid-twentieth century, as political parallelism in general declined, especially in North America. Media owners distanced themselves from the political world, and journalists, who in theory were committed to politically neutral practices of reporting, obtained more autonomy within news organizations. This pattern was what *Four Theories of the Press* referred to as the 'social responsibility' model. It was reinforced by the public service model of broadcasting in Britain, Canada and Ireland and by the 'trusteeship model' in the US, which required commercial broadcasters to 'serve the public convenience and necessity'. Journalistic autonomy peaked in the liberal countries in about the 1960s to 1970s. Since that time growing commercial pressures have eroded it and interventionist owners have become somewhat more common, with Rupert Murdoch and Canadian publisher Conrad Black symbolizing the trend.

Role of the state

The liberal model is, by definition, a system in which the role of the state is relatively limited. None of the liberal countries has significant press subsidies today, for example. In the US, the First Amendment to the Constitution occupies a privileged place in legal doctrine that makes many kinds of state regulation common in Europe untenable politically and legally, including most regulation of communication in electoral campaigns.

At the same time, the role of the state is not insignificant in the liberal model: the state has always played a significant role in the development of capitalism, and this is no less true in the media sphere. In Britain, the liberal political tradition is mixed with a more statist conservative tradition and with important elements of democratic corporatism, and this is reflected in a strong public broadcasting system, relatively strong regulation of commercial broadcasting, and in a different way by the Official Secrets Act. This is an important reason why we see the UK as a mixed case; some scholars see it as more similar to liberal corporatist countries like Germany than to the US (Brüggemann et al. 2014). In Canada and Ireland, liberalism is modified by concerns about national identity, which have motivated state support for public broadcasting and in the Canadian case controls on imported media products.

Even in the US, the state has played an important role in the media system in many ways. The state created the basic infrastructure for the expansion of commercial media through the postal system and an extensive early system of public education, and in the early nineteenth century it subsidized newspapers through patronage. It also created a legal framework that was for the most part favourable to the expansion of media and the public sphere. Research on journalism in the liberal countries has also shown substantial state influence on the *content* of the news, partly because of the strength of the culture of 'national security' in post-Second World War US and Britain.

Political history, structure and culture

The bourgeois revolution occurred early in Britain, and liberal institutions were transferred to British colonies. The US never had a feudal past; its political culture was characterized by a dominant liberal consensus from very early on (Hartz 1955); and as Starr (2004) points out, it had no tradition of state or aristocratic patronage of arts and culture, so its public sphere was rooted in the market from a very early date. The republican culture that developed in the Northern colonies of the US placed a high value on an open flow of information.

Besides the obvious fact that a liberal political system meant a relatively strong development of market institutions in relation to the state, several other aspects of the political system that resulted from the early bourgeois revolutions in the liberal system are worth noting here. Because liberalism became dominant early, the political spectrum is narrower in the liberal system, and this made journalistic professionalization and the notion of a 'neutral' media serving society as a whole

more plausible and more practical. Even partisan tabloids in Britain claim to speak not for a particular class or ideological group but for 'the people'. The liberal countries also saw a strong development of what Max Weber called rational-legal authority, which was pushed by business and by middle class reform movements in the late nineteenth century to rationalize public administration and make it more predictable and efficient for commerce. Rational-legal authority, which also developed strongly in the democratic corporatist system, was favourable to the development of a similarly 'neutral' profession of journalism. Finally, the liberal system involves a relatively fragmented, individualistic model of political representation, and tends to be hostile to the kinds of organized social interests that play such a central role in the democratic corporatist system.

Conclusion

We would like to conclude with a few words, first, about the about the relevance of our three models to media systems beyond the eighteen countries covered here, and second, about the rise of digital media and its relation to the patterns discussed here.

Our analysis is based on what is known as a most similar systems design. We deliberately stayed away from the kind of universalistic theory proposed in *Four Theories of the Press*. Comparative analysis, in our view – particularly in the earliest phase of theory-building – needs to be based on deep familiarity with the particular media systems and their historical contexts, particular forms of economic and political development which have shaped their media systems. We therefore do not intend our analysis to be used as an abstract framework to be 'applied' to cases beyond those we studied. No doubt our three models will be of some relevance as points of comparison, in part because these are historically powerful countries, and their media and political systems have had substantial influence on other systems around the world. Comparative media studies have historically used the liberal model as the principal point of comparison, in part because it has been theorized more fully than other systems. We believe that in fact, of the three models we examine, it is the polarized pluralist model – with its high degree of media partisanship, strong history of state intervention and lower level of rational-legal authority – that will have the most relevance for understanding media systems in other parts of the world. The early consolidation of liberal institutions characteristic of North America and North-west Europe, after all, is a very particular pattern of development from a global perspective. Clearly, though, extending comparative analysis beyond the cases covered here will require developing new conceptual models.

The four dimensions or domains of comparison we use can in some sense be applied to any system. It will always be relevant to ask what role the state plays in the media system; to what extent and in what forms journalism has been professionalized; the degree and form of political parallelism, in the sense of way patterns of political conflict shape the structure and content of media; and the

development of media markets, the degree and manner in which different forms of media are financed and disseminated. But other dimension of comparison may emerge as relevant, and the particular ways these dimensions are conceptualized will have to change. To take one example, political parallelism in Europe was shaped by a particular history of parties and interest groups with wide public memberships largely based on economic interests. In other parts of the world, however, political divisions may be rooted in ethnicity, or in factions of a state elite, or in highly personalized patterns of political leadership, or in religion; this will be associated with very different relations between the media and the political system than what we find in Europe (de Albuquerque 2012).

Turning to the role of new media and the internet, there is no doubt that they have brought dramatic changes in certain ways to the patterns we have described to this point. Existing institutions and relations are disrupted by the rise of new media. Media systems have become more fragmented, with higher levels of market segmentation; new actors have entered the process of circulation of news and information, often challenging the 'gatekeeping' role of 'legacy' media; new forces of transnational influence have arisen, potentially furthering tendencies to homogenization of media systems, or at least blurring of their national boundaries. These changes reinforce the importance of keeping in mind a point we mentioned in the introduction, that media systems cannot be understood as internally homogeneous.

As we have argued above, however, the effects of the internet and new media may vary from system to system, shaped by the professional traditions, institutional structures and media ecologies already in place on their arrival – a pattern social scientists refer to as path dependence (Humphreys 2012). Many journalism scholars have noted, for example, that the internet seems to foster political polarization and to increase levels of political parallelism. The extent to which this tendency disrupts existing patterns in national media systems seems to vary, however. It has been most dramatic in the United States, where political parallelism was at one time relatively low. It is a strong tendency too in the polarized pluralist countries, but here it looks less like disruption than continuity, as new sources of information that arise through the internet are marked by the already-existing tradition of partisanship. In the democratic corporatist countries, meanwhile, where traditions of professionalism and legacy media institutions, including public service broadcasting are historically strong, this tendency is probably less dramatic.

Another important effect of the internet has clearly been to undermine the economic foundation of legacy media, particularly print media. Across all the countries of our analysis, print media have suffered, often cutting back their news gathering operations substantially.

Some more specific patterns are commonly found; local newspapers, for example, have been hit particularly hard across many systems where they were once of great importance, the US, for example, or Sweden. Still, the 'crisis of news' looks different in different systems. It has been most dramatic where legacy commercial media are heavily dependent on advertising. In Southern Europe too,

newspapers, already weak economically, have been hit hard. But newspapers in Southern Europe were less central to the media system to begin with. In the case of Italy, Alessio Cornia has demonstrated that the diffusion of the internet and the consumption of new media is shaped by the dominant position of television, in particular the dominant position of Mediaset corporation (Cornia 2016), preventing larger investments in new media and at the same time weakening the level of pluralism. To the extent that new media undermine the print press in Southern Europe, they could be said simply to reinforce the dominance of electronic media in the polarized pluralist system. In the democratic corporatist systems, meanwhile, traditionally strong legacy media, including newspapers and public service broadcasting, have been able to adapt to technological and economic change more effectively, maintaining large audience shares online. One manifestation of this is the fact that concerns about 'fake news' are for the most part much more muted in Northern Europe than in other regions (Newman 2018).

The internet is deeply changing the entire system of communication worldwide, without question. Nevertheless, the speed of the change and its actual direction will be affected by contextual conditions deeply rooted in the particular structure historical evolution of existing media systems, and we still need to understand the varying nature of those systems to analyze the impact of new media.

References

de Albuquerque, A. (2012), 'On Models and Margins: Comparative Media Models Viewed from a Brazilian Perspective', in D. Hallin and P. Mancini (eds), *Comparing Media Systems Beyond the Western World*, 72–95, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Brüggemann, M., S. Engesser, F. Buchel, E. Hunprecht and L. Castro (2014), 'Hallin and Mancini Revisited: Four Empirical Types of Western Media Systems', *Journal of Communication,* 64 (6): 1037–65.

Brüggemann, M., E. Humprech, R. K. Nielsen, K. Karppinen, A. Cornia and F. Esser (2016), 'Framing the Newspaper Crisis: How Debates on the State of the Press Are Shaped in Finland, France, Germany, Italy, United Kingdom and United States', *Journalism Studies*, 17 (5): 533–51.

Ciaglia, A. (2013), 'Politics in the Media and the Media in Politics: A Comparative Study of the Relationship Between the Media and Political Systems in Three European Countries', *European Journal of Communication*, 28 (5): 541–55.

Cornia, A. (2016), 'TV-Centrism and Politicization in Italy: Obstacles to New Media Development and Pluralism', *Media, Culture & Society*, 38 (2): 175–95.

Donsbach, W. and T. Patterson (1992), 'Journalists' Roles and Newsroom Practices: A Cross-National Comparison'. Paper presented at 42nd Conference of the International Communication Association, Miami.

Durkheim, É. (1965), *The Rules of Sociological Method*, New York, Free Press.

Ferenczi, T. (1993), *L'invention du journalisme en France*, Paris: Librairie Plon.

Forcella, E. (1959), 'Milleciquecento lettori', *Tempo Presente*, no. 6.

Gustafsson, K.-E. (1980), 'The Press Subsidies of Sweden: A Decade of Experiment', in A. Smith (ed.), *Newspapers and Democracy. International Essays on a Changing Medium*, 104–26, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Hadenius, S. (1983), 'The Rise and Possible Fall of the Swedish Party Press', *Communication Research*, 10 (3): 287–311.

Hallin, D. C. and P. Mancini (1984), 'Speaking of the President: Political Structure and Representational Form in U.S. and Italian TV News', *Theory and Society,* 13: 829–50.

Hallin, D. C. and P. Mancini (2004), *Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hartz, L. (1955), *The Liberal Tradition in America*, New York: Harcourt, Brace & World.

Humphreys, P. (2012), 'A Political Scientist's Contribution to the Comparative Study of Media and Politics in Europe: A Response to Hallin and Mancini', in N. Just and M. Puppis (eds), *Trends in Communication Policy Research: New Theories, Methods and Subjects*, 157–76, Bristol: Intellect.

Newman, N. with R. Fletcher, A. Kalogoropoulos, D. A. L. Levy and R. K. Nielsen (2018), *Digital News Report 2018*, Oxford: Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism.

Ortega, Félix and M. Luisa Humanes (2000), *Algo Mas Que Periodistas: Sociología de una Profesión*, Barcelona: Editorial Ariel.

Papathanassopoulos, S. (2001), 'Media Commercialization and Journalism in Greece' *European Journal of Communication*, 16 (4): 505–21.

Patterson, Thomas E. and W. Donsbach (1993), 'Press-Party Parallelism: A Cross- National Comparison.' Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Communication Association, Washington, DC.

Ricuperati, G. (1981), 'I giornalisti italiani fra poteri e cultura dalle origini all'Unità', in AA.VV., *Storia d'Italia*, 1085–1132. Torino: Einaudi.

Sartori, G. (1976), *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Siebert, F. S., T. Peterson and W. Schramm (1956), *Four Theories of the Press*, Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Starr, P. (2004), *The Creation of the Media: Political Origins of Modern Communications*, New York: Basic Books.

Chapter 10

GLOBAL SCREEN INDUSTRIES

Michael Curtin

Despite the stunning proliferation of social media and amateur video, screen industries (film, television and video game) remain important contributors to the everyday media diet of users around the world. Theatrical feature films not only sell billions of tickets each year, most cinema exhibition venues are located in entertainment complexes where they serve as anchor tenants that attract audiences and shoppers. Moreover, many of the most popular films are attached to major brand names like Batman and Moana that provide the core intellectual property for ancillary merchandise and theme park attractions. Similarly, television (via broadcast, cable and satellite) remains a foundational component of home entertainment, even in societies where many viewers now stream their favourite programmes online. Major producers such as Zee in India, Hunan in China and Globo in Brazil provide core content across a wide range of genres, much of it now generating other forms of engagement via social media and video games. In the games industry itself, one also sees a burgeoning number of titles from amateurs and small-time independents, but the major publishers, such as Tencent in China and Ubisoft in France, still command the most robust catalogs of content and the largest revenues. Consequently, screen media continue to attract large audiences and lucrative revenues with content that is produced, promoted and circulated via industrial practices.

The connections between entertainment and information media are profound and elaborate, but for the purposes of analytical clarity this chapter focuses on screen industries that explicitly focus on the former, even if at times the content they produce indexes social reality or makes political claims. By and large, the industries discussed below aim to attract audiences by entertaining them and engaging in stylistic experimentation. They traffic in popular aesthetics and most do so primarily to turn a profit in competitive media markets.

These markets have changed dramatically since the 1990s, both in their priorities and practices, but also in their structural relations and configurations. One of the most significant changes is that modern media have become more global at many different levels, from the programming decisions made by local television stations to the strategic plans hatched by transnational conglomerates.

This chapter therefore examines the dynamic interactions between media institutions and policies at the local, national, regional and global levels. For example, it interrogates Hollywood's ongoing hegemony in blockbuster feature films, while also providing a context for analyzing the emergence of pan-Arab media conglomerates, the explosive impact of African videofilms, the proliferation of East Asian co-productions, and the stunning rise of a global game economy. It will furthermore examine the interpenetration of practices, that is, the globalization of local media and the localization of global media. And it will detail the ways in which media and cultural policies have played a fundamental role in the geographic refiguring of screen media industries. The chapter offers a global and multi-scalar perspective on a range of issues, including ownership, institutional structure, financing, distribution, professional practice, copyright, consumption, regulation, labour and creativity.

International antecedents

Having described the continuing significance of screen media, it is important as well to offer a rationale for this chapter's focus on *global* screen industries, which arguably makes sense since media are commonly invoked to metaphorically represent globalization itself. Most of us have seen or heard reports of World Cup football fans tuning in by the billions, Chinese moviegoers queuing up for the latest *Transformers* release, and Tetris players obsessed by puzzles on their smartphones that were originally designed by a Russian scientist, popularized by a Japanese company, and embraced by generations of players around the world. Despite vast geographic distances and cultural differences, modern media seemingly play a central role in fostering a sense of common experience and human connection across the globe. Yet the concept of globalization nevertheless remains a controversial one, both politically and intellectually. Indeed, some of the authors in this volume would take exception to the term by challenging its analytical coherence or by countering that distances and differences remain more significant than the tenuous connections fostered by screen media. Are World Cup fans actually participating in a global experience given that many of them are watching on national television channels and cheering for their home teams? Is globalization a truly novel phenomenon or is it a continuation of trends that have been unfolding across the centuries? If the latter, why refer to *global* media rather than *international* media, a term that has been used for over a century?

Partly, these criticisms can be attributed to the disciplinary inertia of scholarly fields that were established during the nineteenth century. Sociologists, for example, aim to understand how modern institutions help to sustain solidarity among millions of citizens who otherwise remain strangers. From this perspective, media industries are foundational components of national societies and to the extent that they reach beyond their domestic context, they engage with other national media systems (Athique 2016). Note that this book is the sixth edition of a volume that has over the course of its publishing history changed every word in

its title except 'society' (Curran et al. 1977). Society and nation have been closely intertwined with much of the scholarly discourse about media. Following a similar logic, opinion leaders and government officials have forged policies that made it possible for national media industries to take root and have furthermore discouraged transnational media flows that threatened to undermine domestic producers or compete for the loyalty of their citizens. Thus, media industries – whether commercial, public or state-run – have been a central concern of most governments during the modern era.

Scholars and policy-makers who have reflected on the transnational dimensions of media industries tend to consider relations between discrete national systems with respect to content exchanges, co-productions, and joint ventures. Moreover, a great deal of attention has been paid to the daunting and pre-eminent status Hollywood studios, stretching all the way back to the 1920s when US feature films made significant inroads in Europe while the formerly prolific screen industries of Germany, France and Italy were still reeling in the aftermath of the First World War. Although each country rebuilt its capacity during the 1930s, war again intervened, providing another opportunity for American studios to expand their cinematic influence and extend it to television so that the US was by the 1960s an unparalleled cultural force in many parts of the world.

The international reach of US producers was constrained, however, by national policies that limited film and television imports in defence of domestic media institutions. Such policies were crucial to the success of, for example, Czech film animation, Mexican commercial television and Australian public broadcasting. They not only provided a stable context for national media but also made it possible to export and exchange cultural products with foreign counterparts. Mexican television companies became major exporters to countries in the Western Hemisphere (Sinclair 1999; Lopes et al. 2012) and Hong Kong cinema flourished in parts of East and Southeast Asia (Wong 2002; Fu 2008; Zhang 2010). Nevertheless these media institutions were dwarfed by their Hollywood counterparts. One of the few significant alternatives to the American juggernaut was the British Broadcasting Corporation, which struggled during tight economic times following the Second World War, but became a major TV programme exporter beginning in the 1960s (Tunstall 1977). The Soviet Union was also a prolific producer and exporter, especially influential in Eastern Europe but largely absent from television markets of the West (Imre 2016).

The most suggestive indication of the imbalances and power differentials between countries was documented in a 1960 United Nations report claiming that two-thirds of the world's television receivers resided in the United States. Moreover, 94 per cent of the world's TV sets were situated in the US, UK, Japan and West Germany (UNESCO 1963). One decade later, many countries had established national television channels, but still had very little production capacity and therefore were net importers (Nordenstrang and Varis 1974). Some were so poor – and consequently bereft of technological and institutional capacity – that a key thread of scholarly and policy studies aimed to address that deficit by explicitly advocating media development initiatives. American firms were therefore

pre-eminent institutions in film and television production, distribution, and exhibition. They were also leading exporters of technology as well as creative, craft, and management practices. When countries such as Nigeria, Brazil and Saudi Arabia entered the television era, their broadcasters hired American firms to help them set up television services and provide programming.

Due to the daily demand for fresh content, many countries purchased countless hours of Hollywood film and television programming. In the short run this helped to grow their services but it also undermined the incentive to produce local programming. US distributors further complicated the situation by adjusting their prices to keep them competitive with local programming. Given that Hollywood shows were already paid for by revenues from American movie theatres and television stations, distributors enjoyed tremendous pricing flexibility in overseas markets. Indeed, critics contended that US pricing policies intentionally aimed to undermine local producers, keeping them dependent on foreign imports.

If the end of the Second World War signalled the demise of the European empires, then it also pointed to the growing pre-eminence of US screen media industries, a phenomenon critiqued by Herbert I. Schiller's landmark book, *Mass Communications and American Empire* (1969). Apprehensions about US media hegemony mounted throughout the 1970s, with critics charging that American cultural exports were intertwined with economic and military strategies aimed at global supremacy.

Criticisms culminated in the publication of a report by UNESCO's International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems (MacBride 1980), which in turn engendered a General Assembly resolution aimed at rectifying cultural imbalances. The resolution received almost unanimous support, but failed due to vetoes by the US and UK delegations.

Although many criticisms were justified, causes behind the imbalances varied considerably. Some countries such as Germany, Japan and the Soviet Union – which were significant film producers during the 1930s and leading pioneers of television – suffered in the wake of the Second World War for a variety of reasons, slowing the resurgence of their screen industries. Other countries were major film producers, such as India, but suffered from internal social and policy constraints (Pendakur 2003). The Chinese film industry based in Hong Kong flourished transnationally, but was relatively diminutive with respect to audience size and revenues (Wong 2002; Fu 2008). Similarly, in Latin America, the Mexican media companies owned by the Azcárraga family were significant regional exporters, but the markets where they operated generated relatively modest revenues, even their home market of Mexico itself (Sinclair 1999). Moreover, in India, Hong Kong and Mexico, film and television companies tended to be family-run businesses that conspicuously avoided direct competition (or even collaborated) with their US counterparts.

Thus, by the 1970s, Hollywood was indeed a transnational dynamo, but it was analytically more precise to refer to it as a national institution with international prominence. It financed projects domestically, targeted them at home audiences, and measured their success by US ticket sales and television ratings. Moreover, Hollywood itself, or rather Southern California, was a fairly provincial creative

environment, staffed almost entirely by resident labour and culturally focused on all things American. Exports were considered an 'after market' and the major film and TV companies saw their international distribution divisions as cash cows that delivered handsome revenues, but were rarely taken into account when forging creative or corporate strategies. Moreover, personnel in the 'international' divisions had rather circumscribed views of the world, paying most of their attention to only a handful of overseas markets in Japan, Australia, Canada and Western Europe. At the time, it would have been a stretch to consider even the most prominent US film and television firms as global enterprises.

Globalization

Screen media industries truly began to globalize during the 1980s as a consequence of several interconnected phenomena. Most prominently, they were influenced by larger structural forces, as many of the largest companies in the industrial world began to experience falling rates of profit, which encouraged them to pursue new ways of cutting costs and expanding their markets. These corporate concerns were intertwined with the political agendas of the Reagan and Thatcher governments, leading to a transnational political project to deregulate and privatize industries in order to expand the range of operation for Western corporations. This in turn spurred the development of new financial instruments and fostered the interconnection of global securities markets and manufacturing networks via sophisticated communication networks. The far-reaching impact of this policy shift has earned copious attention from critics of neo liberalism, but less attention has been paid to the specific impact of speculation and financialization with respect to screen media industries.

For example, it is notable that Ted Turner (son of an Atlanta billboard entrepreneur) and Rupert Murdoch (son of an Adelaide newspaper publisher) rose to global prominence during the 1980s on a tide of 'junk bonds', a form of corporate financing that at the time was considered exceptionally risky and therefore paid very high interest rates (Yago 1991). In order to attract lenders, Turner and Murdoch concocted lavish fantasies of a global village woven together by satellite television channels and eager transnational advertisers. Since the bonds came due at regular intervals, the only way for these firms to stay solvent was to deliver ongoing and prodigious expansion that would attract new lenders. Each financing round was therefore tied to new acquisitions and each acquisition was complemented by flamboyant rhetoric about the potential of media globalization and corporate conglomeration. Turner was able to launch the first truly global television news service and Murdoch was the first outsider to muscle his way into the inner circle of the American media oligopoly (Auletta 2004; Chenowith 2002). Both benefited from lax regulatory oversight and novel forms of financing, but, importantly, they also benefited from the unfathomable potential of global media markets.

Their rhetoric and financial strategies became infectious. In 1990, a group of Chinese investors led by Li Ka-shing, then Hong Kong's wealthiest billionaire,

launched Asia's first privately owned telecommunications satellite, its footprint stretching from the Pacific to the Mediterranean and from Siberia to Sarawak. Although originally aimed at corporate clients, Li's son, Richard, seized the opportunity to use the satellite as a platform for building Star TV, a transnational television service aimed at the world's most populous and diverse continent. Like his counterparts from Atlanta and Australia, Richard Li fashioned himself as a McLuhanesque visionary, stoking the embers of media revolution by making bold pronouncements about the twilight of mass broadcasting and the dawn of pan-Asian television. According to Li, Star promised to erase spatial barriers and national frontiers, bringing together far-flung audiences that were yearning to participate in a continental turn toward global modernity. Star promised to reach almost three billion people, a truly colossal audience, but even if it rallied only a fraction of the whole, its potential was stunning enough to garner the attention of corporate advertisers and media competitors (Chan 1997; Curtin 2007).

Indeed, the 1990s became a decade of feverish deal-making that witnessed the launch of pan-Arab satellite television services (Kraidy and Kahlil 2009; Mellor et al. 2011), the accelerating liberalization of South Asian media (Mankekar 1999; Rajadhyaksha 2003; Ganti 2012; Punathambekar 2013), and the acquisition of two major Hollywood studios by Japanese electronics manufacturers. Moreover, commercial principles and practices began to infuse the operations of media institutions in the former Communist bloc after the fall of the Berlin Wall and China's turn towards modernization (Havens et al. 2012; Portuges and Hames 2013; Imre 2016; Zhao 2008).

Anxious about the emergence of new competitors and the prospects for future growth, major media companies pressed for deregulation that would allow them to expand in scale and operate transnationally. Many of the conglomerates that emerged from this transitional era were underwritten by complex financial arrangements and facilitated by the rising prominence of shareholder value as the pre-eminent principle of corporate governance, a process that some researchers refer to as financialization.[1] These scholars contend that since the 1980s, public policy has fostered a 'Copernican revolution' that has elevated the influence of the financial sector in almost every aspect of commercial enterprise (Epstein 2006). In some ways it could be argued that financialization attempts to rationalize sprawling corporate institutions that are essentially unfathomable. It does so by celebrating quantitative metrics and short-term profitability over foundational investments in research, development, and human capital. It seeks to enumerate the value of each constituent element of the corporate conglomerate through an endless parade of divisional P&L (profit and loss) reporting exercises that supposedly impose

1 Hedge funds, investment banks, and institutional investors own most of the shares in major corporations. They not only command large blocks of stock, but also use their voting power to influence corporate priorities. Consequently, top executives must constantly court and massage the analysts that represent these investors in order to justify their strategies and promote the value of their company to an elite financial community that is increasingly driven by quantitative measures of performance.

discipline and accountability in an environment built on rapacious speculation. This fetishization of quantitative metrics has inexorably shifted the priorities of modern corporations from the production of goods and services to the *performance* of profitability and the celebration of shareholder value.

Consequently, today's corporate managers find themselves responding to the relentless and mercurial demands of financial analysts, hedge funds and institutional investors. The resulting tsunami of institutional metrics and data obscure as much as they reveal, but they nevertheless serve as justification for decisions large and small. Media workers often experience these trends in their dealings with studio executives and producers who privilege market calculations over creative risk and novelty. Financialization also imposes pressure to do more with less, wringing out cost economies that show little regard for creative concerns, working conditions, audience affinities, or national policies (Miller et al. 2005; Curtin and Sanson 2016; Curtin and Sanson 2017).

Thus, speculation, conglomeration and financialization are key structural elements of media globalization. Whereas during the 1990s many imagined that satellite broadcasting would in the future be raining Mickey Mouse and Batman down on audiences around the world, we have instead witnessed the emergence of an industrial landscape featuring complex competitive conditions at various geographic scales in diverse contexts around the world. Moreover, the big Western media conglomerates now compete and collaborate with such counterparts as Rotana from Dubai, Reliance from Bombay, and CJ Entertainment from Seoul. In the digital, gaming, and social media spheres it's China's Tencent, France's Ubisoft and Russia's Yandex.

Twenty-first-century media industries

So what then do we mean when we talk about the globalization of screen media industries? And in what ways is media globalization in the twenty-first century distinctive from prior eras?

First of all, as mentioned above, financial instruments and circuits of distribution have changed dramatically since the 1990s. Not only are Hollywood films conceived, financed, and circulated transnationally, so too are Arab television shows, Korean pop songs and French video games. Of course, many other cultural products still serve local and national audiences, but transnational media distribution has escalated dramatically, driven by competitive pressures and facilitated by new technologies.

Second, the social relations of media production have stretched across space, initiated primarily by the pursuit of cost economies among the world's most prosperous and prolific producers, the Hollywood studios. With film, television, and video game production budgets ballooning into hundreds of millions of dollars, producers began to develop contingent ties to studio facilities and government entities around the world.

Today, cities such as Vancouver, Prague and Hyderabad compete to offer 'world class' infrastructure, labour and government subsidies that facilitate a geographically

mobile and protean mode of production (Magor and Schlesinger 2009; Goldsmith et al. 2010; Mayer and Goldman 2010; Szczepanik 2016).

Third, this transnational production network is made possible by a convergence of professional practices that have emerged via knowledge exchanges that take place in offices and production studios, as well as in the international markets for content exchange (e.g., MIPCOM at Cannes). Workers at these sites share techniques as well as insider tips, gossip and industry folklore. Film festivals (e.g., Guadalajara International Film Festival), game expositions (Tokyo Game Show) and awards ceremonies (African Movie Academy Awards) also provide contexts for deliberations about aesthetic and professional practices, and they have become important sites for the transnational promotion of talent and celebrities (Havens 2006; Bielby and Harrington 2008; Wong 2011; de Valck et al. 2016).

Fourth, as media professionals interact in these transnational venues, much of what they learn and observe filters back to national and local contexts where textual features and production techniques are imitated or adapted, resulting in hybrid content that is reimagined for different publics. Remarkably, adaptations move 'up' and 'down' as well as 'across'. That is, content and aesthetics not only circulate widely, they are also refigured in order to address different topographies of imagination. And they create new topographies. What was once a Latin American regional media market has recently become interwoven with the very substantial and prosperous Latinx market in the United States, resulting in a new hemispheric scale of popular imagination, creation and circulation. A foundational genre of this media sphere is the telenovela, which has changed dramatically as a result of globalizing forces, and has moreover become an agent of change by influencing producers in distant locales, such as Moscow, Istanbul and Lagos (Krings and Okome 2013; Miller 2016).

Finally, we are witnessing new patterns of interaction between media users and producers, as well as among users themselves. Once seen primarily as consumers, today's viewers and fans amply express themselves in a variety of ways and media producers systematically monitor this discourse, creating feedback loops that shape story lines and characters. Moreover, online commentary and recommendations have become fundamental factors in the popularity of media texts and in the expansion of media options. In China, for example, social media sites like Weixin, Weibo and Tudou have stimulated an explosion of awareness about foreign titles as well as local niche offerings, both of which used to be unavailable in mainland mass media. Moreover, user-generated content and peer-to-peer sharing have dramatically expanded awareness of media content and aesthetics from near and far.

Consequently, we now live in an era when conventional understandings of national and international media are still valuable but need to be complemented by critical approaches that take account of more complex and flexible geographies of production, circulation and use. Researchers now refer to media scapes, spheres, regions and zones. These are protean spaces that are constituted and reconstituted from top to bottom, spaces that would have been unimaginable during the 1980s when a trans-Pacific telephone call cost $3.20 per minute, when blockbuster

cinema was the proprietary province of Hollywood, and when government regulations and technical standards prevented TV viewers in Singapore and Senegal from watching the same programme. Although researchers have historically focused on media's capacity, or putative mission, to reinforce local and national ties, we are now seeing the ways in which media worlds emerge, scale and diminish in response to a relentless tug of actors and forces. One of the most fascinating and disturbing examples of media globalization is in the realm of production, which provides a telling example of the many of the transformations discussed above, showing how screen media industries today are far different from their twentieth-century counterparts.

Globalization of production

As mentioned above, the 1990s was a pivotal decade with respect to deregulation and privatization of media institutions in many parts of the world. It was also an important period of transition in media policy and research. For example, the trend towards deregulation undermined many of the conventional tools of policy-makers who traditionally had intervened most effectively in the realms of distribution and consumption by limiting imports and technological access, or by censoring content before it made its way into circulation. Increasingly, the efficiency of these policies diminished as audiences gained access to satellite, videotape, VCD and DVD technologies that allowed them to surreptitiously circulate restricted content. The Chinese government, for example, limits the number of Hollywood movies imported each year, but this has only a minor impact on the actual consumption of foreign films in China since most foreign titles can be acquired through black and gray market distribution channels. Government restrictions have only limited effects on personal consumption and are often counterproductive because they foster public resentment and distrust of government institutions that own or manage media organizations.

Keeping citizens engaged with domestic media now requires that states acknowledge audience preferences and recognize their personal capacity to evade official constraints. During the 1990s, many governments therefore began to shift their attention to the supply side of the policy equation. Instead of trying to restrict or manage consumption, many of them began to embrace 'creative industries' discourse, which seemed to offer both a tonic for cultural sovereignty and a stimulus for the broader economy (Hartley 2004; Flew and Cunningham 2010). Yet as we shall see, the principles behind this approach have engendered a range of outcomes, some of which are actually counterproductive, both locally and globally (Garnham 2005; Hesmondhalgh 2018).

Proponents of creative industries policies contended the effects of de-industrialization could best be addressed by enhancing domestic human capital in industries that focused on high value-added products that ranged from computer software to fashion to finance (Howkins 2001). In Britain and Australia this perspective gained momentum by collapsing a host of enterprises under the

umbrella of creativity, pointing to the synergistic value of an economy that nurtures excellence in science, software, sports and media. Meanwhile in the United States, a society that is generally allergic to the concept of cultural policy, attention was focused on the social and industrial conditions that spur innovation in particular locales (Florida 2005; Scott 2000).

Despite the distinctions between these approaches, many critics agreed that media productivity had become an important index of a society's innovative capacity. Consequently, the global media conglomerate and the motion picture blockbuster were seen as telling indicators of productive capacity, cultural influence, and healthy employment. Policy-makers began to use these rationales to justify subsidies, infrastructural investments, and training programs in media, computer and design industries.[2]

The level of investment in some places has been astounding. Chinese government officials have over the past decade spent billions to make the PRC a more prominent cultural producer and exporter (Li 2011; Hu and Ji 2012; Keane 2013). The government in tiny Dubai created three sprawling urban development zones for screen production and distribution, which are now populated with marquee media enterprises of the Arab world (Picard and Barkho 2011; Dickinson 2016). And on a more modest scale, New Zealand has since the early 2000s provided ongoing support for the Quixotic ventures of Peter Jackson and his Wellywood colleagues (Conor 2015). Besides national governments, cities, provinces and state legislatures have poured resources into the screen industries, hoping to attract film, television and video game makers. Scholars and policy-makers remain observant, however, of the potential pitfalls, noting how difficult it is to manage and measure intangible resources such as creativity and innovation.

The most widely used policy tools are subsidies and tax incentives designed to attract foreign investment, enhance local infrastructure, and develop technical and creative skills among the resident workforce. Ideally, these policies aim to insinuate locales like Hyderabad, Wellington and Budapest into the globally networked production infrastructure of feature film blockbusters. Supposedly, they entice free-spending producers to shower their resources on the local economy, and over the longer term they aim to encourage the development of sophisticated services and skill sets that are transferable to other enterprises.

While policy principles have been changing since the 1990s, so too have managerial strategies, as screen media—like many other industries—began to embrace 'project thinking', a production approach derived from US engineering and military manufacturing during the latter half of the twentieth century (Goldsmith et al. 2010; Dicken 2015). Intended for large-scale projects (e.g., bridges, bombers and computers) that couldn't be realized by a single vertically integrated firm, designers and procurement officials opened the door to bidders that agreed to comply with the detailed specifications for costs, inputs and processes that guided each element of a major project. By creating networks of

2 See, for example, http://www.thecreativeindustries.co.uk/uk-creative-overview/why-the-uk and http://www.artswisconsin.org/resources/creative-economy-resource-center/

contractors and subcontractors, many of them hundreds of miles apart, managers established a contestable bidding system with relatively transparent standards that helped to foster competition and innovation.

Although certainly these projects were susceptible to the influence of dominant firms, the bidding process nevertheless encouraged the participation of multiple players, all of whom operated according to a shared set of protocols. Innovations in communication, transportation and shipping further facilitated this trend, making it possible to create global assembly lines that have dramatically transformed the geography of manufacturing. No longer is it presumed that cars or their component parts will be produced in Nagoya, Turin or Detroit. Instead, cities, states and national governments engage in 'locational tournaments' to lure contracts, factories and jobs to their territories (Mytelka 2000). Thus, the codes and conventions of engineering and manufacturing have allowed more firms in more places to participate, but they have at the same time strengthened the leverage that top managers hold over their network of contractors, since any single contractor is easily replaceable.

Following this logic, screen media producers today scour the globe using dedicated specialists who compare the relative merits of prospective locales. One executive describes the process as framed initially by narrative concerns, but these considerations tend to be relatively elastic, since talented crew members can dress sets and frame shots in ways that make a Malibu ranch look like an Army base in Korea or a street in Prague look like nineteenth century London. Moreover, film studios in places like Hyderabad and Hengdian advertise their facilities as infinitely malleable, providing soundstages and back lots that afford a wide range of visual possibilities for the discerning producer (Kumar 2006). Although visual requirements outlined in the script may be a departure point for their deliberations, studio executives turn quickly to economic calculations, taking into account exchange rates, taxes breaks, subsidies, and economic incentives. Having narrowed the list, producers then begin to compare facilities and the resident crew base.

Where once it was the case that producers only occasionally ventured beyond the studio gates, today it is presumed that most producers will shop around for shooting locations. This process is facilitated by organizations such as the Association of Film Commissioners International (AFCI), which annually holds a conference that attracts public officials and service firms from around the world who set up booths to pitch the merits of their locales to motion picture producers and location executives. The conference also features workshops and panels that provide venues for sharing concerns and fostering a common language for project proposals and budgets. Representatives from such places as Hawaii, Dubai, and Qingdao eagerly showcase their ability to collaborate according to global industry standards.

Besides these locational tournaments, producers also rely on a global ensemble of location management firms that provide detailed breakdowns of available resources and relevant costs. After a firm lands a contract, it then secures local resources and crew, and provides other forms of support, such as negotiating permits, translating work orders, mediating conflicts and lobbying officials (Sanson forthcoming). In addition to acting as an institutional interface, the firm provides

specialists with extensive and intimate knowledge of physical sites for filming. These location scouts secure access to both native locales and to buildings or landscapes that can stand in for distant counterparts. Indeed, city-for-city 'doubling' is a common practice, as was the case with *World War Z* when Glasgow was disguised as Philadelphia and a town on the island of Malta stood in for Jerusalem. It becomes more complicated, however, when rural landscapes are involved, since they require wider camera angles and panning techniques used to convey broad vistas. Local knowledge is therefore mobilized to highlight specificity while also maximizing the range of choices. Location personnel therefore serve as an interface between the global apparatus and local resources. They make the system viable, and quite crucially, profitable. Without them tax incentives would not be as valuable to screen media producers or to the state governments that offer them (McNutt 2015; Mayer 2017).

Television producers tend not to be as fleet footed as their feature film counterparts, since they usually set up shop to produce a full season of episodes and if the series succeeds, they tend to keep the production apparatus in place. Still, their initial deliberations about where to establish a base of operations has grown much more flexible. Canada pioneered many innovations in transnational television during the 1990s when it attracted American companies to Vancouver and Toronto to take advantage of wage differentials, subsidies, and a resident pool of skilled craft labour.

With the Canadian television industry then under duress, labour unions also offered concessions, but perhaps the most important factor for US producers were the currency exchange rates that made it very inexpensive to shoot in Canada at the time. In addition to cost savings and profit potential, TV producers were also attracted by the fact that these economies allowed them to 'put more on the screen' at a discount price, which was an especially important consideration for drama producers that were then experiencing to a surge of competition from reality television shows (Coe 2001; Elmer and Gasher 2005; Tinic 2005).

Similar calculations were being made in the rapidly expanding domain of Arab satellite television where cities like Beirut, Damascus and Dubai competed to attract producers of shows that would be telecast to regional audiences. Some shows were more geographically specific, targeting for example the Gulf States, while others addressed audiences across much of the Middle East and North Africa. Funding for the most popular productions have tended to come from channels and investors that are connected to wealthy factions from Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States, but many executives, as well as creative and craft workers, hail from Lebanon, Syria, Egypt and the West. Indeed, the most popular television shows throughout the region tend to draw on transnational resources (Kraidy and Kahlil 2009; Picard and Barkho 2011; Dickinson 2016).

Spanish-language television production likewise experienced significant changes around the turn of the millennium as global corporations like Sony, Fox and NBC Universal began to express growing interest in US-based Latinx audiences and in the prospect of producing for a younger generation of viewers throughout the Americas. Citing both the demographic and technological

potential of satellite television, they also took note of the creative possibilities offered by shows like *Yo Soy Betty, La Fea*, which was originally was produced in Colombia, but then was adapted for Mexican television and went on to become a regional success on satellite, in syndication, and via local adaptations (McCabe and Akass 2013; Zhang and Fung 2014). Advertisers showed growing interest in the turn toward younger and transnational audiences, which in turn encouraged major media conglomerates who began to compete for Spanish-speaking talent that had previously been tied to national television services. Over time, financing, production and labour began to flow across national frontiers and new centres of activity began to flourish in cities like Miami and Bogota (Mato 2002; Rivero 2013; Pinon 2014; Donoghue 2017). This is not to say that television audiences have abandoned national services or that global television has come to dominate the Americas (Sinclair and Straubhaar 2013; Pertierra and Turner 2013) but rather it is to highlight the ways in which domestic media institutions now operate in a broader transnational context.

Even if some elements of the screen media industries remain intensely attached to particular locales or national contexts (e.g., Nollywood's Alaba market, Hollywood's talent agencies and Bollywood's star-studded Juhu neighbourhood), other elements are becoming more transnational, especially institutional perspectives, practices and protocols. Perhaps no other component of the screen media industries exemplifies this trend better than the fastest growing one, video games, which today feature truly globalized social relations of production. Moreover, many of the elements and issues described below are held in common across the screen media industries, since computer generated imagery (CGI) has become an ever more central element of the overall production process in both video game studios and the visual effects (VFX) shops that service film, television and advertising companies.

A global assembly line

Video games are similar to film and television in that they require collaborative craft and creative labour in order to generate popular and recognizable cultural products that are nevertheless distinctive. Like all screen media, games are organized by genres and they often have a narrative element that involves some sort of challenge or puzzle. Games are furthermore characterized by the audiovisual pleasures they offer their audiences. Yet unlike film and TV, games do not have scripts or format bibles. Most are produced according to design documents prepared during the initial planning stage, after which a number of prototypes are developed and tested before a final design is put into production. Thus, video games are complex systems with many moving parts so that sometimes problems don't become evident until those parts are brought together in late-stage builds. Like other screen media, games are complex cultural products that rely on extensive collaboration. It is therefore remarkable that the industry increasingly relies on transnational production networks throughout the development process.

With more than two billion players worldwide, the gaming industry generated revenues of $122 billion in 2017, thanks the enduring popularity of console games, substantial growth in eSports, and the dramatic expansion of mobile gaming. East Asia is the fastest growing region with China having surpassed the US and now accounting for more than a quarter of total revenues (Wijman 2018). Overall, the video game industry – having surpassed cinema and steadily gaining ground on television – is a major driver of economic growth in many parts of the world, adding jobs in such cities as Warsaw, Bangalore and Shanghai. Major game publishers and online platforms – e.g., Sony, Tencent and Activision Blizzard – enjoy expansive reach, dominating both market sales and competition, which forces smaller companies to either align with them or succumb. Consequently, most development shops are either owned by one of the big publishers or provide services on a contractual basis, resulting in globalized networks of production that structure the working conditions and creative practices of the industry (Dyer-Witheford and de Peuter 2009; Scholz 2012; Nichols 2014; Consalvo 2016; Kerr 2016).

Globalization of the game industry accelerated after the turn of the millennium due to the rapidly growing cost of 'AAA' blockbusters, thereby encouraging the world's major publishers to develop production sites in cities where they could take advantage of cheaper labour, tax incentives and/or a growing base of consumers. Due to the demand for high-definition visuals, game production increasingly required legions of workers tasked with a diverse array of detailed and time-consuming tasks. Following trends in other manufacturing industries, major publishers began to search for ways to economize through the respatialization of production. Their efforts were encouraged by local governments around the world that were eager to provide training, subsidies, tax incentives and facilities in order to attract what they perceived as clean, glamorous, high-tech jobs (Conway and deWinter 2017; Fung 2018). Major publishers also took advantage of the diminishing cost of broadband telecommunication links to connect personnel so that they could work together remotely. By the end of the decade, transnational production had become the industry standard.

For example, Ubisoft, headquartered in France, reportedly employs over 9,000 game workers worldwide, from Montreal to Singapore to Shanghai. Its *Assassin's Creed* (*AC*) franchise, like most other high-profile games, used ten studios around the world to produce its 2014 release, *AC: Unity*. Publisher-run studios generally tend to offer higher pay and better working conditions in order to retain a hold on to some of the most skilled and experienced workers in the industry. When they want to reduce labour costs they outsource elements of the project to places like Budapest, Hyderabad and Warsaw, which have become renowned for independent shops staffed by educated employees willing to work at comparatively low wages. Companies in these cities first established themselves by porting and translating PC titles for gamers in their region, but many have now transitioned to subcontracting elements of blockbuster game projects or developing their own proprietary products, especially casual and mobile games, which can be done on smaller budgets with more modest resources. Regardless of the type of project, employees usually sit

at workstations with spartan furnishings and technology, labouring long hours in crowded conditions, often under intense pressure. Moreover, most shops operate on shoestring budgets and rely on foreign financial support, which makes them vulnerable and therefore compliant subcontractors (Huntemann and Aslinger 2013; O'Donnell 2014; Penix-Tadsen 2016; Vanderhoef 2019).

Yet even at the top of the industry pyramid, working conditions are precarious in cities like Los Angeles and Montreal, which are considered prosperous nodes of the industry, featuring clusters of publisher-owned studios and independent boutiques of various sizes. This plenitude makes it possible for highly skilled and experienced game developers to move locally between employers as projects ebb and flow. Others, however, find it necessary to migrate from city to city in search of jobs. Since most game production projects last two to seven years, workers are almost constantly searching for new opportunities, even during stretches of stable employment. Mobility and precarity are therefore fundamental conditions of game labour and the globalization of production has furthermore compounded these pressures, since talented workers are often encouraged to move abroad to provide leadership and training in cities like Shanghai and Prague where shops are up-skilling their workforce.

Although conditions vary from studio to studio, workers experience an alarming pattern of exploitation throughout the development cycle of each major title. For instance, most shops maintain a skeletal core staff during the pre-production phase of development when ideas are hashed out, prototypes built, and design documents written. They then hire more staff as development progresses, largely in the form of contract labour (some of it local, some of it outsourced) who generally earn less than core staff members. Moreover, short-term employment and flawed crediting systems make it difficult for workers to earn recognition for their contributions, which in turn undermines their chances for future employment.

These working conditions seem to cry out for labour organizing, but surprisingly there has been very little movement in this direction, partly because workers tend to see themselves as high-tech creative professionals rather than assembly line workers and partly because the global distribution of the workforce makes it difficult to build solidarity and trust among employees. The situation is further complicated by the fact that managers respond to expressions of discontent or resistance by quietly redeploying resources to a more compliant labour force. If workers in a shop in Vancouver were to organize, they would likely find their project reassigned to a shop in Prague or Hyderabad (Christopherson 2008; Vanderhoef and Curtin 2016).

In fact, for most workers, losing one's job is part of the job. Employers lay off workers after projects are completed; they lay off workers if the shop fails to attract new projects; they lay off workers if they are bought out by another company; and they lay off workers during recurring cycles of restructuring. It is estimated that the average length of employment is three years, which is in part attributable to the fact that shop owners and managers are under relentless pressure to underbid competitors from near and far, offering high quality outputs at bargain basement prices.

Conclusion and implications

Although screen media industries have exhibited continuities across time, the neo liberal project of globalization during the final decades of the twentieth century fostered dramatic and largely unanticipated transformations, so that today, a large and growing amount of screen content is conceived and financed transnationally, much of it produced under the aegis of vast commercial conglomerates that operate across multiple and flexible topographies. These organizations furthermore mobilize sprawling production networks in order to pursue opportunities and economies around the globe. Working with armies of subcontractors, major producers employ 'world class' standards, conventions and technologies that are now widely embraced and emulated, affecting the practices of media workers and executives at organizations large and small, global and local. Even though many media institutions remain anchored to local and national constituencies (and many are intimately intertwined with state institutions), they too have been influenced by these transformations, since they must compete for the attention and loyalty of audiences who now have regular access to transnational content. Consequently, new industrial structures and practices have transformed the quotidian labour and aesthetic conventions of media organizations worldwide. They have furthermore altered the terms by which critics, scholars, and policy-makers deliberate about social significance of film, television and video games. For even though national and local perspectives remain vital tools of analysis, they now must be complemented by critical engagement with the global dynamics of screen media industries.

Bibliography

Athique, A. (2016), *Transnational Audiences: Media Reception on a Global Scale,* Malden, MA: Polity.

Auletta, K. (2004), *Media Man: Ted Turner's Improbable Empire,* New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

Bielby, D. and C. Harrington (2008), *Global TV: Exporting Television and Culture in the World Market,* New York: New York University Press.

Chan, A. B. (1997), *Li Ka-Shing: Hong Kong's Elusive Billionaire*, Hong Kong: Oxford University Press (China) Ltd.

Chenoweth, N. (2002), *Rupert Murdoch,* New York: Crown Publishing Group.

Christopherson, S. (2008), 'Beyond the Self-expressive Creative Worker: An Industry Perspective on Entertainment Media', *Theory, Culture & Society*, 25 (7–8): 73–95.

Coe, N. (2001), 'A Hybrid Agglomeration? The Development of a Satellite-Marshallian Industrial District in Vancouver's Film Industry', *Urban Studies*, 38 (10): 1753–75.

Conor, B. (2015), 'The Hobbit Law: Precarity and Market Citizenship in Cultural Production', *Asia Pacific Journal of Arts and Cultural Management*, 12 (1).

Consalvo, M. (2016), *Atari to Zelda: Japan's Videogames in Global Contexts,* Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Conway, S., and J. deWinter, eds (2017), *Video Game Policy: Production, Distribution, and Consumption,* New York: Routledge.

Curran, J., M. Gurevitch and J. Woollacott, eds (1977), *Mass Communication and Society,* London: Edward Arnold.

Curtin, M. (2007), *Playing to the World's Biggest Audience: The Globalization of Chinese Film and TV,* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Curtin, M. and K. Sanson, eds (2016), *Precarious Creativity: Global Media, Local Labor,* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Curtin, M. and K. Sanson, eds (2017), *Voices of Labor in the Age of Global Media*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Dicken, P. (2015), *Global Shift: Mapping the Changing Contours of the World Economy,* 7th edn, New York: The Guilford Press.

Dickinson, K. (2016), *Arab Cinema Travels: Transnational Syria, Palestine, Dubai and Beyond,* London: British Film Institute.

Donoghue, C. B. (2017), *Localising Hollywood,* London: British Film Institute.

Dyer-Witheford, N. and G. de Peuter (2009), *Games of Empire: Global Capitalism and Video Games,* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Elmer, G. and M. Gasher, eds (2005), *Contracting Out Hollywood: Runaway Productions and Foreign Location Shooting,* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Epstein, G. A. (2006), *Financialization and the World Economy,* Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Flew, T. and S. Cunningham (2010), 'Creative Industries after the First Decade of Debate', *The Information Society*, 26 (2): 113–23.

Florida, R. L. (2005), *Cities and the Creative Class,* New York: Routledge.

Fu, P., ed. (2008), *China Forever: The Shaw Brothers and Diasporic Cinema,* Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Fung, A. Y. H. (2018), *Cultural Policy and East Asian Rivalry: The Hong Kong Gaming Industry,* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield International.

Ganti, T. (2012), *Producing Bollywood: Inside the Contemporary Hindi Film Industry*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press Books.

Garnham, N. (2005), 'From Cultural to Creative Industries', *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 11 (1): 15–29.

Goldsmith, B., S. Ward and T. O'Regan (2010), *Local Hollywood: Global Film Production and the Gold Coast,* St Lucia: University of Queensland Press.

Hartley, J., ed. (2004), *Creative Industries,* Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

Havens, T. (2006), *Global Television Marketplace,* London: British Film Institute.

Havens, T., A. Imre and K. Lustyik, eds (2012), *Popular Television in Eastern Europe During and Since Socialism,* New York: Routledge.

Hesmondhalgh, D. (2018), *The Cultural Industries*, 4th edn, Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications

Howkins, J. (2001), *The Creative Economy: How People Make Money from Ideas*, London: Penguin.

Hu, Z. and D. Ji (2012), 'Ambiguities in Communicating with the World: The "Going-out" Policy of China's Media and Its Multilayered Contexts', *Chinese Journal of Communication*, 5 (1): 32–37.

Huntemann, N. and B. Aslinger, eds (2013), *Gaming Globally: Production, Play, and Place*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Imre, A. (2016), *TV Socialism*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press Books.

Johns, J. (2006), 'Video Games Production Networks: Value Capture, Power Relations and Embeddedness', *Journal of Economic Geography*, 6 (2): 151–80.

Keane, M. (2013), *Creative Industries in China: Art, Design and Media,* Cambridge: Polity.

Kerr, A. (2016), *Global Games: Production, Circulation and Policy in the Networked Era,* London and New York: Routledge.

Kraidy, M. and J. F. Khalil (2009), *Arab Television Industries,* London: BFI/Palgrave Macmillan.

Krings, M. and O. Okome, eds (2013), *Global Nollywood: The Transnational Dimensions of an African Video Film Industry,* Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Kumar, S. (2006), 'Mapping Tollywood: The Cultural Geography of "Ramoji Film City" in Hyderabad', *Quarterly Review of Film and Video*, 23 (2): 129–38.

Li, W. (2011), *How Creativity is Changing China,* London: Bloomsbury Academic.

de Lopes, M. I. V., G. O. Gómez and M. Alvarado (2012), *OBITEL 2012: transnacionalización de la ficción televisiva en los países Iberoamericanos,* Porto Alegre: Editora Sulina.

MacBride, S. (1980), *Many Voices, One World: Towards a New More Just and More Efficient World Information and Communication Order (Final Report),* Paris: Unesco.

Magor, M. and P. Schlesinger (2009), '"For this relief much thanks": Taxation, Film Policy and the UK Government', *Screen*, 50 (3): 299–317.

Mankekar, P. (1999), *Screening Culture, Viewing Politics: An Ethnography of Television, Womanhood, and Nation in Postcolonial India,* Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Mato, D. (2002), 'Miami in the Transnationalization of the Telenovela Industry: On Territoriality and Globalization', *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies*, 11 (2): 195–212.

Mayer, R. E. (2017), 'Using Multimedia e-Learning', *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, 33(5): 403–23.

Mayer, V. and T. Goldman (2010), 'Hollywood Handouts: Tax Credits in the Age of Economic Crisis', *Jump Cut*, 52.

McCabe, J. and K. Akass, eds (2013), *TV's Betty Goes Global: From Telenovela to International Brand,* London: I.B.Tauris.

McNutt, M. (2015), 'Mobile Production: Spatialized Labor, Location Professionals, and the Expanding Geography of Television Production', *Media Industries*, 2 (1): 60–77.

Mellor, N., M. Ayish, N. Dajani and K. Rinnawi (2011), *Arab Media: Globalization and Emerging Media Industries,* Cambridge, UK and Malden, MA: Polity.

Miller, J. L. (2016), *Nollywood Central: The Nigerian Videofilm Industry,* London: British Film Institute.

Miller, T., N. Govil, J. McMurria, R. Maxwell and T. Wang (2005), *Global Hollywood 2,* London: British Film Institute.

Mytelka, L. (2000), 'Locational Tournaments for FDI: Inward Investment into Europe in a Global World', in N. Hood and S. Young (eds), *The Globalization of Multinational Enterprise Activity and Economic Development,* 278–302, London: Macmillan.

Nichols, R. (2014), *The Video Game Business,* London: British Film Institute.

Nordenstreng, K. and T. Varis (1974), *Television Traffic – a One-way Street?: A Survey and Analysis of the International Flow of Television Programme Material,* Paris: Unesco.

O'Donnell, C. (2014), *Developer's Dilemma: The Secret World of Videogame Creators*, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Pendakur, M. (2003), *Indian Popular Cinema: Industry, Ideology, and Consciousness,* Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.

Penix-Tadsen, P. (2016), *Cultural Code: Video Games and Latin America,* Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Pertierra, A. C. and G. Turner (2013), *Locating Television: Zones of Consumption,* London: Routledge.

Picard, R. G. and L. Barkho (2011), 'Dubai Media City: Creating Benefits from Foreign Media', in C. Karlsson and R. G. Picard (eds), *Media Clusters: Spatial Agglomeration and Content Capabilities,* 281–305, Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Pinon, J. (2014), 'Reglocalization and the Rise of the Network Cities Media System in Producing Telenovelas for Hemispheric Audiences', *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 17 (6): 655–71.

Portuges, C. and P. Hames, eds (2013), *Cinemas in Transition in Central and Eastern Europe after 1989,* Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Punathambekar, A. (2013), *From Bombay to Bollywood: The Making of a Global Media Industry,* New York: New York University Press.

Rajadhyaksha, A. (2003), 'The "Bollywoodization" of the Indian Cinema: Cultural Nationalism in a Global Arena', *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 4 (1): 25–39.

Rivero, Y. M. (2013), 'Our *Betty*: The Legacy of the *Yo soy Betty, la fea*'s Success in Colombia', in J. McCabe and K. Akass (eds), *TV Betty Goes Global,* 45–63, London: I.B. Tauris.

Sakr, N. (2007), *Arab Television Today,* London: I.B. Tauris.

Sanson, K. (2014), 'Location and Labor: Critical Crossroads in Global Film and Television', *Creative Industries Journal*, 7 (1): 54–58.

Sanson, K. (forthcoming), 'Stitching It All Together: Service Producers and the Spatial Dynamics of Screen Media Labor', *International Journal of Cultural Studies*.

Schiller, H. I. (1969), *Mass Communications and American Empire,* New York: A. M. Kelley.

Scholz, T., ed. (2012), *Digital Labor: The Internet as Playground and Factory,* New York: Routledge.

Scott, A. J. (2000), *The Cultural Economy of Cities,* London and Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Sinclair, J. (1999), *Latin American Television: A Global View,* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sinclair, J. and J. Straubhaar (2013), *Latin American Television Industries,* London: British Film Institute.

Szczepanik, P. (2016), 'Transnational Crews and Post-socialist Precarity: Globalizing Screen Media Labor in Prague', in M. Curtin and K. Sanson (eds), *Precarious Creativity: Global Media, Local Labor*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Tinic, S. (2005), *On Location: Canada's Television Industry in a Global Market,* Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Tunstall, J. (1977), *The Media Are American,* New York: Columbia University Press.

UNESCO (1963), *Statistics on Radio and Television, 1950–1960,* Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

de Valck, M., B. Kredell and S. Loist, eds (2016), *Film Festivals: History, Theory, Method, Practice,* London and New York: Routledge.

Vanderhoef, J. (2019), *Passion, Pixels, and Profit: The New Creative Economy of Indie Game Production,* Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Vanderhoef, J. and M. Curtin (2016), 'The Crunch Heard 'Round the World: The Global Era of Digital Game Labor', in M. Banks, B. Conor and V. Mayer (eds), *Production Studies, The Sequel!,* 196–210, New York: Routledge.

Wang, S. (2003), *Framing Piracy: Globalization and Film Distribution in Greater China,* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Wijman, T. (2018, April 30), 'Global Games Market Revenues 2018'. Retrieved 2 June 2018, from https://newzoo.com/insights/articles/global-games-market-reaches-137-9-billion-in-2018-mobile-games-take-half/

Wong, A., ed. (2002), *The Cathay Story*, Hong Kong: Hong Kong Film Archive.

Wong, C. H.-Y. (2011), *Film Festivals: Culture, People, and Power on the Global Screen*, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Yago, G. (1991), *Junk Bonds: How High Yield Securities Restructured Corporate America,* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Zhang, X. and A. Fung (2014), 'TV Formatting of the Chinese Ugly Betty: An Ethnographic Observation of the Production Community', *Television & New Media*, 15 (6): 507–22.

Zhang, Y. (2010), *Cinema, Space, and Polylocality in a Globalizing China,* Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

Zhao, Y. (2008), *Communication in China: Political Economy, Power, and Conflict,* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Chapter 11

Digital Platforms, Globalization and Culture

Aswin Punathambekar and Sriram Mohan

Introduction

Digital platforms are everywhere. Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, Twitter, Wechat, Tinder and many more are now woven into the rhythms of ordinary, everyday life for millions of people across the world. With state and private investments in digital infrastructures (and communication technologies more generally) leading to increased access to the internet the world over, it seems hard to imagine a near future without a range of platforms facilitating our social, cultural, political and economic interactions and exchanges. From the perspective of technology companies, governments, and indeed, the public at large, these developments constitute nothing short of a 'platform revolution', one that will continue to 'disrupt' markets, labour relations, business practices, state institutions and, on the whole, transform entire societies.

Not surprisingly, we now have a robust and heated debate about the influence that widely used digital platforms wield and the impact they have on political cultures in particular. The scale at which some of the most influential digital communication platforms operate – 2.2 billion monthly users on Facebook, 1.5 billion on YouTube, and 1.5 billion on WhatsApp – is just one part of the story.[1] Growing awareness of the ways in which these platforms are being weaponized by states, corporations and political parties has led to calls for greater scrutiny and regulation. Recognizing that communication platforms built on extracting value from our experiences and interactions will not necessarily serve as a good foundation for a vibrant, open and diverse public sphere in our digital era, scholars and policy-makers in the US and Western Europe have developed strong arguments for regulating digital companies in the public interest (van Dijck 2016) and are even exploring how cooperatives can form the basis for a more open platform society (Scholz 2017). Scholars have also drawn attention to the growth

---

1 https://www.statista.com/topics/1164/social-networks/

and dominance of American-based platforms as signalling a new phase of media, informational, and cultural imperialism (Fuchs 2016; Jin 2013). In this line of political-economic critique, one that continues to centre the US as *the* dominant media power instead of accounting for the complexities of a multi-polar mediascape, the internet is regarded as yet another extension of American empire (Fuchs 2016).

To be sure, these perspectives and critiques are not baseless. The consolidation of corporate/state power and the move away from an open web (Gillespie 2010) is a serious global concern. And celebratory accounts of digital media and user-agency do need to be leavened with a more critical and historical understanding of political and cultural structures. As Aouragh and Chakravartty (2016) point out, it is impossible to understand the role of digital infrastructures and platforms in relation to, say, the events of the Arab Spring, without accounting for the legacy of US Empire and decades-long efforts at modernization and democratization in the Third World (see also Chakravartty's contribution to this volume).

Given that 74 per cent of internet users now reside in the Global South, including Asia (48.7 per cent), Africa (10.9 per cent), Latin America (10.5 per cent) and the Middle East (3.9 per cent) ('Internet Users in the World' 2018), it seems safe to assume that the specific form and effects of digital platforms will hinge on the mediation of a range of local forces and factors. For instance, the meteoric growth of local language internet users in a diverse country like India – from 42 million in 2011 to 234 million by 2016 – signals the emergence of vernacular practices that challenge our Anglo-centric understandings of digital cultures (KPMG 2017). And yet, current debates about platform imperialism and the public interest rest on assumptions and arguments that bear a striking similarity to those made during the 1970s and 1980s when the proliferation of transnational satellite television channels raised anxieties concerning conglomeration, cultural homogenization, and the erosion of national-cultural identities (Parks and Kumar 2002; Tomlinson 1991). Put simply, sweeping claims about platform imperialism seldom allow for nuanced understandings of shifting geopolitical relations, media and telecommunications industry practices, and the experiences of media audiences and publics in a wide range of political and cultural contexts outside the Anglophone Western world.

Steering clear of narratives of homogenization and, at the other end, uncritical celebrations of local difference and hybridity, this chapter explores the uneven and often fraught expansion of digital communication platforms beyond the Anglophone West. We are not concerned with asking here whether the globalization of digital platforms is a 'good' or 'bad' thing for communities and nations that lack financial resources or geopolitical clout, whether a handful of American platform companies dominate the world, or whether cultural identities and political processes being transformed under the influence of English-language digital platforms. Nor do we believe that we should avoid questions about Western media dominance despite the emergence of other global media capitals, the very real constraints on audiences and users in a predominantly capitalist global media system, and regulations and policies that shore up unequal flows of capital,

talent and content. What we seek to do is to develop a broader perspective for understanding the dialectic of globalization and localization in relation to digital platforms.

In conversation with recent efforts to grapple with the global character of the internet and the plurality of digital cultures (Goggin and McLelland 2017), we develop three broad arguments: first, digital platforms are part of global media cultures; second, digital platforms are built on multiple layers of media infrastructures and analyzing them calls for an inter-medial and inter-sectoral approach; and third, there is a continued need to understand the economic, political, and socio-cultural significance of regional cultures, languages, and media territories for the global expansion and 'localization' of digital platforms. In outlining these arguments, we hope to show that the 'coded structures' (van Dijck 2013) that underpin digital platforms are indelibly cultural and not just technical and commercial ones. As we will see, foregrounding 'culture' entails contending with keywords and concepts including data, affect, circulation, and sharing while exploring how media and cultural imperialism, localization and hybridity have acquired new valences in an era of digitalization.

Platforms in the global mediascape

What do we stand to gain by positioning the 'digital' between two powerful keywords – 'global' and 'culture' – that have animated the study of media in different disciplines? To begin with, a focus on global inter-connections allows us to acknowledge and account for digital media as having emerged from and as part of processes of economic and cultural globalization that have unfolded since the late-1970s (see Qiu on 'The Global Internet', this volume). We are less concerned about defining limits on what constitutes the 'digital' than with insisting on an implicit recognition that digital media anywhere in the world are caught up in a world-historical process in which social, cultural and economic exchanges are transnational, multi-directional and driven by a multi-polar and predominantly capitalist media system.

It is worth reminding ourselves that media globalization is by no means solely a 'western' phenomenon. Beginning in the 1980s, the media landscape across Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East has been altered dramatically as transnational and regional television networks displaced and, in some cases, reinvigorated centralized, public, and often state-regulated media systems. This process has only intensified in recent years as digital distribution and online-video networks (both legal and extra-legal) have expanded their footprints, creating new circuits for the flow of media content that criss-cross national, linguistic and other political and cultural borders. Furthermore, since the early 1990s, a number of cities and regional hubs across the non-Western world – Hong Kong, Shenzhen, Mumbai, Bangalore, Accra, Lagos, Bogota and so on – have emerged as important nodes in a trans national network of media and ICT (information and communication technology) design, production and circulation. In rich accounts

of media industries (Curtin 2003; Govil 2009) and digital cultures (Chan 2013), scholars have shown how media and tech capitals emerge through a complex interaction of local, regional, global as well as national forces and factors including state policy, technological advances, the built environment, talent migration and the desires and ambitions of media moguls and venture capitalists. Far from leading to a homogenized world system in which Anglo-American media, culture and values overwhelm local culture(s) everywhere, the globalization of media has given rise to new and highly hybrid scales and forms of cultural production and cultural identity.

To be sure, these transformations in the media sector were part of broader transitions involving the adoption of neo liberal economic policies and the de-regulation and privatization of different sectors of the economy. Our analysis thus needs to account for the uneven ways in which economic and political forces shape the digital media landscape. In the Asian context, for instance, we can see quite clearly the emergence of China and India as key players in global media and tech circuits whereas a smaller nation like Myanmar is caught up not only in India and China's regional struggles for hegemony but also with American platform capitalism. As Daniel Arnaudo (forthcoming, 2019) has explained, the development of digital media in contemporary Myanmar is symptomatic of wider conflicts that structure political culture, particularly along ethnic, religious and gendered lines. Moreover, the development of mobile and digital infrastructures in Myanmar reveals the power that platforms like Facebook wield.

In a context marked by low literacy levels, low levels of ICT use, and poor regulatory oversight, initiatives such as Facebook Zero (offered by Telenor, a Norwegian multinational telecommunication company, starting in 2014) become highly problematic. Facebook Zero is a simplified, text-only version of Facebook that users with feature phones (non-smartphone) could access. Recognizing that the only way to maintain its growth was by expanding into the so-called emerging markets of Asia, Africa and Latin America, Facebook entered into agreements with major telecommunication companies that allowed users to access Facebook Zero without incurring any data-usage costs. For hundreds of millions of people accessing the internet through their relatively inexpensive mobile phones, such strategies create a 'walled garden' and an exceedingly narrow view of being online and indeed, what the internet is (Mims 2012). The dangers of one particular digital media company dominating the internet extends well beyond concerns of market competition and user privacy. The fact that Facebook has become *the* dominant site for digital and mobile communication in a country like Myanmar has serious implications for inter-ethnic and inter-religious relations. Investigative reports have revealed that the explosion of hate speech on Facebook – by far the only major entry point for online information – did stoke anti-Muslim sentiments and incite violence (Hogan and Safi 2018).[2]

2 https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/apr/03/revealed-facebook-hate-speech-exploded-in-myanmar-during-rohingya-crisis

A global perspective also helps us discern that the spatial coordinates of any given digital platform will always exceed the boundaries of specific cities, regions or nations. In fact, it would be ludicrous to examine the formation and global impact of Silicon Valley by remaining within the boundaries of the United States. After all, San Francisco's emergence as a global tech hub cannot be grasped without mapping its connections with other nodes of finance, technology, and human capital such as Bangalore, Shenzen and Accra (Avle 2014). Moreover, the everyday operation of any given digital communication platform is also supported by a global labour force. The routine and daily task of content moderation on a platform like Facebook, for instance, is supported by thousands of underpaid workers in India and Philippines who go through a staggering volume of user-content including some highly disturbing sexual and racist imagery. The psychological and social toll of form of digital labour (Roberts 2016) often goes unnoticed but should inform our understanding of digital platforms as constituted by *global* connections.

Even as we draw attention to digital labour and other negative dimensions of how digital platforms operate, there can be no doubt that the same platforms are increasingly central to the production of a meaningful sense of cultural belonging and locality for people the world over. In fact, media scholars' early interest in digital platforms emerged in part from what they afforded user communities in terms of connection, creativity, customization and exchange, usually evidenced through the rise of 'Web 2.0' in the mid-2000s. The excitement around these possibilities was tempered by calls to pay attention to the political economy of these platforms, i.e., their ability to profit from vast quantities of data generated through their use, and their increasing influence in determining and shaping legitimate use. Van Dijck and Poell (2015) even assert that the reshaping of public and private communications by social media platforms' commercial imperatives amounts to a transformation of the political economy of the media landscape. But even a sweeping definition of political economy, as the 'study of control and survival in social life' (Mosco 2009: 24–25), does not make sufficient space for the full range of moral and cultural resources and circumvention techniques mobilized by users on and by these digital platforms every day.

This is further complicated by the tensions between studying platforms as computational systems designed and controlled by a few and approaching them as bridges between independently developed and maintained communities of practice. As Brock (2012) argues in his work on African-American uses of digital communication platforms, critical political economy scholars attempt to account for some of the possibilities that lie at these intersections but continue to undervalue the linkages between desire and user practice. Brock urges us to also think about the complexities of desire and pleasure, contending that the libidinal energies accrued through playful and subversive uses drive the operations of digital media platforms.

Understanding the dynamics of digital platforms, then, calls for a renewed focus on the changing relations between economy, culture, and space without privileging the national as *the* dominant, pre-given, and uniformly imagined framework and scale of analysis, while remaining attentive to the creative ways in which nation-states have exerted control over digital infrastructures, platforms

and users. For instance, YouTube's trajectory in Pakistan – from its entry as a global platform in 2006, the censorship and outright ban in 2008, the protracted civil society struggle, and finally, the lifting of the ban after the launch of a local version in 2016 – offers an instructive case in how digital platforms navigate local and regional politics and, by the same token, how state-citizen relations shape digital cultures.

Following the republication of caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad and the reproduction of purportedly non-Islamic content on YouTube in 2008, the Pakistani state ordered local internet providers to block access to the platform, with a configuration error then shutting off the site to users across the world for a couple of hours. The lack of a localized YouTube implementation (and consequently, the lack of control experienced by the state in its efforts to monitor and moderate content) was repeatedly mobilized by politicians as the reason for the blanket ban on the platform in Pakistan. The tensions between the state's impulse to censor content that it deemed blasphemous and Pakistani civil society's opposition to such heavy-handed control of digital and news media then played out through persistent calls to reinstate platform access.

A key example here is #KholoBC (*kholo* meaning 'open' and BC being an acronym for an expletive), a campaign opposing state censorship and content regulation on the internet. Sparked by a 'viral' rap song featuring comedian Ali Gul Pir and rapper Adil Omar, #KholoBC indexed a range of discontents about the limiting of the freedom of expression in Pakistan, using religion and national security as smokescreens, culminating in a call to action specifically focused on removing the YouTube ban.

#KholoBC also involved a video shot on the streets of Karachi featuring a person wearing a YouTube-branded cube walking the streets holding a sign reading 'hug me if you want me back'. Men and women are shown approaching the friendly cube for hugs, as cries of 'I love YouTube' and 'God, please open YouTube' punctuate the soundtrack.

Examples like these reveal the limits of an overarching media imperialism argument and push us to explore the more contingent links among states, global media/tech companies, and audience/user practices. Moreover, when we look beyond the north Atlantic region, it also becomes clear that digital media cannot be seen as neatly following on after broadcasting, film, television and video cultures. The Pakistani state's response to YouTube is part of a broader effort to clamp down on new forms of cultural and political expression sparked by the expansion of cable television in 2003–04, just a few years before the arrival of digital platforms. In other words, the layering of multiple media infrastructures in just over two decades has led to the creation of a disjunctive mediascape that calls for an inter-medial and inter-sectoral approach – one that traces connections across media forms (film, TV, print, etc.) and between sectors (television and telecommunications, for example). In other words, even as we pay attention to the spatial politics of digital cultures – what the cultural geographer Doreen Massey (1994) refers to as 'power-geometry' of globalization – we also need to foreground questions of temporality and media history.

Situating digital platforms: media and cultural infrastructures

During the 1990s and early 2000s, the digital turn across the Global South was defined as much by the ups and downs of venture capital backed dot-com companies as by ICT4D (Information and Communication Technologies for Development) projects bankrolled by organizations including the World Bank and the UK's Department for International Development. Digital cultures, in other words, are shaped by distinct and at times disjunct temporalities within the same nation-space (Appadurai 2000). An emphasis on the temporal dimensions of technological and institutional change assumes even greater importance in the context of postcolonial media cultures given that at a quite basic level, the digital cannot be seen as neatly following on after broadcasting, film, and television and video cultures. As Ravi Sundaram (2013: 12) points out, the 1980s and 1990s in India were marked by a 'frenetic media multiplicity' when cassette culture, colour television, VCRs, cable and satellite broadcasting, and the internet all arrived with barely any temporal gaps. The story unfolds along similar lines in Pakistan as well. In a richly detailed account of new television genres and their impact on political culture, Hashmi (2012) recounts that in less than a decade after the ban on private media ownership was lifted in the early 2000s, there were a total of fifty-four satellite channels, more than fifty radio stations, 151 dailies, and sixty-eight monthly publications in place.

The study of digital platforms like YouTube thus cannot simply adopt medium-specific trajectories. The story of digital media in postcolonial contexts is in large part about the phenomenal expansion of communication infrastructures since the mid-1990s. In the span of a decade, industry discourse in the digital and mobile media sectors in countries like India shifted from educating new consumers about devices and data services to a generation 'born for the internet'. And the ups and downs of state censorship and regulation notwithstanding, the digital media economy has become tightly integrated with the advertising, marketing, print, film, radio and television industries across the Indian subcontinent. Moreover, the arrival of different technologies and media forms within the same timeframe – for instance, the uptake of colour television and the desktop computer during the mid-1980s – suggests histories of intermediality and media convergence that do not register in mainstream scholarship on digital media.

Indeed, this is precisely the historical amnesia that John Caldwell cautioned against when he argued for an approach to digital media and technoculture as 'historical formations animated by continuities as much as invention' (2000: 3). Caldwell's historicizing impulse – to situate the social and cultural logics of digital platforms in relation to histories of electronic and broadcasting media – is one we must embrace if we are to avoid framing global digital cultures within the familiar straitjackets of technological novelties that travel the world from some select centres to various peripheries or as inaugurating a decisive break from other media forms.

Adopting this historically grounded perspective also alerts us to the question of media infrastructures that undergird digital cultures, a topic that has not

received the kind of scholarly attention accorded to audiences, films and television programmes, industries and institutions and even policy and regulation. Even in non-Western contexts, where infrastructure(s) are marked by their hyper-visibility, scholars have tended to ignore the profound impact that a whole range of communication infrastructures – towers, cables and wires, devices, repair practices and so on – has had on operations of digital platforms.

Consider the 'YouTube Go' project, a telling example of tech localization that digital companies have engaged in as nation-states and telecom companies have invested in high speed network infrastructures and ensured a phenomenal growth in the number of users with smartphones and data connections. Framed as 'lessons for building international products', a report from Google's Design team recounts how their YouTube Research team helped the company to 'reimagine the app's experience' for users in India, Nigeria, Brazil and other 'emerging markets' (Next Billion Users 2018). With the understanding that 'retrofitting would not work', the design team recommended a series of tweaks – video previewing, offline viewing and proximate sharing – that addressed users' frustrations. The research team also recognized the importance of featuring 'locally relevant content' and local language support but did not address the crucial question of what exactly locally relevant content meant (besides the metric of which videos were popular in a given region).

In other words, platforms like YouTube are able to address the concern about local relevance at an infrastructural level through moves such as offline availability of videos, sharing videos through mobile internet hotspots, and so on. Even language, the immanent domain of the cultural and the political, turns into an infrastructural concern that ought to be managed, not negotiated. As we noted earlier, the question of local languages has become fundamental to the future of the digital media industries in countries like India given the growth of Indian language internet users from 42 million in 2011 to 234 million by 2016 (KPMG 2017). The impact of the emergence of local language users as a powerful bloc is felt well beyond a platform's software and design domains to include the wider media ecosystem including the development of digital advertisements in local languages, digital payment interfaces and crucially, multi-language data analytics (KPMG 2017).

These industry-wide changes notwithstanding, the issue of developing and offering locally relevant content has been far more complex for platforms like YouTube than for social networking platforms like Facebook or Twitter, for example, where locally relevant content is generated almost entirely by users and the platform's primary function becomes one of enabling discovery and algorithmically prioritizing hashtags and user feeds (Marwick and boyd 2011). But for an online video platform like YouTube, localization has meant bridging the gulf between user generated content and material sourced from established screen industries. At the time of writing, it has become clear that digital video platforms and portals (Lotz 2017) including Netflix, Amazon Prime and YouTube are forging links with established film and television companies. Consider, if only briefly, YouTube's trajectory in the Indian mediascape.

When YouTube India, the twentieth country-localized version of the online video platform, was launched in May 2008, press coverage of the announcement focused on institutional partnerships with top Bollywood content providers (Indiatimes News Network 2008). YouTube was already fighting a legal battle over copyright infringement in the Delhi High Court with major music label T-Series (Pahwa 2008), where YouTube's promises to remove copyrighted content when copyright infringements were reported were squarely rejected by the publisher who characterized YouTube as 'defective technology'. Since then, these 'defects' seem to have been ironed out through subscriptions and payment systems, with T-Series emerging as the top music channel on the platform globally in 2016 (*Mumbai Mirror* 2017). But given the cloud of legal trouble hovering over its launch, Google-owned YouTube ensured that it signalled its intentions clearly and lined up a series of partnerships including those with prominent television news channels like NDTV, state institutions like the Ministry of Tourism and the Indian Institute of Technology, and sports content providers like KrishCricket. In bringing together a range of partners to provide content across specific genres, YouTube was following in the footsteps of MTV and other global television companies in mobilizing industry lore about Indian audiences' proclivities, i.e., their preference for cricket and Bollywood, and their investment in news and education. In mapping this trajectory, Sangeet Kumar is right to argue that the emergent scene of online video production in India has a 'codependent relationship with hegemonic cultural institutions by being both in competition with it but also gaining from the technical, cultural labor, as well its archive of readily available content to be used and reused' (2016: 5609).

Even a cursory examination of archived copies of the YouTube India site a month after its launch reveals that there were efforts undertaken to surface content created by individuals (in the 'Featured Videos' tab on the homepage, for instance). Videos of fishes at the Golden Temple in Amritsar were listed alongside those of Bengali-language graffiti, card tricks and motorcycle stunts in Kerala. As people began to take seriously YouTube's exhortations to 'broadcast yourself', the notion of a YouTube star also became legible in the Indian context. Wilbur Sargunaraj, famous for his Tamil-accented English music videos on topics ranging from blogs to 'love marriage', is often referred to as India's first YouTube star. Other notable examples of early success on YouTube India through music videos include teen musician Shraddha Sharma, who went on to release albums with the Universal Music Group (Pahwa 2013), and 'karaoke master' Dr K Choudhary. Even as claims of YouTube India being 'bigger than MTV India' were floated by the top brass at Google (Pahwa 2012), the online video platform was also building on the momentum around comedy, curating content from collectives like All India Bakchod (AIB) and The Viral Fever (TVF) alongside clips from films in various regional languages. If partnerships with the Indian Premier League (IPL) to live-stream cricket matches was one plank on which the platform sought to build its user base in the region and attract advertisers, satire, parody, and original comedy content represented another plank in the boardwalk of localization efforts. By the time the national general election results were live streamed on YouTube in May

2014 (another marker of its growing importance as a site for political speech and resistance), the platform could boast of significant depth in terms of content availability in genres ranging from cooking and make-up tutorials to gadget reviews and devotional music.

If cultivating ties with established media industries and their talent and labour infrastructures (from writers and actors to caterers and set construction labourers) played a critical role in producing a distinct 'creator culture' (Cunningham and Craig 2018), the introduction of the option to download videos for offline playback on Android phones in 2014 was another key factor when it came to YouTube's viewership numbers. Offline playback was a feature that was initially introduced only in three markets (India, Indonesia and the Philippines) known for their mobile phone-centric user base and unavailability of affordable high-quality data plans. These were also three nations with the slowest average internet connection speed in the Asia Pacific region (Bellman 2014). Since then, offline playback has been made available in Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam and some markets in Africa (Algeria, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria) and the Middle East (Jordan, Libya). While scholars like Larkin (2008) points to how media infrastructures and networks of circulation in the Global South can connect people into collectivities, YouTube's infrastructuring impulse appears to be driven by the need to recast people as users. This is evident in proclamations by senior YouTube employees that the 'next billion users. . . are going to come from a market like India' (indiantelevision.com 2015). This industry discourse about emerging markets is not off the mark given that India is one of the biggest online video markets in the world with YouTube viewership on mobile phones alone hitting 180 million in early 2017 (Menon 2017).

When we contend with digital platforms moving from one cultural and industrial context to another, we thus see how multiple layers and dimensions of existing infrastructures play a key role. As the work of infrastructure studies scholars has shown (Larkin 2008; Parks and Starosielski 2017), infrastructures are comprised of both technical, material things (mobile phones, SD cards, set-top boxes, satellites etc.) and the 'soft' cultural practices that shape the formation of social collectivities and the circulation of media objects, ideas and so on. Where a platform like Youtube is concerned, the importance of tracing telecommunication industry practices becomes as crucial as tracking content licensing and co-production arrangements with established media industries including film, television and music. But localization also rests on an elusive notion of 'cultural fit', and the history of global media is littered with efforts by media companies to produce content that resonates with audiences rooted in particular social and cultural milieus.

Thinking about the 'textual' dimensions of platform localization would allow us to explore, for instance, the cultural tweaks that Tinder as a 'dating' app needs to incorporate into its design or the original programming that YouTube would have to produce in order to succeed in South Asia. In this regard, our understanding of localization and hybridity in relation to satellite television and advertising is a helpful basis (Mazzarella 2010; Kraidy 2005). Scholarship on MTV's hybrid avatars

across the world has shown that localization is a very complex process involving cultural translations and exchanges that can at times be politically fraught (Fung 2006; Cullity 2002). These accounts also foreground how localization is a multi-scalar process whereby shifts in industrial and managerial logics (for instance, producing content locally) go hand in hand with highly charged representational moves that build on and often challenge dominant norms, values, and aspirations in relation to class, caste, gender and sexuality (Kumar and Curtin 2002; Mankekar 2004). In their detailed analysis of a music video star, Alisha China, for example, Kumar and Curtin (2002: 351) show how the 'seemingly contradictory strategies of conglomeration and de-centralization' create the space in channels like MTV-India for surprising new representations of gender roles that can challenge patriarchal norms. These dynamics of trans-culturation proved crucial in understanding the often unforeseen political effects of reality TV participation across Asia and the Middle East (Kraidy and Sender 2011).

When assessed in relation to this longer media and cultural history, it is evident that platform localization cannot be merely about local language implementation, subtitling, and technological tweaks that respond to concerns like data speeds and cost. It is much more than this. In the following section, we focus on YouTube India to show how emergent data-driven industry logics, industry lore (Havens 2014) about language-based media territories, and the videos produced by YouTube channels reveal imaginations of 'culture' that both respond to and transcend extant geo political boundaries and concerns.

Platform localization: a case study of YouTube India

From the perspective of the media industries, regions are at times regarded as sites of cultural and political coherence but at other times, as spaces that have to be actively policed to ensure that audiences/users do not access content through various informal distribution circuits. Studies of global media industries make it clear that any straightforward mapping of geographic territories onto media regions is a fraught endeavour (Lobato and Meese 2016; Elkins 2016). However, in the Indian context, the region–language link does emerge as a powerful organizing principle given that the purportedly 'national' Hindi-English language content producers have explicitly categorized the 'south' of India not just as a market but as a distinctive cultural and political territory. This is not a new categorization; it has been held in place by film and television distribution practice for well over five decades.

The reorganization of independent India's states and territories along linguistic lines in 1956 helped to produce within the country a set of 'regions', which continue to guide media production and distribution practices to this day. Specifically, the troubled imagination of Hindi as the *national* language and Hindi language cinema as the *national* cinema has meant that other language-based cultural productions have historically been marginalized under the umbrella of the *regional*. This territorial imagination has been contested by intellectuals and

activists from various sites for well over a century now, with the Indian diaspora's spread and influence also contributing to its instability.

Moreover, forces of economic globalization and cultural globalization that led to the emergence of numerous trans-local television networks like Sun TV, or the development of new and diffuse regional formations around Bhojpuri-language cinema have also challenged this narrow mapping of region onto language (Kumar 2013).

Scholars have also pointed out that media and cultural regions, far from being fixed and pre-given, have to be continually produced and performed. It is not possible in the space of this chapter to detail the many inter- and intra-regional struggles that define the history of language-based communities in South Asia and other world regions, but it is worth situating contemporary cultural and political dynamics within a history that extends back, as Mir (2010) and Orsini (2013) argue, well into the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It is crucial, then, to approach language-based formations by keeping in mind their inadequate yet necessary character. This broader history of languages and cultural regions proves helpful in decoding YouTube India's production logics and specifically, their purported 'discovery' of South India as a distinct cultural region.

In an interview rounding up developments on YouTube in India in 2017, Satya Raghavan, the company's head of entertainment for the country, revealed that Hindi, Tamil, Telugu and English remained the top four languages for the platform (Mathur 2017). Less than a year later, he acknowledged a rise in demand for content in South Indian languages, in another trade press article about the seven hundred-million-dollar online video market in India (Singh 2017). Such narratives about languages and the scales of their appeal are reiterated in the platform's own annual global retrospective, *YouTube Rewind*. The 2017 version, for instance, marks the dominance of Hindi (and 'Hinglish') by featuring the stars of popular North Indian YouTube channels like BB ki Vines, Technical Guruji, All India Bakchod, and fashion vlogger Shruti Arjun Anand.

But despite Raghavan's own claims about the importance of South Indian languages like Tamil and Telugu to YouTube at large, not a single South Indian channel is mentioned in the *Rewind* video. That the 'Indian' market continues to be spoken for by Hindi language content creators in such global initiatives illuminates one of the foundational tensions of imagining and mobilizing media regions in a national context where the boundaries of the states have largely been drawn across linguistic lines. This is only further complicated by the presence and appeal of diasporic audiences whose media practices both rupture and reshape industrial imaginations of the south of India or the southern peninsula as the 'other' media region. In this industrial context, the efforts to carve out a distinct Tamil-language space by channels like *Put Chutney* seem remarkable.

Founded in February 2015, *Put Chutney* has over 680,000 subscribers and its videos have accrued more than 78 million views (as of July 2018). *Put Chutney*'s online presence, however, is not limited to YouTube – it has more than 1.8 million followers on Facebook, 28,000 followers on Twitter and a comedy special on Amazon Prime. Even as their multi-platform play expands to encompass emergent

opportunities such as Facebook Watch and Whatsapp Business, their early work on YouTube offers crucial clues to apprehend the possibilities and limits of platform localization. While their early videos such as 'We are South of India', dubbed by the BBC as 'a musical guide to southern India' (Brosnan 2014), tried to speak to the entire peninsular region of India (with its multiple languages), *Put Chutney's* producers soon focused their efforts on Tamil culture and identity and specifically in the mega-city of Chennai. In terms of industrial logics and algorithmic identification of audiences, this move marked Put Chutney's recognition of their influence largely in relation to a Tamil audience and not a 'South Indian' one. While analyzes of television channels' negotiation of such pressures of localization and regionalization (for instance, in the case of MTV India) have focused largely on the tensions around authenticity from a North Indian/Hindi standpoint, YouTube channels such as Put Chutney have fashioned other urban pathways to traverse globalized media fields textually. A key example of such engagement is the video *What if Batman was from Chennai?*, where a South Indian Batman struggles against parental expectations and bleak employment and marriage prospects. Uploaded in April 2015, the video and its successor (*What if The Avengers were from South India?*) have together clocked over 7.2 million views as of January 2018.

This version of Batman focuses largely on the cloaked superhero's run-ins with his perpetually disappointed uncle, played by actor Delhi Ganesan whose association with such characters has been solidified by years of being cast in similar parts in Tamil cinema. Ganesan's character Ananthapadmanabhan, who rebukes Batman for calling him Alfred, is a crotchety but caring bank employee and the epitome of an avuncular arbiter of middle-class morality that a westernized-yet-South Indian Batman struggles to embody. As his uncle chides him for being an aimless wastrel and not finding an IT job, Batman hangs his head in shame. In a video chock-a-block with Batman-esque takes on everyday objects and practices in South India, Batman gets caught by the cops for drunk driving and earns the ire of his uncle in numerous ways until he agrees to an 'arranged marriage' with Catwoman.

Inscribed within this arc are the lives of urban and decidedly upper-caste and middle-class residents of Chennai and other south Indian cities as they live in multigenerational households and work out the tensions between tradition and modernity alongside the transition from state socialism to neoliberal capitalism.

Ananthapadmanabhan, as the reluctant man Friday Alfred, indexes the moral anxiety animating such rapid change and controls a young apathetic Batman's navigation of this minefield. While most of the dialogue is in English, the subtitles accentuate the oddball humour, serving as another layer of parody and cleverly working around the struggles of translating a text dense with references to Tamil film songs and inside jokes.

In an interview with a local English daily two months after the video's release (and early success), Rajiv Rajaram, one of the founders of Put Chutney, pointed to how the 'regional space' is a massive market and claimed that Put Chutney can 'be regional, and be English at the same time' (Gautham 2015). Implicit here is a pushback against what film and television industry discourses have set up as a

foundational incommensurability, i.e., one can either mobilize specific cultural regions (mapped on to markets) by producing content in local languages such as Tamil or Telugu, or one can mobilize an urban audience, dissipated without any regional charge, using English. Yet, for online video channels like Put Chutney, the route to prominence appeared to lie in defying such framings and attempting to carve out markets based on the claim that if one was interested in telling 'south side stories', they could very well be in English.

Operating on a platform like YouTube was, then, a focused, data-driven search for such a south Indian digital audience and which, in turn, had to challenge the film and television industries' imaginations of a Tamil or a Telugu audience.

In the summer of 2016, in an interview with one of the authors of this article, Rajaram argued that English was a good 'bridge language' that allowed him to make a claim to speak for the south. Rajaram also acknowledged the inherent impossibility of claims to speak for the south of India, pointing to how they will always run up against viewers who feel that their cultural milieu was not represented. Interestingly, digital industry professionals like Rajaram routinely mobilize and combine algorithmic knowledge and established lore about specific audience/user communities when it comes to making programming decisions. Put Chutney, for instance, relies on Intelligence Machine, the proprietary analytics tool developed by its parent company to back its hunches on themes and audience proclivities. While trade press reports reiterate the company's claims about the tool's 'big data stack' and its ability to process 'terabytes of data from digital and social media everyday' (Panjari 2018), Rajaram points to its usefulness in identifying trending topics and determining which ones will sustain long enough for him to produce content around them. Thus, the temporality of user interest, baked into platforms like YouTube through sections such as Trending, is stabilized via algorithmic interventions like Intelligence Machine and is related to representational moves that contribute to the localization of online video platforms.

It goes without saying that digital studies scholarship is at an early stage and we need more work to trace patterns of cultural exchange beyond the one region that we have focused on here. If the language–region dyad emerges as a highly unstable category in our analysis, so does the link between platform localization and national borders. This is apparent in other regions in South Asia where robust and dynamic exchanges with diasporic communities in the Gulf Cooperation Council (UAE, Qatar, etc.) exist and flourish, and certainly in the northern parts of India where a Hindi-Urdu cultural formation establishes networks across India, Pakistan and parts of Afghanistan. Often, these new cultural circuits build on long-standing connections that are imagined and sustained through linguistic and cultural proximities. Thus, at a broader level, examining these processes of localization in relation to global digital platforms also helps us imagine the World Wide Web as a 'mosaic of online regional cultures' (Wu and Taneja 2016), with such regions forming at the intersection of multiple scales – the local, the national, the regional and the global.

Conclusion: towards a global understanding of digital platforms

In this chapter, we have approached the study of digital platforms as part and parcel of a multi-polar global media system marked by complex interactions among states, media capitals and territories, and shifting patterns of media consumption. Paying close attention to processes of media convergence and inter-sectoral links (between telecommunication and social media companies, for instance), we have emphasized how digital communication platforms are built on multiple layers of technological, media, and cultural infrastructures. Finally, drawing on scholarship on the politics and poetics of localization and hybridity in relation to satellite television, we have drawn attention to the interaction of two logics at work when it comes to digital media platforms such as YouTube – a data-driven and algorithmic understanding of users/audiences on the one hand and on the other hand, an enduring set of concerns about language, identity and cultural representation.

It goes without saying that much more work is required to trace patterns of cultural exchange beyond the one region that we have focused on here, and to do so by taking seriously the multiplicity of digital media cultures beyond the Anglophone West. Since media and communication studies began in the 1970s, its object of study has changed in fundamental ways. Media were, at first, thought almost wholly within the frame of the nation-state, its national politics and culture. Since then, the diffusion of continuing technological innovations, driven by the world economy, has changed the media landscape beyond recognition, producing the digital and globalized world that we inhabit today. If the phenomenal expansion of television during the 1980s and 1990s sparked heated debates on how the globalization of media and communication was transforming societies, then Kraidy (2017) is surely right to ponder if it is time now to rewrite the term as 'global *digital* cultures'. Understanding the unfolding impact of digitalization and in particular, the workings of digital platforms that are reshaping culture and communication across the world, calls for a truly global and comparative perspective.

References

Anwer J. (2010), 'Meet India's first YouTube star', *Times of India*, 21 March.

Aouragh, M. and P. Chakravartty (2016), 'Infrastructures of Empire: Towards a Critical Geopolitics of Media and Information Studies', *Media, Culture & Society,* 38 (4): 559–75.

Avle, S. (2014), 'Articulating and Enacting Development: Skilled Returnees in Ghana's ICT Industry', *Information Technologies & International Development*, 10 (4): 1–13.

Brock, A. (2012), 'From the Blackhand Side: Twitter as a Cultural Conversation', *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media,* 56 (4): 529–49.

Brosnan, G. (2014), 'A Musical Guide to Southern India is a YouTube hit', *BBC News*, 8 November.

Caldwell, J., ed. (2000), *Electronic Media and Technoculture,* New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Chan, A. S. (2013), *Networking Peripheries: Technological Futures and the Myth of Digital Universalism,* Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Cullity, J. (2002), 'The Global Desi: Cultural Nationalism on MTV India', *Journal of Communication Inquiry,* 26 (4): 408–25.

Cunningham, S., D. Craig and J. Silver (2016), 'YouTube, Multichannel Networks and the Accelerated Evolution of the New Screen Ecology', *Convergence,* 22(4): 376–91.

Curtin, M. (2003), 'Media Capital: Towards the Study of Spatial Flows', *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 6 (2): 202–28.

van Dijck, J. (2013), *The Culture of Connectivity: A Critical History of Social Media,* New York: Oxford University Press.

van Dijck, J. (2016), '*#AoIR2016: Opening Keynote 'The Platform Society' by José van Dijck*. [Online. Accessed 26 February 2018.] Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ypiiSQTNqo

van Dijck, J. and T. Poell (2015), 'Social Media and the Transformation of Public Space', *Social Media + Society,* 1(2): 1–5.

Elkins, E. (2016), 'The DVD Region Code System: Standardizing Home Video's Disjunctive Global Flows', *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 19 (2): 225–40.

Fuchs, C. (2016), *Critical Theory of Communication,* London: University of Westminster Press.

Fung, A. (2006), '"Think Globally, Act Locally": China's Rendezvous with MTV', *Global Media and Communication*, 2 (1): 71–88.

Gillespie, T. (2010), 'The Politics of "Platforms"', *New Media & Society,* 12 (3): 347–64.

Goggin, G. and M. McLelland (2017), *The Routledge Companion to Global Internet Histories,* Routledge Media and Cultural Studies Companions Series, London: Routledge.

Govil, N. (2009), 'Wind(Fall) from the East', *Television & New Media,* 10 (1): 63–65.

Hashmi, M. (2012), 'At the Limits of Discourse: Political Talk in Drag on Late Night Show with Begum Nawazish Ali', *South Asian History and Culture,* 3 (4): 511–31.

Havens, T. (2014), 'Media Programming in an Era of Big Data', *Media Industries Journal* 1 (2). DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.3998/mij.15031809.0001.202

Hogan, L. and M. Safi (2018), 'Revealed: Facebook Hate Speech Exploded in Myanmar during Rohingya Crisis', *Guardion*, 3 April.

indiantelevision.com (2015), 'The Next Billion YouTube Users are Going to Come from India', Ajay Vidyasagar. [Online. Accessed 26 February 2018.] Available at: http://www.indiantelevision.com/iworld/video-on-demand/thenext-billion-youtube-users-are-going-to-come-from-india-ajay-vidyasagar-151204

Jin, D. Y. (2013), 'The Construction of Platform Imperialism in the Globalization Era', *tripleC: Communication, Capitalism & Critique. Open Access Journal for a Global Sustainable Information Society,* 11 (1): 145–72.

KPMG and Google (2017) 'Indian Languages – Defining India's Internet.' [Online: Accessed 26 February 2018.] Available at: https://home.kpmg.com/in/en/home/insights/2017/04/indian-language-internet-users.html

Kraidy, M. (2005), *Hybridity, Or the Cultural Logic of Globalization,* Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Kraidy, M. (2017), 'Convergence and Disjuncture in Global Digital Culture – An Introduction', *International Journal of Communication,* 11 (10): 7.

Kraidy, M. M. and K. Sender, eds (2011), *The Politics of Reality Television: Global Perspectives*, London: Routledge.

Kumar, A. (2013), 'Provincialising Bollywood? Cultural Economy of North-Indian Small-town Nostalgia in the Indian Multiplex', *South Asian Popular Culture,* 11 (1): 61–74.

Kumar, S. (2016), 'YouTube Nation: Precarity and Agency in India's Online Video Scene', *International Journal of Communication,* 10: 5608–25.

Kumar, S. and M. Curtin (2002), '"Made in India": In Between Music Television and Patriarchy', *Television & New Media*, 3 (4): 345–66.

Larkin, B. (2008), *Signal and Noise: Media, Infrastructure, and Urban Culture in Nigeria,* Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Lobato, R. and J. Meese (2016), *Geoblocking and Global Video Culture,* Amsterdam: Institute of Network Cultures.

Lotz, A. (2017), *Portals: A Treatise on Internet-Distributed Television*, Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Mankekar, P. (2004), 'Dangerous Desires: Television and Erotics in Late Twentieth-Century India', *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 63 (2): 403–31.

Marwick, A. E. and d. boyd (2011), '"I tweet honestly, I tweet passionately": Twitter Users, Context Collapse, and the Imagined Audience', *New Media & Society,* 13 (1): 114–33.

Massey, D. (1994), *Space, Place, and Gender,* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Mathur, N. (2017), 'We have a Content Ecosystem that is Wide, Deep, Well Balanced: YouTube', *Mint*, 11 December.

Mazzarella, W. (2010), 'Beautiful Balloon: The Digital Divide and the Charisma of New Media in India', *American Ethnologist,* 37 (4): 783–804.

Menon, B. (2017), 'YouTube Mobile Viewership Hits 180 m in India', *The Hindu*, 23 March.

Mir, F. (2010), *The Social Space of Language: Vernacular Culture in British Colonial Punjab,* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Mosco, V. (2009), *The Political Economy of Communication,* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Mumbai Mirror (2017), 'T-Series now World's No. 1 Music Channel on YouTube'. [Online. Accessed 26 February 2018.] Available at: https://mumbaimirror.indiatimes.com/ entertainment/bollywood/t-series-now-worlds-no-1-music-channel-on-youtube/ articleshow/56745819.cms

Orsini, F. (2013), *The History of the Book in South Asia*, London: Routledge.

Pahwa, N. (2008), 'YouTube And T-Series Given Time To Settle Copyright Infringement Dispute'. [Online. Accessed 26 February 2018.] Available at: https://gigaom. com/2008/02/28/419-youtube-and-t-series-given-time-to-settle-copyright-infringement-disput/

Pahwa, N. (2012), 'YouTube India Is Bigger Than MTV India In Revenues – Rajan Anandan'. In: *MediaNama*. [Online. Accessed 26 February 2018.] Available at: https:// www.medianama.com/2012/01/223-youtube-india-is-bigger-than-mtv-india-in-revenues-rajan-anandan/

Pahwa, N. (2013), 'YouTube Star Shraddha Sharma Signs Album Deal With Universal; YouTube Deal With Culture Machine'. In: *MediaNama*. [Online. Accessed 26 February 2018.] Available at: https://www.medianama.com/2013/11/223-youtube-shraddha-sharma-universal-music-culture-machine/

Panjari, S. (2018), 'Culture Machine inks content deal with Amazon Prime Video'. In: *TelevisionPost*. [Online. Accessed 12 July 2018.] Available at: https://www. televisionpost.com/culture-machine-inks-content-deal-with-amazon-prime-video/

Parks, L. and S. Kumar, eds (2002), *Planet TV: A Global Television Reader,* New York: New York University Press.

Parks, L. and N. Starosielski, eds (2015), *Signal Traffic: Critical Studies of Media Infrastructures,* Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Roberts, S. T. (2016), 'Commercial Content Moderation: Digital Laborers' Dirty Work', in S. U. Noble & B. Tynes (eds), *Intersectional Internet: Race, Sex, Class and Culture Online*, New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc.

Singh, N. P. (2017), *Race and America's Long Work,* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press .

Sundaram, R. (2013), *No Limits: Media Studies from India,* New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Tomlinson, J. (1991), *Cultural Imperialism: A Critical Introduction,* London: Pinter Publishers.

Wu, A. X. and H. Taneja (2016), 'Reimagining Internet Geographies: A User-Centric Ethnological Mapping of the World Wide Web', *Journal of Computer- Mediated Communication,* 21 (3): 230–46.

Part III

PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES

Chapter 12

JOURNALISM, ONLINE AND OFFLINE

C. W. Anderson

It would have been difficult to know how to write this chapter for the previous (5th) edition of *Media and Society*. In 2010, the year the 5th edition was published, digital journalism remained in a state of profound flux, with the reigning wisdom (or lack thereof) about the industry captured in a pithy quote from media theorist Clay Shirky: 'Nothing will work, but everything might' (Shirky 2009). In the news business, the state of play seemed to be changing daily, with newspapers collapsing, ambitious digital projects just getting off the ground, and speculation running rampant about whether or not the venerable *New York Times* could survive for even a few more years. What's more, the normative implications of all this turmoil and flux were hard to pin down. For years, critically-minded theorists of communication had lambasted the apparatus of institutionalized journalism on a variety of grounds (for example, Curran and Seaton 1981; Gitlin 1980); however, now that this very mainstream media seemed on the verge of collapse, no one was quite so sure about what to wish for. Perhaps things were actually better under the mass media regime than many intellectuals had realized (Starr 2009).

Even more crucially than questions of normative emphasis, though, the intellectual *stakes* of the transformation of journalism seemed unclear in 2010. Obviously, a business model for the production of digital news needed to be discovered, but the participation of mainstream economists in the debate over the 'future of journalism' was relatively muted. There was a bit more research by organizational sociologists and sociologists of the professions dissecting the new workflows and institutional routines of emerging digital journalism outlets, but that too could seem distant from the significant intellectual concerns of the communications field. It seemed as though entire swaths of media studies – political communication, science and technology studies, visual communication and semiotics, a more labour-inflected sociology of work, and many others – might be relevant to developments shaking the profession of journalism, but the exact nature of this relevance had yet to be fully articulated.

I would contend that the situation has changed a great deal in almost ten years. In part due to the passage of time, in part due to the work of hundreds of scholars in the now mature field of journalism studies, it is far easier to write this essay than

it would have been in 2010. The goal of any chapter on 'journalism online and offline', then, must be to combine stock-taking and intellectual table-setting with some thoughts on what *future* research on digital news, and digital cultural production more generally, might look like. To accomplish this, the following pages are divided into three sections. The first section is historical, dividing the history of online news into four phases – what I call the 'participatory era', the 'crisis era', the 'platform era', and the 'populist era'. The second section focuses more on the academic journalism research both to date and in the future, specifically looking at work from the sociology of the professions, science and technology studies, economics, history, political communication and more humanities-inflected research. The third and final section returns to more normative questions, specifically considering three areas: the relationship between the institutional press and the state, questions of what makes for good digital participation, and finally, the role of emotion and reason in journalism and in political life more generally.

Histories of digital news

Can there really be a history of digital news? After all, the future of the form remains unknown, the state of play is changing fast, and barely twenty years have passed since the first newspapers went online. But as I have argued elsewhere (Anderson 2015), rapid digital developments make a historical, chronological perspective more important for scholars, not less. Since the late 1990s, I would argue that we have actually seen at least four 'eras' come and go as online journalism, and the larger culture in which it is embedded, have evolved. As noted above, I call these eras the 'participatory era', the 'crisis era', the 'platform era', and the 'populist era', and will now discuss each of them in turn.

The participatory era

The early years of the internet were marked by an excitement that the relatively low costs of digital content production, combined with the ease through which such content could be distributed, would mark as a flourishing of creative practices more generally. Scholars like Henry Jenkins (2008) and Yochai Benkler (2006), along with more popular writers like Clay Shirky (2008), combined legal, economic, and socio-cultural strands of scholarship to sketch a twenty-first-century information utopia in which a relatively bottom-up stream of digital content circulated relatively free of friction, could be combined with other cultural products, and would be enabled by a relatively permissive copyright regime. Although the underlying political philosophy in which these ideas were grounded was never entirely articulated (although see Benkler 2006), the general background seemed to some combination of an Americanist 'marketplace of ideas' framework (in which the more ideas in circulation at any one time, the greater the likelihood that truth would emerge from an open and transparent clash of perspectives) or a cybernetic notion of media use (in which media producers, products and

consumers were enmeshed in a series of feedback loops that would inevitably improve the accuracy and relevance of news products). These frameworks, although originally geared toward the production of general cultural products per se, easily lent themselves to being adapted to a journalistic context.

The activist website Indymedia was one of the first participatory journalism projects to draw on this framework of citizen participation on DIY media production, and a great deal of scholarly ink was spilled on the analysis of Indymedia and its related offshoots. In one of the earliest of these pieces, Platon and Deuze (2003) described the site as a 'radical way of making, selecting and sharing news'. They and other early scholars chronicled an open-source news process in which left-wing, largely anarchist media activists used both structured community participation (in the form of an 'open newswire' to which anyone could upload breaking news or political commentary) and editorial oversight (with centrally and collectively chosen 'feature stories') to create a participatory news website that would be particularly active during moments of political protest and unrest. Scholarly and popular interest in Indymedia was soon surpassed by a focus on 'blogging', a long-form, text-based combination of political commentary and conversationally oriented news reporting in which journalistic amateurs weighed in on topics ranging from the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks on New York City and Washington DC, to the Iraq War, to the botched US governmental response to Hurricane Katrina. These analyzes of blogs and citizen media were themselves overtaken by discussions about the participatory nature of platforms like Twitter, Facebook and YouTube, each of which incorporated interactive elements and the production of user-generated content into the core of their operating methods (I will return to the discussion of these platform projects below).

The core scholarly and popular concerns during the participatory era might be summed up by a question which was once meant seriously and now has become something of a joke in media sociology circles: 'is blogging journalism?' This question, though now rather silly, gets at a fundamental intellectual preoccupation of the participatory era. In a world where everyone can, at least in theory, contribute bits of factual media content to the public realm, what separates professional journalism (with its low barriers to entry, lack of mechanisms of occupational exclusion, and seemingly simple forms of work and content production) from the fact-generating activities of ordinary people? We will come to the way these issues were taken up in scholarship in the pages that follow. In the world and the profession, however, these questions of who counted as a journalist were soon overtaken by the economic crisis enveloping news media, and Western newspapers in particular.

The crisis era

The debate about who could be considered a journalist in an age of radically democratized participation was not entirely distinct from the economic, professional, and organizational crises that overtook newspapers following the 2008 financial crash. Between 2003 and 2015, news print advertising revenue

plummeted by more than 50 per cent. Newsroom employment, likewise, was down by 30 per cent during the same time, dropping to a level not seen since 1978 (Pew Research 2014). During that dark economic decade, few large newspapers closed, while many others, including many of the newspapers owned by Advance Publications, cut back printing and home delivery days. In the eyes of the public at large, journalists and the news they produce are trusted less than ever. The work routines and production flows at hierarchically oriented, bureaucratic news institutions veered toward the chaotic; production processes are now far different than they were only a few years ago, and they still show only minimal signs of stabilizing.

In Barbie Zelizer's words, 'crisis' became the preferred term of choice used to describe the mature era of digital journalism production following the enthusiasm and efflorescence of the participatory media moment (Zelizer 2015). While Zelizer doubts whether crisis is the best word to describe the transformations in journalism in the digital age, we might rephrase her argument with the thought that the intellectual problem is not identifying the journalism crisis (or opportunity); it is, rather, disentangling a set of multiple, occasionally unrelated journalistic crises. There was a crisis of culture and trust, insofar as the competence of journalists was under fire from a variety of actors across the political spectrum and a general anti-professionalism was embraced by a variety of insurgent digital actors. There was an organizational and workflow crisis, as newsroom processes were entirely reshaped to accommodate the changing digital consumption habits of increasingly wired audiences. Finally, and perhaps most profoundly, there was an economic crisis, as the collapse of the digital advertising market led to newsroom layoffs, newspaper closures, and an increase in labour precarity amongst journalists.

The economic crisis, finally, drew intellectual sustenance from the explosion of participatory media that began a decade before. If part of the destruction of the traditional business model for journalism was the dramatic crash of the value of display advertising due to an unlimited supply of digital inventory (as theorists like Shirky argued [Shirky 2009]) then the blame for this could in part be lain at the feet of the thousands of media makers that populated this new digital space. While the primary impact of the radical media makers discussed in the previous section was psychological, cultural and professional, in other words, there was a powerful line of argument that drew additional economic consequences from these professional shifts. As we will see, however, this was an incorrect argument. The most important culprit in the collapse of the newsroom business model was not increased competition, but rather the efficiency of hyper-personalized digital advertising, combined with the concentrated market power of digital platforms. The economic problem for journalism was not competition, in other words, but surveillance and monopoly. I will turn to a discussion of these developments in the next section.

The platform era

By the late 2010s, concerns about possible economic business models for news and the role played by quasi-journalistic actors in the production and distribution of

news stories had shifted from the 'blogosphere' and citizen journalists to media *platforms*: Facebook, Twitter, Google and others. Tarleton Gillespie, one of the first scholars to write about the politics and economics of these socio-technical systems, considers how the meaning of platform has evolved over the past decade:

> As *platform* first took root in the lexicography of social media, it was both leaning on and jettisoning a more specific computational meaning: a programmable infrastructure upon which other software can be built and run, like the operating systems in our computers and gaming consoles, or information services that provide APIs so developers can design additional layers of functionality. The new use shed the sense of programmability, instead drawing on older meanings of the word (which the computational definition itself had drawn on): an architecture from which to speak or act, like a train platform or a political stage. Now Twitter or Instagram [or Facebook] could be a platform simply by providing an opportunity from which to speak, socialize, and participate.
>
> Gillespie 2017

The shift from talking about the blogosphere as an economic and professional threat to journalism to talking about Facebook as a similar threat marks an evolution from an academic perspective on digital news that thinks primarily in competition/speech/free-market terms to one that thinks in terms of institutional power and monopoly. This evolution also sheds light on some deep ideological blind spots embedded in the first wave of theorizing about the crisis in journalism. The original perspective saw the economic crisis in news as caused by an explosion in content *supply* and a corresponding collapse in the value of display advertising generated by digital overabundance. From this point of view, the decline in the economic fortunes of old media organizations could be seen as the revenge of the 'free market' on hidebound news monopolies, even if the public utility of these monopolies could still be justified in normative terms. Both advertisers and readers now had their choice of news. If our attention shifts to platforms, however, what we see is the replacement of one (local) quasi-monopoly by another (global) monopoly – from the one newspaper town to Facebook. The first perspective fits well with the libertarian and law and economics perspective of much writing about the early internet. The second point of view does not.

Whatever the theoretical predispositions of those studying them, a concern with the relationship between platforms like Twitter and Facebook and journalism have come to dominate a great deal of the recent academic research on digital news. In 2018, both the Reuters Institute for Journalism at Oxford University and the Tow Center for Digital Journalism at Columbia University released major reports on the platform/publisher relationship. And while both had their differences, they were united in their description of an unequal economic and technological relationship in which Facebook could more or less impose its economic and professional news values, despite its claims that it really had no interest in being a journalistic outlet. As Revers and I have argued elsewhere

(Anderson and Revers 2018), the participatory and DIY tendencies of internet production have been largely absorbed into the business models of large and powerful corporations.

The populist era

While economic concerns continue to dominate the discussion of digital news in 2019, additional, more normative concerns have also emerged. How are populist political actors using the affordances of social media and platforms to shift the meanings of, and the participants in, electoral politics (Anderson and Bodker 2019)? Are state actors, disguised as ordinary citizen journalists or professional news reporters, hijacking the public discourse for nefarious purposes? These concerns also tie into the renewed focus on digital platforms like Facebook, and demonstrates just how much the debate over the future of journalism has changed over the past ten years. From a somewhat abstract debate about the who counts as a journalist online and offline, the surge of so-called 'fake news' has injected concerns about national security, cyberspying, enemy propaganda, and the toxic power of trolls into arguments about the boundaries of the journalism profession. One of the ironies about the web of revelations in 2018 about the degree to which foreign actors used Facebook to insert political propaganda into coverage of the US presidential elections is the fact that it re-raises older issues long thought buried. Who is a journalist? Who gets to decide? What happens when the trust in a major political institution is weakened, in part, due to the blurred boundaries between amateurs and professionals, particularly when those amateurs are acting in distinctly anti-democratic ways? There are no easy answers to these questions, but the degree to which older debates in digital journalism studies are being re-litigated is rather remarkable. Remarkable, too, are the ways that formerly utopian journalism scenarios are being stood on their head under the pressure of the populist and right-wing wave sweeping the nations of the liberal west.

In this fourth and latest era of news online and offline, political science and political communication have joined the plethora of fields being drawn on by digital journalism scholars. In the next section, I move away from the typological history of digital news and turn instead to an overview of how different tribes of scholars – not just political communication theorists but sociologists of the professions, science and technology scholars, economists, historians, cultural studies scholars – have analyzed the developments I discussed above. I also discuss some of the ways that digital journalism studies have contributed back to each of these fields, echoing Boczkowski and Michelstein's call to see journalism studies as an 'export oriented' as well as 'import oriented' intellectual field.

Scholarly resonances

In his much-cited, ever-evolving contribution to this volume, Michael Schudson has argued that the sociology of news has drawn on three or four foundational

sources of knowledge when crafting its studies and theories. In early editions of his chapter, Schudson distinguished between organizational, political-economy, and cultural approaches to the study of news; in later editions, Schudson split the political-economic category into two: 'political communication' and 'economic', and re-emphasized the fact that 'constructionist' approaches to news do not mean that news is constructed out of nothing. In the pages that follow I want to borrow from this approach, with my emphasis on the fact that studies of digital news have occasionally been more explicit in their theoretical borrowings than the studies cited by Schudson; much of the research in the past few years in digital journalism studies seems to be something of an arms race to advance the most compelling, adaptable or all-purpose theory that can explain the most aspects of the transformation in news, often drawing on European social theorists which are at a far remove from journalism per se.

In this section, my goal is to not only discuss these trends, but also to follow Boczkowski and Michelstein's advice when it comes to making journalism theory more of a two-way street than it has consistently been by highlighting some ways that studies of digital news have, might contribute to broader theorizing. As they note:

> We think the time is right to turn the connections of scholarship of online news with other domains of inquiry into two-way streets. In addition to the empirical, heuristic, and theoretical gains, this would also enable a process of reintegration of the study of news and journalism into larger disciplines, some of the very same disciplines from which it once emerged. Thus, perhaps the pathway forward would actually mean a return to the beginning. Time, after all, does sometimes move in a circular way.
>
> Boczkowski and Michelstein 2016: 26

Sociologies of the professions and journalistic fields

As noted earlier, in the early days of digital journalism, scholarship a great deal of intellectual ink was spilled on trying to understand just how the boundaries between journalists and non-journalists were erected and maintained, and how these boundaries served to reify different systems of cultural and economic power. Searching for intellectual anchors on which to ground the everyday discourse about how bloggers were or were not journalists, scholars turned to the sociologists of the professions (e.g., Schudson and Anderson 2008) and particularly Andrew Abbott (1988) with his notion of *professional jurisdiction* as something that could be claimed by particular occupational groups doing boundary battles with other groups. In this reading of Abbott, bloggers and journalists each sought to reify particular claims to abstract knowledge over specific areas of social life and professional labour.

Led by Rodney Benson (2006) as well as other scholars influenced by the scholarship of sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (Willig 2016; Munnik 2017; Benson and

Neveu 2005), 'field theory' emerged as a second contending framework for understanding the ways that the boundaries of the journalism profession were changing in the digital age. Unlike the sociology of the professions, which tended to emphasis the agentic nature of the struggles between journalists and their de-professionalizing rivals, field theory was more structural in nature and attempted to quantify the existence and possession of various forms of capital (cultural, economic, etc) amongst occupational groups. Field theory also had the advantage of tying more directly into the audience side of the news industry, with sophisticated analyzes of the 'homology' between producers and within consumers in the journalistic field.

In later years, analyzes of journalism drawing on the sociology of the professions tended to focus on journalistic authority and the boundary work that was entailed in order for that authority to be rendered legitimate. Bourdieuean analyzes, on the other hand, were increasingly utilized by scholars of political communication and for comparative research on media systems (Benson 2013). By and large the news media have used field analysis and sociology as a theoretical backdrop for empirical work, but have these studies of journalism also added to the larger theoretical corpus in any significant way? What have papers on journalism 'given back' to these larger disciplines? We might point to two ways, neither of which exhausts the realm of possibilities. For the sociology of the professions, studies of digital news have provided ample empirical evidence of the ways that technologies help draw journalistic boundaries in ways that go beyond rhetoric.

Journalistic boundary work, in other words, is as much a matter of material processes as one of discourse. Bourdieu's theories, in short, have had to deal with change – and very often, change of a technological sort. This, in turn, raises questions about the role technology has played in the transformation of news, and leads us naturally into a second scholarly field – science and technology studies (STS).

Science and technology studies

Given that so many of the changes in twenty-first-century journalism appear to have been caused in small or large part by technological developments, it is not surprising that media scholars would have turned to the dynamic field of science and technology studies (STS) in order to understand digital media. Notice that the field I refer to here is marked by a combination of two topics – 'science' *and* 'technology'. I want to contend in this section that the application of STS to journalism is often focused on one of these two topics, with works that sought to understand the role of technology as a shaping force in journalistic production or consumption implicitly drawing on the 'T' (technology), while studies that were concerned with the development and reification of journalistic knowledge paid more attention to the 'S' (science). I examine each of these offshoots in turn.

STS is an interdisciplinary field which has drawn on areas of scholarship ranging from the history of science to the sociology of scientific knowledge to ethnomethodology to post-structuralist philosophy. With antecedents in the writings of physicist and historian Thomas Kuhn and sociologist Robert Merton, recent

scholarship on how scientific knowledge gets produced has been keen to emphasize that the 'success' of a technology or a piece of scientific knowledge can in no way find legitimation in its technical superiority (Bijker et al. 1987) or its claims to truth (Bloor 1976). Rather, scientific knowledge and technical discovery are the outcomes of socially embedded processes and practices, which themselves are tied into struggles for power and legitimacy between different knowledge producers and groups (for a classic statement, see Shapin and Schaffer 1985). Since the early 2000s, when the scale of the technological changes confronting journalism first became apparent, journalism scholars have begun to draw on STS theories to explain the role of technology in shaping the production of news. The work of Pablo Boczkowski on the digitization of the journalism industry (2004) can be seen as the key citation in this regard, insofar as this was the first study to draw explicitly on an STS framework to study the production of news. Since Boczkowski, a wide variety of journalism scholars have used STS (Lewis and Usher 2013; Sylvie and Schmitz Weiss 2012; Usher 2013; Reese 2016) and more specifically actor-network theory[1] (Anderson 2013; Turner 2005; Spyridou et al. 2013; Primo and Zago 2015; Plesner 2009; Domingo et al. 2015) to study the way that technological artifacts shape the news.

The study of technology and technological innovation, however, are not the only way to deploy an STS framework in the study of journalism (Anderson and Kreiss 2013). Remember that the original concerns of STS were specifically with questions about how scientific knowledge is created and legitimated. Another avenue for the application of STS theory to the study of news would be to study the manner in which journalistic practices themselves generate knowledge, and how this knowledge is different from other forms of knowledge operating in domains like the law, science and sociology (Anderson 2018; see also Kleiss Nielsen 2017; Galison 2015). Because it is such an odd field of knowledge, one that attempts to be objective yet concerns itself with political, ethical and aesthetic issues, looking at journalism *this way* can also 'give back' to the larger STS field insofar as it concerns itself with the study of a usefully orthogonal professional field.

Questions related to how journalistic knowledge is constructed, legitimized, and deployed also lend themselves easily to a more historical treatment. It is to the question of this relationship between digital journalism and history that I now turn.

Journalism and digital history

It is only recently that scholars have started to consider that the World Wide Web has a history; although histories of the internet have existed at least since Abbate's *Inventing the Internet* (1999), the *Web* as a distinct medium needs to be understood apart from the technical infrastructure and ideologies that made it possible. The launch of the web-cultures academic mailing list in August 2014 marked an

---

1 It is important to note here that actor-network theory and science and technology studies are not the same thing, though they are often treated as largely identical, particularly in journalism studies. For the clearest (though densest) discussion of the differences between them, see the relevant chapters from Pickering (1992).

important moment in thinking about the Web historically, with the introductory message to the list emphasizing the need to ask

> what are established and emerging themes in web and internet history? Is it already possible to map a web historiography, in the sense of an overview of canonical questions, approaches and knowledge? How does existing work address the range of possible histories of web cultures, producers and users, media and communication forms, websites and platforms, web aesthetics, standards and protocols, software and programming languages, groups and institutions?

To date there have been few histories of digital journalism; or perhaps it is more accurate to say there have been few narratives about news on the Web specifically framed as histories rather than ethnographies, qualitative studies, or meta-theoretical analysis. A discussion of this tendency to collapse the notion of the Web as history with the Web as a living medium can be found in two of my own writings (Anderson 2015; Anderson 2018). And while it may take a longer time frame in order to fully get our heads around the notion of journalism online as chronological development, we can begin to build a more time-sensitive overview by simply placing the many wonderful digital news ethnographies back to back to back in time and watching these histories of the present unfold before our eyes. Boczkowski's (2004) ethnography chronicles the earliest experiments in digital news-making, while Anderson (2013) and Usher (2014) look at the second stage of journalistic web development. Later books, such as Boyer (2013), Konieczna (2018), and Graves (2016) each explore different aspects of the emergence of digital news formats across a small time span.

   Can the emerging field of web history learn anything from these periodic attempts to put the development of digital news into a chronological format? One small area that may be of interest to digital historians is the *institutional* nature of digital news. Many of the important actors in web history are rather de-institutionalized networks; studying journalism allows us to see how formal organizations adapted to the affordances of the internet over the long haul. Related to these field-level changes are developments involving Facebook, Twitter and other digital platforms. I now turn to a discussion of these organizations and their impacts on the news.

Economics and platforms

Key to all these histories are the economics of journalistic developments, and the way that different technologies – particularly platforms – enable and constrain journalistic business models in the digital age. In many ways, the economics of the news industry have been the subject of the most sustained attention of any analyzes of digital journalism. In other ways, they have been something of a scholarly black hole. Let me try to explain.

   I noted in the previous section that a narrative of crisis – rightly or wrongly – began to dominate the discussion of online news in the mid 2000s. Much of this sense of crisis was economic, and stemmed from the plain fact that the American

newspaper industry entered a state of profound and possibly terminal decline as the impact of the digital revolution in news accelerated. Given that the capitalist newspaper industry was the prime provider of original reporting in the United States, it was easy to equate the decline of newspapers with the decline of journalism as such. And the numbers were clear: between 2000 and 2017 the number of people working at newspapers fell from 424,000 to 183,300, or a decline of more than 50 per cent.

The fundamental argument lying behind discussions of the business of news was something like the following: for a long time, massive profits generated by the monopoly positions of most local newspapers allowed them to subsidize the production of money-losing public interest reporting. But the link between public service and profit was always artificial and never the result of a conscious benevolence on the part of newspaper owners, or a genuine commitment to public service. Newspaper finances, decimated by the collapse of the advertising market following the onset of digital media, generated an internal contradiction in which the link between profit and service was broken. It is fair to say that the last decade of discussion of the economics of the news business have proceeded from this central argument.

However, the amount of *actual* academic economic analysis of the news business is remarkably rare, given the prevalence of the business model collapse. There are a few exceptions (Picard 2010; Fengler et al. 2008). But most of the conversations about the economic decline of newspapers have occurred in journalism studies, sociology, political communication, or in the public sphere. What's more, the dynamics of the economic crisis in news seem to be changing. Whereas the business problems in news once seemed to stem from overabundance (of outlets, publishers, content and so on – an abundance that drove down the value of display advertising) the latest concerns have more to do with the monopolization of advertising and attention by platforms, particularly Facebook. A second line of intellectual inquiry might thus concern the relationship between platform economics and news production (for the beginnings of such an analysis see Van Dijck 2013; Van Dijck et al. 2018), although here again, the discursive space is largely colonized by industry reports and white papers (Bell et al. 2018).

The analysis of the economics of the digital news industry can be said to be both everywhere and nowhere at once. The same might also be said of the more recent discussion of the relationship between politics, communication and populism.

Political communication and populism

Recent political developments in the West have not been kind to journalism, digital or otherwise. There is a nagging suspicion that journalists somehow 'missed' the story of Brexit or Donald Trump, perhaps due to their own latent political biases or their poor reporting. Others fear that journalism itself might be contributing to the populist malaise currently sweeping advanced democracies, with its seeming disdain for facts and its embrace of tribalist politics. As noted in the earlier section, after a long concern with business models and the economics of journalism,

attention has shifted to more normative concerns about the role of information in a healthy democracy, how journalism might best promote solutions to pressing political problems (McIntyre 2017) rather than just present all sides of a controversy, and whether we are living in a post-fact or post-truth era.

Political communication scholars have turned their attention to these and related topics with gusto. As just one example among many, a special issue of the *European Journal of Communication*, edited by Stephen Coleman (2018), has engaged with issues related to the link between post-truth and public communication, particularly journalism. Other, more empirical political science scholars have looked at the relationships between disinformation, polarization and digital media (e.g., Tucker et al. 2018), while others have turned to the socio-technical infrastructures of bots and other automated forms of political disinformation (Howard et al. 2017). There is a significant amount of scholarship of this kind, and the key role played by social media and platform companies in the changing dynamics of electoral contention make it highly relevant to adjacent conversations about the relationship between digital journalism and populist politics (Sorensen 2018).

Lurking behind much of this research, however, are some basic unanswered questions, particularly over the role played by information in citizen decision-making. Does disinformation drive irrational political behaviour, and if so, will correcting disinformation make citizens more rational? Should journalists continue to emphasize their own professional difficulties in sorting out the values of truth claims, leaving it up to readers to decide which 'side' of a political issue might be the empirically correct one? Should Western journalists hold fast to their underlying enlightenment values, even when these values seem to be distrusted by their own audiences? Despite the recent opening up of political communication to outside perspectives and more flexible, even qualitative, frameworks (Karpf et al. 2015) much of the conversation is still dominated by an understanding of citizens that sees them as the recipients of either correct or incorrect information. This is not a flaw in what appears to be a genuinely productive and forward-thinking body of scholarship, but it should serve as a warning of that field's limitations. This is, perhaps, one small thing that the study of digital news can contribute to the world of political communication more broadly. To fully explore the dynamics behind the politics of the twenty-first century, and the relationship between politics and journalism online and offline, traditions from the humanities and softer social sciences will have to be mobilized as well.

The emotions and aesthetics of journalism

Karin Wahl-Jorgensen was one of the earliest digital-era journalism scholars to look at how journalism functions, not simply as a conveyor of facts, but as a compiler and generator of emotions as well (see also Nikunen's essay in this volume on emotion and affect). In her book *Emotions, Media, and Politics*, Wahl-Jorgensen (2018) looks at the relationship between anger, journalism and Donald Trump, the manner by which Facebook structures emotional engagement through its

deployments of algorithmic logic, and the way many prize-winning stories are more emotional than factual. Studies like this one can serve as a helpful counter-point to the more information-processing type studies described in the previous section, as can research that looks more at the *aesthetics* of digital journalism.

Journalism studies, it is important to note, has traditionally devoted only secondary attention to the production of journalistic aesthetics, focusing primarily on newsroom routines involved in the production of newspapers and other textual forms.

The writings of Barbie Zelizer and Kevin Barnhurst are an exception to this, but even their research primarily predates the explosion of digital journalism. In the last few years visual communication scholars have become more broadly interested in the aesthetics of news media beyond photojournalism, specifically with regards to the relationship between imagery, graphics, layouts and writing in a digital context. In particular, Helen Caple, David Machin and Hartmut Stöckl have offered compelling social semiotic analyzes of key visual and multimodal news media genres like, for example, online news galleries, newsbites, and news opening sequences. There are additional reasons why a more humanities-inclined perspective on digital news might be helpful. Many of the studies discussed in the previous section rely on a set of theories about what the media 'does' to audiences that have been widely debunked in the communications literature. Second, they have a narrow understanding of 'the media' that sees it as made up of relatively unitary pieces of informational content. This understanding ignores the aesthetic content of the media, and indeed, relegates the entire concept of visual news media to a second-tier status. Both these problems create a third, which is that we too often talk about the relationship between media and politics in narrow, overly social scientific terms, ignoring the range of other intellectual perspectives that could be brought to bear on these relationships.

Research on journalism online and offline might also want to draw on strands of sociology and sociological theory more broadly. While media and communications scholars have looked primarily at news as information and have built compelling arguments about the poisoning of the public well by fake news, a few sociologists have devoted themselves to understanding the *cultural, emotional and narratival* roots of the current 'crisis in public communication' (Blumler 1995). Arlie Hochschild's work on the 'deep story' in her book *Strangers in Their Own Land* – the way that the story Tea Party activists in Louisiana told themselves about the current state of American political and economic life influenced their political choices – has been central to this conversation. For Hochschild, the roots of the populist upsurge in politics do not lie in economic distress as much as they lie in a *story about* economic distress. Conservatives in the United States imagine social life as a line or queue, waiting to get to something called the 'American Dream'. Not only has this line or queue slowed to a crawl, in the minds of these Tea Party supporters, but a variety of minority groups and immigrants have been cutting to the front of the line, aided and abetted by corrupt and grifting politicians. While the focus of Hochschild's book lies primarily in the national

American context, sociologists like Will Davies (2010) have drawn on it to discuss Brexit and the upsurge of populist political communication in Europe more generally.

The previous six sections have discussed the manner in which different scholarly communities are probing the dynamics of online and offline journalism, and have noted some of the ways that a specifically journalistic oriented line of research might, following Boczkowski and Michelstein's exhortation's to 'give back' to other disciplines. Some larger normative questions about digital news remain unaddressed, however. I want to conclude by briefly discussing a few of these bigger and more problematic dynamics in the field of digital news.

Final normative considerations

Much work remains to do in the world of journalism – both online and off. This includes the work of scholarship, but also the work of journalists, editors, activists and politicians themselves. In the end, the fate of digital news will not be decided by academics. It will be shaped by the people who make it, and those who interact with these makers.

Given this, I want to discuss – very briefly – some final normative considerations that we might want to consider as we progress to the inevitable 7th edition of *Media and Society.* The first is the question of the role the state ought to play in stabilizing and even funding the institutional press. The economic crisis in news is far from over, and support for a governmental provision of press subsidy may actually be rising in the US. But the conversation continues.

A second normative question relates to the issue of what kind of participation in digital journalism is good participation, if any. It has been remarkable to what degree the larger intellectual discourse about citizen-media or participatory journalism has shifted from deep utopianism to profound dystopianism (Anderson and Revers 2018). The digital ecosystem *does* appear to have shifted in a permanently participatory, open direction, even if the larger networked structures of the internet also enable digital centralization. It is likely that an intellectual middle ground will be found between pessimism and optimism, but a lot of hard thinking must be done about what behaviours are valuable with regard to participatory media – and why.

Finally, there is much work to be done on understanding the relationship between digital news, emotion and reason in politics, the aesthetics of information, and the way that publics are assembled in the twenty-first century. In the end, journalism only matters insofar as it facilitates a group of strangers coming together in some fashion in order to make collective decisions about their common life. What kind of public does today's journalism assemble? How do the varieties of digital information, their various shapes and forms, make politics possible? These three questions represent a glimpse of only some of the pressing intellectual problems we face, as journalism continues to move from offline to online.

References

Abbate, J. (1999), *Inventing the Internet.*, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Abbott, A. (1988), *The System of the Professions: An Essay on the Division of Expert Labor,* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Anderson, C.W. (2013), *Rebuilding the News: Metropolitan Journalism in the Digital Age*, Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Anderson, C. W. (2015), 'Up and Out: Journalism, Social Media and Historical Sensibility', *Social Media and Society*, 1 (1).

Anderson, C. W. (2018), *Apostles of Certainty: Data Journalism and the Politics of Doubt*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Anderson, C. W. and D. Kreiss (2013), 'Black Boxes as Capacities for and Constraints on Action: Electoral Politics, Journalism, and Devices of Representation', *Qualitative Sociology,* 34 (4): 365–82.

Anderson, C. W. and M. Revers (2018), 'From Counter-Power to Counter-Pepe: The Vagaries of Participatory Epistemology in a Digital Age', *Media and Communication*, 6 (4): 24–35.

Benkler, Y. (2006), *The Wealth of Networks,* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Benson, R. (2006), 'News Media as a "Journalistic Field": What Bourdieu Adds to New Institutionalism, and Vice Versa', *Political Communication,* 23 (2): 187–202.

Benson, R. (2013), *Shaping Immigration News: A French–American Comparison*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Benson, R. and E. Neveu (2005), *Bourdieu and the Journalistic Field,* Cambridge: Polity.

Bijker, W., T. Hughes and T. Pinch, eds (1987), *The Social Construction of Technological Systems: New Directions in the Sociology and History of Technology,* Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Bloor, D. (1976), *Knowledge and the Social Imaginary,* London: Routledge.

Blumler J. G. (1995), *The Crisis of Public Communication*, Hove: Psychology Press.

Boczkowski, P. (2004), *Digitizing the News: Innovation in Online Newspapers,* Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Boczkowski, P. and E. Michelstein (2016), 'Scholarship in Online Journalism: Roads Traveled and Pathways Ahead', in P. Boczkowski and C. W. Anderson (eds), *Remaking the News: Essays on the Future of Journalism Scholarship in the Digital Age,* 15–27, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Boyer, D. (2013), *The Life Infomatic: Newsmaking in the Digital Era,* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Carlson, M. and S. Lewis (2015), *Boundaries of Journalism: Professionalism, Practices, and Participation,* London: Routledge.

Coleman, S. (2018), 'Introduction', *European Journal of Communication,* 33 (2): 117–21.

Curran, J. and J. Seaton (2018 [1981]), *Power Without Responsibility: Press, Broadcasting and the Internet in Britain,* London: Routledge.

Davies, W. (2010), 'The Political Economy of Unhappiness', *The New Left Review*, 71.

Domingo, D., P. Masip and I. Costera-Meijer (2015), 'Tracing Digital News Networks Towards an Integrated Framework of the Dynamics of News Production, Circulation and Use', *Digital Journalism*, 3(1): 53–67.

Fengler, W., Ahya Ihsan and Kai Kaiser (2008), *Managing Post-disaster Reconstruction Finance*, Geneva: The World Bank.

Galison, P. (2015), 'The Journalist, the Scientist, and Objectivity', in F. Padovani and A. Richardson (eds), *Objectivity in Science: New Perspectives from Science and Technology Studie*s, 57–75, Cham: Springer.

Gillespie, T. (2017), 'The Platform Metaphor, Revised'. [Online. Accessed July 25, 2018.] Available at https://www.hiig.de/en/the-platform-metaphor-revisited/

Gitlin, T. (1980), *The Whole World is Watching: Mass Media and the Making and Unmaking of the New Left*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Graves, L. (2016), *Deciding What's True: The Rise of Political Fact-Checking in American Journalism,* New York: Columbia University Press.

Hochschild, A. R. (2016), *Strangers in Their Own Land*, New York: The New Press.

Jenkins, H. (2008), *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide,* New York: New York University Press.

Karpf, D., D. Kreiss, R. Kleis Nielsen and M. Powers (2015), 'The Role of Qualitative Methods in Political Communication Research: Past, Present, and Future', *International Journal of Communication,* 9 (2015): 1888–1906.

Kleis Nielsen, R. (2017), 'Digital News As Forms of Knowledge: A New Chapter in the Sociology of Knowledge', in P. Boczkowski and C. W. Anderson (eds), *Remaking the News: Essays on the Future of Journalism Scholarship in the Digital Age,* 91–110, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Konieczna, M. (2018), *Journalism Without Profit Making News When the Market Fails,* New York: Oxford University Press.

Lewis, S. and N. Usher (2013), 'Open Source and Journalism: Toward New Frameworks for Imagining News Innovation', *Media, Culture & Society,* 35 (5): 602–19.

McIntyre, K. (2017), 'Solutions Journalism: The Effect of Including Solution Information in News Stories About Social Problems', *Journalism Practice*

Munnik, M. (2017), 'A Field Theory Perspective on Journalist–Source Relations: A Study of "New Entrants" and "Authorised Knowers" among Scottish Muslims', *Sociology,* 1–16.

Pew Research (2014), *State of the News Media: 2014.* [Online. Accessed 28 March 2014.] Retrieved from www.journalism.org/packages/state-of-the-news-media-2014/

Picard, R. (2010), 'The Future of the News Industry,' in James Curran (ed.), *Media and Society,* 365–79, London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2010.

Pickering, A. (1992), *Science as Practice and Culture,* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Platon, S. and M. Deuze (2003), 'Indymedia Journalism: A Radical Way of Making, Selecting, and Sharing News?', *Journalism: Theory, Practice and Criticism,* 4 (3): 336–55.

Plesner, U. (2009), 'An Actor-network Perspective on Changing Work Practices: Communication Technologies as Actants in Newswork', *Journalism: Theory, Practice and Criticism,* 10 (5): 604–26.

Primo, A. and G. Zago (2015), 'Who and What Do Journalism? An Actor-Network Perspective', *Digital Journalism,* 3 (1): 38–52.

Reese, S. (2016), 'Levels and Spaces: The New Geography of Journalism Research', *Digital Journalism,* 4 (7): 816–26.

Schudson, M. and C. W. Anderson (2008), 'Objectivity, Professionalism, and Truth Seeking', in Karin Wahl-Jorgensen and Thomas Hanitzsch (eds), *The Handbook of Journalism Studies,* 88–101, London: Routledge.

Shapin, S. and S. Schaffer (1985), *Leviathan and the Air-Pump: Hobbes, Boyle, and the Experimental Life,* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Shirky, C. (2008), *Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing Without Organizations,* New York: Penguin Books.

Shirky, C. (2009), 'Newspapers and Thinking the Unthinkable'. [Online. Accessed 25 July 2018.] Retrieved from http://www.shirky.com/weblog/2009/03/newspapers-and-thinking-the-unthinkable

Spyridou, L., M. Matsiola, A. Veglis, G. Kalliris and C. Dimoulas (2013), 'Journalism in a State of Flux: Journalists as Agents of Technology Innovation and Emerging News Practices', *International Communications Gazette,* 75 (1): 76–98.

Starr, P. (2009), 'Goodbye the Age Newspapers (And Hello a New Era of Corruption)', *The New Republic*. [Online. Accessed 25 July 2018.] Retrieved from https://newrepublic.com/article/64252/goodbye-the-age-newspapers-hello-new-era-corruption

Sylvie, G. and Amy Schmitz Weiss (2012), 'Putting the Management into Innovation & Media Management Studies: A Meta-Analysis', *International Journal of Media Management,* 14 (3): 183–206.

Tucker, J. A., A. Guess, P. Barbera, C. Vaccari, A. Siegel, S. Sanovich, D. Stukal and B. Nyhan, (2018), 'Social Media, Political Polarization, and Political Disinformation: A Review of the Scientific Literature'. Available at SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=3144139 or http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3144139

Turner, F. (2005), 'Actor Networking the News', *Social Epistemology,* 19 (4): 321–24.

Usher, N. (2013), 'Ignored, Uninterested, and the Blame Game: How *The New York Times*, *Marketplace*, and TheStreet Distanced Themselves from Preventing the 2007–2009 Financial Crisis', *Journalism: Theory, Practice and Criticism,* 14 (2): 190–207.

Usher, N. (2014), *Making News at The New York Times,* Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Wahl-Jorgensen, K. (2018), *Emotions, Media and Politics*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Willig, I. (2016), 'Field Theory and Media Production: A Bridge-Building Strategy', in C. Paterson, D. Lee, A. Saha and A. Zoellner (eds), *Advancing Media Production Research Shifting Sites, Methods, and Politics,* London: Palgrave.

Zelizer, B. (2015), 'Terms of Choice: Uncertainty, Journalism, and Crisis', *Journal of Communication,* 65 (5): 888–908.

Chapter 13

MEDIA, RACE AND THE INFRASTRUCTURES OF EMPIRE[1]

Paula Chakravartty

> Colonialism, however, is not satisfied by this violence against the present. The colonized people are presented ideologically as people arrested in their evolution, impervious to reason, incapable of directing their own affairs, requiring the permanent presence of an external ruling power. The history of the colonized peoples is transformed into meaningless unrest, and as a result, one has the impression that for these people humanity began with the arrival of those brave settlers.
>
> —Frantz Fanon, 1960 (from Khalfa and young 2017: 654), 'Why we use violence'

Media studies has grown exponentially as a field of inquiry across the world alongside the long-running US-led 'War on Terror' in Iraq and Afghanistan, which spilled over into Libya, Pakistan, Syria, Somalia and Yemen. In contrast to other fields of study such as anthropology, political science, history, and gender and ethnic studies, the broader field of media studies (including communication and information studies) has seen remarkably little reflection upon US and other Western colonial powers' occupation, ongoing violence and strategic interests across Central and South Asia, the Middle East and North Africa (Aouragh and Chakravartty 2016). As the historian Alfred McCoy has argued, 'a broad spectrum of contemporary scholars, including staunch supporters of unbridled U.S. power, agree that empire ... is the most appropriate descriptor for America's current superpower status' (2009: 28), even as we recognize that US empire today as being in a stage of decline. Attention to the question of media and empire seems urgent both given the immersive mediatization of war on the one hand, and the growing defence expenditure in the United States in a longstanding tradition of cooperation between military and information industries, thanks to the 'fusion of intelligence and precision; "an almost industrial-scale counter-terrorism killing machine"' (Gregory 2017: 27).

The permanent and asymmetrical War on Terror is estimated to have cost the US $5.6 trillion (by 2017). In addition to the devastating environmental and social costs of this action, some 10.1 million people are estimated to have been made refugees or displaced from their homes, with the death toll by conservative estimates to be 370,000 fatalities (2016), the vast majority being Afghani, Pakistani and Iraqi nationals.[2] Within the territorial boundaries of the US, the War on Terror has followed long-established patterns of race and violence going back to the Indian Wars of the nineteenth century and the subsequent militarization of policing and state violence against racialized 'internal enemies'. We can trace a lineage of exclusionary immigration and incarceration of 'enemy aliens' going back to the history of internment of Japanese Americans, and subsequent surveillance and incarceration of African Americans as well as the post-9/11 bipartisan criminalization of Latinx and 'Muslim' migrants. In a recent book on the relationship between these 'inner and outer wars', *Race and America's Long War*, Nikhil Pal Singh (2017) asserts that 'American war craft . . . is bound to American race craft as the politics of fear and lineaments of enemies without and within morph together, intertwine, and mutually reinforce one another' (31).

Figure 13.1 is helpful in demonstrating this 'intertwining of US war-craft and race craft'. The image comes from a popular political magazine from 1899, at the height of the 'yellow journalism' era which sets the modern baseline for commercially driven sensationalist news reporting, selling the Spanish American War in Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines to a sceptical US public. Here, we see the promise both of the 'unlimited imperial potential' for the century ahead
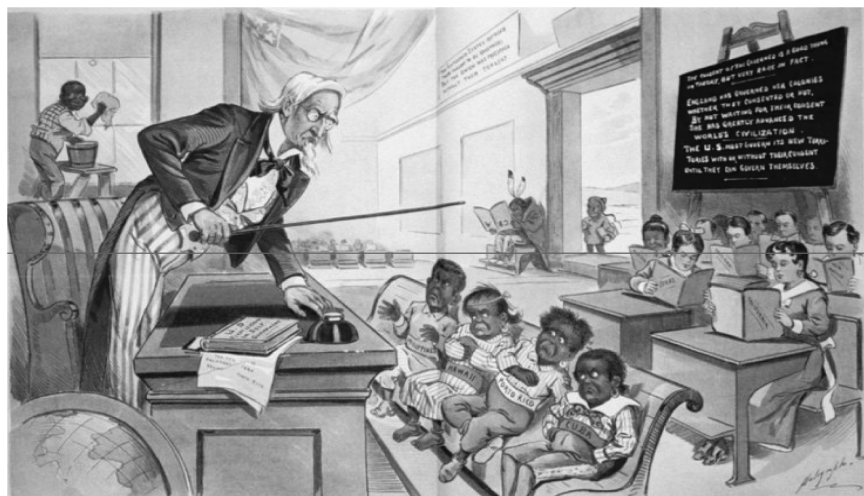

Figure 13.1 'School Begins,' *Puck Magazine*, 25 January 1899.

2 For more detailed breakdown of estimates, see: http://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/figures

and the unique dual mission of American empire, with Uncle Sam instructing pupils about a hierarchical racist order of 'colonial people and US-based non-whites whose progress demanded lessons in civilization' (Del Moral 2013: 37).

I focus on this distinct history of race and American empire in this chapter precisely because the US remains the normative center of dominant theories of media and democracy and media freedom.[3] As James Curran writes in his book *Media and Democracy* (2011): '. . . from the vantage point of numerous countries around the world, the independence of American media from government control, and the fearless way in which American journalists are able to criticize authority, is a source of admiration and inspiration. American media – viewed from a distance – seem like a "shining city on a hill"' (16). Curran is critical of this flattering rendering of US media power in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, and his allusion to President Ronald Reagan's 1980s embellishment of the lexicon of colonial American exceptionalism, the promise of freedom and liberty *through* racialized violence and occupation, requires greater attention by media scholars today.

In an earlier publication, Miriyam Arough and I (2016) argued that colonial and postcolonial infrastructures of empire can be traced from nineteenth century imperial rivalries and the long twentieth century of US domination, today transformed by the rise of new regional alliances and geo-political configurations. This includes the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century manifestations of communication technologies (photography and cinema, but also underwater telegraph and telephone cables, and telecommunications networks), the postcolonial Cold War era of mass media, national broadcasting and international satellite communication, as well as digitally networked technologies that – from the 1990s and beyond – became part of splintered and increasingly privatized infrastructural networks and platforms the world over. Scholars in geography and urban studies have established that these infrastructures are material manifestations of 'new notions of speed, light, power and communications' (Graham and Marvin 2001: 40; Larkin 2008). Media anthropologist Brian Larkin and critical media scholars more widely are 'adopting an infrastructural disposition' (Parks and Starosielski 2015), that draws from the cognate field of science and technology studies (STS) to understand infrastructure as '*both* the material stuff of cables and wires that were once considered modern public goods as well as the "soft" and more amorphous networks of cultural exchange shaped by European [and American] colonial power' (Larkin 2008: 37).

Thinking through media logics and technologies as infrastructures of empire requires a reckoning with the politics of race *and* capitalism. Media studies scholars

---

3 While this chapter focuses on the specific history of race and empire in the United States, I am assuming that US racism and colonial power are rooted in modern systemic European practices of violence, exploitation and segregation of 'non-white' populations. For more on theories of colonial power and race, see da Silva (2007), Hesse (2016) and McClintock (2013).

such as Jill Hills (2010), Dwayne Winseck and Robert Pike (Winseck and Pike 2007) have documented the late nineteenth-century inter-imperial rivalries between established European colonial powers and the rising power of the US as they competed for their interests over underwater cable companies, telecom companies and news agency cartels which led to the internationalization of communications infrastructure. Winseck and Pike (2007) argue that race and racism tell us less about imperial expansion than the cooperation and collusion amongst private firms to expand networks across Africa and Latin America. I would urge us to reconsider this dichotomy between what we might think of as the empire of US or Western capital and the structuring legacies of Euro-American racial power and violence. Instead, we might wish to trace the connections between capitalism and race whether we go back to the journalism empire of William Randolph Hearst in 1898, or consider today's infrastructures of empire in assessing the racialized market power of Amazon, Google, Disney or Facebook (Noble 2018).

For example, the colonial logic of racialized information infrastructure ought to take us back as early as the seventeenth-century slave ship, as argued insightfully in Simone Browne's *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness*. Browne contends:

> If we are to take transatlantic slavery as antecedent to contemporary surveillance technologies and practices as they concern inventories of ships' cargo and the cheek-by-jowl arrangement laid out in the stowage plan of the *Brooks* slave ship, biometric identification by branding the slave's body with hot irons, slave markets and auction blocks as exercises of synoptic power where the many watched the few, slave passes and patrols, manumission papers and free badges, black codes and fugitive slave notices, it is to the archives, slave narratives, and on to black expressive practices, creative texts, and other efforts that we can look for moments of refusal and critique.
>
> 2015: 12

Locating how European, and specifically American, colonial racial violence have shaped the design, operation and content of media and information infrastructures brings us to the quotation at the beginning of this chapter from a recently translated speech, given in a notably more optimistic era of decolonization across Africa and Asia. In 1960, Frantz Fanon, psychiatrist and political philosopher, diagnosed a recurring thematic of the European colonial encounter in a speech calling for Pan-Africanism in the face of long-term colonial violence.

Fanon shows that the justification for the repeated promise of liberation *through* occupation whether in the case of settler colonialism and slavery, or the USA's extra-territorial forays – from Cuba, Hawaii, the Philippines and Puerto Rico in 1898, to the Korean peninsula in the 1950s, Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia in the 1960s, Central America and Latin America in the 1970s and 1980s, and Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan and Yemen in the 2000s – is possible because of the assumed lack of moral and intellectual capacity by colonized and thereby racialized subject

populations. In 1900, W.E.B. Du Bois famously recognized that 'the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line'. In fact, Du Bois wrote of a global colour line established in 1898 when the US began its extra-territorial forays as an empire for freedom 'yoking together' the plight of African Americans and other domestic racialized populations with newly racialized subjects of US rule: 'What is to be our attitude towards these new lands and towards the masses of dark men and women who inhabit them?'[4]

Fanon, like other early black radical critics such as W.E.B. Du Bois, but also Aimé and Suzanne Césaire, George Padmore and C.L.R. James, among others, who foregrounded the centrality of racial expropriation in the foundational logic of modernity and capitalism in Europe and in its colonies. As political theorist Denise Ferreira da Silva (2007) has argued, the principles of universality sustains the writing of the 'others of Europe' as entities facing certain and necessary (self-inflicted) obliteration.[5] It is also in these contradictions of racial expropriation and freedom promised by the US empire that transnational solidarity for decolonial futures have been imagined and fought for. In what follows, I outline how critical theories of race and racial violence and postcolonial approaches to the state and citizenship allow us to reconsider and expand the extant literature on US media technologies and empire, a literature and approach that has largely receded from the centre in contemporary debates about media and society.

The empire of liberty and the Cold War: the gift of media freedom

> We go on creating what mankind calls an empire while we continue to believe quite sincerely that it is not an empire because it does not feel to us the way we imagine an empire ought to feel.
>
> —Walter Lippmann, (1927) *Men of Destiny*,
> XVI 'Empire: The Days of our Nonage are Over'

> For the Grocer, movies were more than a homily on familiar themes. They were his avenue to the wider world of his dreams. It was in a movie that he had first glimpsed what a real grocery store could be like – 'with walls made of iron sheets, top to floor and side to side, and on them standing myriads of round boxes, clean and all the same dressed, like soldiers in a great parade.'

4 The argument about the global significance of Du Bois' writing on the colour line known from his book, *The Souls of Black Folks* (2003), as it was developed in a series of international speeches and essays, is made by American Studies scholar Amy Kaplan (2005: 175–78).

5 Drawing on the work of Fanon, Sylvia Winters and other black critical theorists, this argument is developed more fully in P. Chakravartty and D. da Silva (2012). For more on the productive concept of 'raciality', see D. da Silva (2007).

The fleeting glimpse of what sounds like the Campbell Soup section of the A&P supermarket had provided the Grocer with an abiding image of how his fantasy world might look. No pedantries intervened in the Grocer's full sensory relationship to the movie s . . . 'The Turkish ones are gloomy, ordinary. I can guess how they will end . . . The American ones are exciting. You know it makes people ask, what will happen next?'

—Daniel Lerner (1958) 'The Grocer and the Chief: A Parable,' from *The Passing of Traditional Society*, The Free Press: 27–28

The century-long public amnesia about US Empire is rooted in the foundational contradictory history of US exceptionalism as both the first republic and a settler colonial state defined by founding father and slaveholder, Thomas Jefferson, as an 'empire of liberty'. Distinguishing its imperial ambitions from European colonial powers, Jefferson justified westward expansion and ultimately mass violence against indigenous peoples by military force (Wolfe 2006). As political theorist Anthony Bogues (2010) argues in drawing from historian William Appleman Williams (1980), 'the sustainability of its political power resided in the realm of the mind and in bending consciousness to conform to what was seen as the natural spirit of being human . . . the natural unfolding of human destiny as embodied in the ways of life that were founded on conceptions of American liberty' (14). In the twentieth century, we would see the fusing together of Jim Crow laws that mandated the segregation of African Americans lasting until the mid-1960s on the domestic front which would directly shape '. . . foreign policy towards the millions of people of color newly brought under US jurisdiction', throughout the long twentieth century of military occupations, covert warfare and political interference alongside softer regimes of 'development' across the Third World (Garland-Mahler 2018; Latham 2006). By the mid-twentieth century, commercial media infrastructures including the 'free press' and the Hollywood cinema haunting the imagined Turkish Grocer's dreams above, would become central features of the disavowal of American empire alongside its growing reach in the making of a Cold War world.

Historian Mimi Thi Nguyen (2012) provides a helpful analysis of the racial politics of the US *liberal* Empire, through the 'christening' of '. . . Asia – first Korea and then Vietnam – as the key theater for the global conflict with communism, with the contradictory "gift of freedom"' (37). US political and intellectual elites from the 1950s onwards present their policies of occupation and decades-long mass violence as a liberal 'gift' because it would ultimately bring 'enlightened self-government', an antidote to both pre-colonial and communist tyranny. Nguyen's analysis of US liberal empire focuses on the figure of the grateful, racialized Vietnamese refugee – the 'boat people' of the 1970s and 1980s – who came to embody the seeming generosity of the US nation-state, deflecting the violence and dispossession that led to their status as refugees. Here, we can draw from the idea of the contradictory 'gift' of media freedom as constitutive of US liberal empire, to rethink discussions of media, race and empire.

During the 1950s and 1960s, exposure to new commercial media technologies – whether through the Voice of America radio network, or research funded by

the United States Information Agency (USIA), or the promotion and the distribution of Hollywood films and advertising that promised to change 'hearts and minds' – came to be seen by US-based researchers and policy-makers as pivotal to ensuring US influence in a decolonizing bi-polar world (Mattelart 1994; Parker 2016). Daniel Lerner, whose work I quote above from a well-known essay contrasting the dynamic and modern figure of the Grocer and his Hollywood aspirations versus a 'backwards-looking' traditionalist Muslim Chief, was one of the founders of what we might consider today the field of International Communications or Global Media Studies (Shah 2011). Lerner's research on 'modernization in the Middle East' took place in the 1950s, in Turkey as well as in Egypt, Syria and Iran – each of which was facing anti-colonial uprisings against British- and American-backed interests in the region. Lerner, trained in psychological warfare and an expert in propaganda from the Second World War, would focus on the ways in which new media technologies and consumer culture acted as catalysts that triggered the empathetic capacity for modern 'psychic and physical mobility' (Adalet 2018: 84). In this formulation, the gift of individual media freedom for the likes of the Grocer would come at the expense of US support for authoritarian regimes and monarchies that suppressed both minorities and political opponents.

We might reasonably ask why the legacy of Cold War experience of development and modernization of media and information infrastructure retains explanatory force today? Its relevance lies in the fact that the post-Second World War focus on modernization and development communication, while eschewing the crudest forms of essentialism and white supremacy (Shah 2011) continued in the colonial tradition of rendering the problems of poverty and inequality as technical concerns, to be solved by what Timothy Mitchell (2002) has called the 'rule of experts', whether engineers, entrepreneurs, economists or lawyers hired by the World Bank, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and within the United Nations (UN) and its agencies, more generally. What is important to keep in mind here is how the liberal project of 'free media' expansion throughout the Cold War era operated through the symbolizing codes of race, class, gender and ethnicity to domesticate difference between ruling minorities and unruly publics in deeply unequal societies where the majority of citizens remained politically and economically dispossessed despite the formal process of decolonization (Mamdani 1996).

We can see the real structural limits of what this gift of 'free media' might mean in practice. While a 'free media' might promote secularism and reject communal practices of religious collective identity and nation building it would have to also prevent the threat of land redistribution or the nationalization of key industries. Dating from the Truman and Eisenhower eras, the infrastructures of 'free media' in this sense were designed by making the Third World village and slum and into a social laboratory for 'diffusion of innovations' of 'liberal developmentalism' ranging from agricultural production to birth control and political mobilization, all meant to lead to 'the right kind of revolution' (Latham 2011). As the quote from 'The Grocer and the Chief' reminds us, media infrastructures would serve as agent

for both individual mobilization as well as social cohesion. The modern liberal subject would through media exposure be driven to achieve as an individual as opposed to follow ascribed norms or customs, while at the same time, the pedagogic relationship between the postcolonial state and Third World subjects meant that state censorship of minority or oppositional perspectives was also justified for the larger purpose of national development. Colombian media scholar Martín-Barbero (1993: 165) pointed out that the postcolonial state appropriated the modernizing technologies of communication in part to realize this self-proclaimed mandate of development. Meanwhile, anti-left media and information infrastructures deployed by private monopolies or governments in Indonesia, South Korea, Singapore, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Pakistan, Egypt and well beyond – surveilled political opponents and promoted authoritarian regimes faithful to a 'modernization agenda without social upheavals' with the explicit backing of the United States and other Western powers (Alhassan and Chakravartty 2011: 270–75; Herman and Chomsky 1988; Roosa 2006). Studies based on recently declassified documents confirm that the US intervened in sovereign foreign elections between 1946 and 1989 some sixty-two times in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East, with the vast majority as covert operations where concerns for democratic legitimacy were almost always trumped by concerns for national interest (Levin 2016).

Turning to look more closely at the academic debates about media and empire during the Cold War, we first have to recognize that American universities funded by the United States Information Agency (USIA) under the aegis of the State Department as well as the Department of Defense,[6] have since the 1950s actively promoted research and public diplomacy on technological modernization in the Third World advocating for commercial 'free media', from advertising to broadcasting and cinema, to adoption of cybernetics, computing and telecommunications and digital infrastructures (Mattelart 1994; Halpern 2015; Parker 2016). When it comes to the question of US media power and empire, we find on one side the prominent Cold War expansionists including the early modernization scholars like MIT-based sociologist Daniel Lerner, who we have discussed, and Stanford-based communications scholar Wilbur Schramm and others, to the next generation of 'electronic communications' experts like political scientist Ithiel de Sola Pool, also based at MIT, whose CIA-funded research on Asia, the Middle East and Latin America would advocate for global deregulation and privatization of digital

---

6 The United States Information Agency (USIA) was established under the Eisenhower administration in 1953 and operated under the control of the State Department, with an estimated annual budget of $2 billion. Put baldly, it was a public relations propaganda division of the US government. Its primary field of operation lay in targeting populations in Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, Latin America and the Middle East from its inception until 1999. For more discussion of the USIA, public diplomacy and the Third World, see J. Parker (2016).

'technologies of freedom' (1983).[7] On the other side, critics of US media imperialism were made up of a group of scholars largely forgotten in the Anglo Media Studies tradition, including Argentinian, Bolivian, Chilean and Venezuelan communication scholars like Antonio Pasquali, Luis Ramiro Beltrán, Fernando Reyes Matta and Mario Kaplún, who at the time were responding to the greatest US-led corporate expansion in Latin America alongside overt and covert military operations which culminated in the 1973 coup and assassination of the democratically elected Salvador Allende of Chile (Roach 1997).[8] The European and North American scholars most recognized today as advocates of both the 'cultural imperialism' argument or the 'propaganda model' – such as Armand Mattelart, Herbert Schiller, Dallas Smythe and Oliver Boyd Barrett, as well as Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman – were surely inspired by these anti-colonial thinkers and social activists struggling for self-reliance

The critics of US media imperialism drew inspiration from transnational anti-colonial movements like the 1955 Bandung and 1966 Tricontinental Conferences, which called for Afro-Asian and Third World solidarity as a counter-point to the European multilateral systems of governance and rule. Both the Bandung and Tricontinental movements can be seen as pivotal moments of opposition to the existing Cold War world order where intellectuals, politicians and 'activists of color who had been subjected to forms of colonialism, racism, and class oppression' presented an 'alternative chronology of world events' (Lee 2010: 9). Countering the promise of the US' 'gift of media freedom', Third World intellectuals and political figures created alliances with African-American and civil rights activists in the United States, decrying educational and housing segregation and the increasingly visible (televised) police violence against non-white communities within America. By the late 1960s, within the US the Black Panther Party explicitly drew common cause with the anti-Vietnam War movement *and* anti-imperialist movements abroad. They argued that 'black people constituted a "colony in the mother country"', and forged new transnational alliances with anti-imperialist movements and governments from Algeria to Cuba, Tanzania to Vietnam (Bloom and Martin Jr 2016: 12).

Contesting the clear limits of liberal developmentalism, political leaders across the Third World pointed to the existing structural inequalities of colonialism and racism and ranked non-alignment and national economic development as higher priorities over the threat of the Cold War conflict (Parker 2016: 5).

At stake in these discussions of Western and US cultural imperialism were questions of increasing domination of the US film and television industries, the near monopoly of Western global news-gathering and growing concerns about technological reliance, if not dependence, in the design and manufacture of the first generation of information infrastructure (Alhassan and Chakravartty 2011: 272).

---

7 For an overview of Development Communications as a sub-field, see Wilkins (2000).

8 The contribution of several of these scholars is summarized in a recent overview of Latin American Communications Theory by F. Enghel and M. Becerra (2018).

Under the mantle of the Bandung era's non-aligned movement, the multilateral call for a New World Information and Communications Order (NWICO) was derailed by the US media and advertising industries and the ideologically hostile Reagan administration of the 1980s that overturned even the weakest calls for reversing any form of US media imperialism (Mattelart 1994; Nordenstreng 1984).

In retrospect, we can see that critical media scholars of US empire from this earlier period failed to adequately examine the contradictions of the postcolonial nation state, where in many cases the advocacy for the democratization of media and information infrastructures by national elites in global fora went hand in hand with silencing dissent at home. Moreover, scholars of media imperialism from this period focused disproportionately on the power of multinational corporations and the United States' and other Western states' role in shaping policy and practice, with less analytic interest in the actual 'Third World' itself and the manifold contradictions of gender, ethnicity, race/caste and religion endemic to postcolonial nationalism. These earlier, albeit important, interventions by media scholars concerned with the Cold War manifestations of dominant Western cultural and information flows, often equated the postcolonial state and its goals of modernization and development with national interest. In so doing, they failed to account for the long-term institutional legacies of oppressive and racist colonial state apparatuses that had been established to rule over subjects as opposed to serve its citizens. As Mahmood Mamdani has argued, the inauguration of the postcolonial nation state 'indegnized' but did not necessary democratize the apparatuses of the state (1996: 8), including those that governed media and information infrastructures.

Infrastructures of empire, racial violence and the forever wars

By the 1990s, following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the spread of commercial satellite television, new – optimistic – theories of media and globalization and the spread of civil society would become part and parcel of a renewed 'popular belief in the unique mission of the United States to secure the destiny of liberal democracy across the world' (Grandin 2011: x).

Once again, and under the guise of satellite and digital 'information revolutions', the gift of free media was proposed as the price of neoliberal imperial expansion. The 'CNN effect' and American popular culture appeared to be bringing the world together against state control whether in Eastern Europe or China, and hybrid media flows promised new cultural and political possibilities as against the fear of American cultural homogenization.[9]

9 We can point to a vast literature in Media Studies and Communications, as well as Anthropology, Sociology and Political Science, that focused on the democratic, 'deliberative' promise of commercial global media technologies and institutions beginning in the early 1990s. This work is too large and varied to catalogue here, but includes among many others: Appadurai 1996; Calhoun 1989; Fishkin 1991; Keane 2003; Straubhauer 1991; Tomlinson 1999; Jenkins and Thorburn 2004.

We have to remember that the falling out of favour of the cultural imperialism framework between the 1980s and 1990s took place during the expansion and enforcement of neoliberal economic reforms worldwide, following the 'lost decade' of the African and Latin American debt crises of the 1980s (Goldman 2006). While the rise of neoliberalism is well known in media studies as resulting from the ascension of Reagan and Thatcher in the 1980s, and Clinton and Blair in the 1990s, its origins in the Global South are often forgotten. It was in fact US-backed dictator Augusto Pinochet's Chile in the 1970s that became the initial laboratory in which Friedrich von Hayek, Milton Friedman and the 'Chicago Boys' carried out the first iteration of austerity that would be adopted by the World Bank in the 1980s and 1990s across most of the former Third World (Mitchell 2002). In *The Darker Nations*, Vijay Prashad makes a polemic and persuasive case that debt played a central role in the 'assassination of the Third World'; the latter's 'obituary' was written in New Delhi in 1983, at the Seventh Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) meeting, when a growing consensus emerged among 'the more influential' NAM elites to resolve the debt crisis engulfing Latin America and Africa by arguing that 'individual contracts between the indebted state and its debtor should be the approach, rather than the totality of the Third World against their creditors' (2008: 210–14).

The 1980s and early 1990s also saw expanding covert and overt military interventions by the Reagan and Bush I presidencies across Central America to Afghanistan and Pakistan in the 1980s, and in Iraq in the early-1990s. Historians have found that in the 1980s alone, the United States supported military governments that brutally suppressed leftist and indigenous opposition movements in Central America, and which ultimately killed more than 75,000 Salvadoreans and 200,000 Guatemalans (Grandin 2007). Greg Grandin (2011) argues that 'Cold War terror – either executed, patronized, or excused by the United States over the long twentieth century – fortified illiberal forces, militarized societies, and broke the link between freedom and equality, thus greatly weakening the likelihood of such a fulfillment ...'. In other words, instead of assuming that US media infastructures instill individual freedom (against state power), a critical focus on US empire in its own 'backyard' in Central America and across Latin America demonstrates the ways in which commercial media infrastructures play a role in 'de-linking social solidarity from the idea of freedom, which has been recast as personal liberty, setting the stage for free market ideology' (xv).

If liberal media-modernization projects dating back to Daniel Lerner era of the 1950s and 1960s were premised on state-led development interventions meant to free the individual to govern themselves as citizen-subjects with a set of rights and responsibilities, the emerging neoliberal model of the 1980s was based on a critique of state intervention (the welfare state, developmentalist state, the socialist state) and 'predicated on the need to recreate or recapture the individualist essence, in danger of being lost' (Hale 2002: 496). While it may seem counter-intuitive, the 'recuperation of the individual' was seen as possible only through the strengthening of non-state actors, whether they were communities, civic associations, faith-based organizations and NGOs.

In the 1990s, the United States, with its economic and military might televised across the 24-hour satellite coverage of the first Gulf War, became the sole global power advancing the rule of financial capitalism, undergirded by the expansion of privatized information infrastructures. The first 'live' video game war fought out in Iraq during 1991 also inaugurated a new mediatized mode of imperial violence that was marked not by the sheer 'asymmetry of force' which had been the case throughout the Cold War, but rather by what Grégoire Chamayou (2015) calls the 'fear of "Black Hawk Down" syndrome', when during the Clinton administration's intervention in Somalia, there was a recognition of the problematic optics of body bags from the Vietnam war. Thus a new era of 'humanitarian Wars of the 1990s' took place 'in the name of preserving military lives, the risk of producing more casualties among the civilians was accepted, even though it was those very civilians whom the operation was designed to protect' (Chamayou 2015: 129).

Throughout this era of 'humanitarian wars' of the 1990s in the Balkans, East Africa and Haiti, scholarly attention in media and cultural studies retained a focus on the more promising accounts of a deterritorialized globalization and global culture as the primary site of political transformation. Into the first decade of the 2000s, it would be a handful of scholars on the margins of Media Studies, Cultural Studies or Communications, who would continue to characterize the description of US power in the global context as that of an empire (Boyd Barrett 2014; Dyer-Witherford and de Peuter 2009; Kumar 2012; Mattelart 1994; Schiller 2000, 1991). This was also the case in the scholarship on postcolonial global media and culture, which while critical of the epistemic violence of European colonialism and tracing the plurality and multiplicity of migrant and hybrid identities and cultural practices, rarely engaged with US geopolitical or economic power. And yet, with some notable exceptions and postcolonial critics like Edward Said, Stuart Hall and Gayatri Spivak, we might agree with Mary Louise Pratt (2008) when she writes that postcolonial studies by focusing on colonialism largely 'elide[s] the intricately related phenomenon of neo-colonialism'. She goes on to write that even more troubling is the 'systematic elision in postcolonial studies of imperialism'.

Returning to the US' history of 'morphing' race craft and war craft (Singh 2017), the 1990s also saw, during President Bill Clinton's two terms, the US 'post-racial moment' emerging through the systematic and effective dismantling of welfare provisions, significant expansion in the prison system, the growing precarity in labour markets and attacks on affirmative action and other race-conscious policies (Amaya 2013; Gilmore 2007; Squires 2014). Within the US, postcolonial and critical race scholarship from this period drew much-needed attention to the discursive strategies at play – replete with tropes like the 'welfare queen,' the 'gang banger' and the non-tax-paying dependent 'illegal' immigrant – deployed to justify the gutting of welfare programmes and the design and implementation of extreme crime and immigration policies (Chavez 2013; Hancock 2004). These racist tropes and the 'prison fix' as solution to political and economic crises (Gilmore 2007) would only escalate after the transformative September 11th attacks in 2001. In the post-9/11 world, 'surveillance, detention and deportation of targeted "persons who appear to be Middle Eastern, Arab or Muslim"' led to a new racial category where

'members of the group are identified as terrorists, and disidentified as citizens' (Paik 2017: 10). It would be productive in Media Studies to trace these continuities between the domestic 'war on drugs' and the 'war on terror' both domestically and abroad, and consider the ways in which the main tools of raciality (racial and cultural difference) effectively produce interchangeable subaltern subjects.

In the context of the US-led occupation or support for the ongoing wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Yemen, Palestine and beyond, there has to be recognition that in contrast to prevailing counts of globalization in the 1990s, 'Empire is back', as Randy Martin (2007) asserted in the opening lines of *An Empire of Indifference: American War and the Financial Logic of Risk Management*. Martin argued that 'preemption or bringing the future into the present' through military strategies based on logics of securitization and arbitrage have structured a 'pre-emptive approach to foreign policy'. As studies of the Obama administration's 'exponential expansion' of targeted assassinations and reliance on drone strikes make apparent (Hajjar 2012), a decade plus of pre-emptive warfare has indeed led to indifference for much of the American public, steeped in discourses of self-management and an 'ethos of responsibility', and ready to blame Afghanis, Iraqis, Pakistanis and Palestinians for their descent to violence, chaos and corruption. Meanwhile, media and information infrastructures in the form of 'precision'-technology-based drones (unmanned aerial vehicles) have become integral to the 'respatialization' and 'racialization of war', and the collapsing of US-led military and police operations across Africa, Asia and the Middle East (Parks and Kaplan 2017).

In closing this preliminary discussion of the infrastructures of empire and racial violence in relation to the War on Terror, which has lasted the lifetime of millennial readers of this chapter, we might ask what the unintended consequences of the decline of interest in questions of race and empire has meant for studies of media and society in the twenty-first century? What was lost in the afterglow of a proliferation of what we might consider 'happy media and globalization' studies that have proliferated in the 2000s, *despite* the forever war and continuous economic and environmental crises? The post-Cold War era of a seemingly peaceful liberal internationalist global order alongside the worldwide proliferation of media and computer technologies shifted interest in the fields of media and information studies away from engagement with neo-colonial violence and what political scientist Cedric Robinson (1983) termed 'racial capitalism'. If we agree that racial inequality and violence have shaped the histories of US media and information infrastructures, this means we must reconsider the lineage of media freedom today when racial and ethno-majoritarian animus seems surprising, if not aberrant, to many media studies scholars today.

An empire in decline: towards de-colonial futures?

The election of a president regarded by many as a white supremacist, whose immigration policies affirm practices of ethnic cleansing and whose popular political support rests on an *anti*-globalist, isolationist approach to foreign policy

and trade, has led to speculation that the present moment marks a clear sign of the waning of the US' geopolitical status. Commentators across the political spectrum have remarked that Trump marks the decline if not fall of the American Empire.[10] The current moment might indeed signal certain political or technological shifts with the rise of global populism or the social media proliferation of 'disinformation'. However, in this chapter I highlight the importance of historical continuities that help make sense of the current moment. I have tried to argue that the history of US racialized liberal empire and the 'gift of media freedom' need to be foregrounded in our understandings of media and society. Today, in the midst of polarized ideological and political divisions, the issue of race and the colonial legacies of white supremacy, inequality and violence should be at the forefront of scholarly and public discussions about media and society (Bhambra 2017). We need only to consider the global racialization of Islam and the police and military violence of the never-ending war on terror; the multiple crises of global capitalism that has disproportionately punished working-class 'third-world-looking people' seeking refuge and survival; and the wave of ethno-nationalist, populist political victories across the globe (Hage 2016).

Despite the daunting power of the infrastructures of empire discussed throughout this chapter, the era of decolonization movements and civil rights struggles offered collective and transnational critiques of the 'gift of media freedom'. These were articulated against the backdrop of international socialist and decolonization movements where new political communities of Afro-Asian and Tricontinental (Africa, Asia and the Americas) solidarities and economies, however contingent, were imagined as internationalist political possibilities (Lee 2010; Prashad 2007). It was these internationalist intellectuals from socialist, third-world feminist, civil rights and decolonization movements, who emphasized both self-reliance and multi-racial transnational solidarity, that ultimately aimed for *liberated infrastructures* to combat colonial propaganda and build transnational circuits of transport and communication (radio and newspapers) in the service of the commons (Cabral 1966; Fanon 1968; Garland-Mahler 2018; Lee 2010). In 1972, the Black Panther Party's *10 Point Program* included the call for 'people's community control of modern technology'. The inter-generational conversation that led to these calls included intellectuals and activists including Frantz Fanon whose books, *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) and *Black Skin White Masks* (1952), are occasionally assigned in Media and Cultural Studies courses along with *Discourse on Colonialism* (1950), written by Fanon's teacher, Aimé Césaire. But they also include other, more obscure, figures in our field, including (and this is by no means an exhaustive list) Amilcar Cabral, revolutionary theorist and political activist who fought for liberation of the Portuguese colonies of Cape Verde and Guinea Bissau, Argentinian economist Raul Prebish, the founder of the Dependency

---

10 Noam Chomsky and *the Nation* on the left, along with analysts at *Foreign Policy* and the conservative *New Republic*, have all made this point about the Trump presidency in 2017–18.

Theory school, and Egyptian Marxist economist Samir Amin, to US civil rights intellectuals and leaders like Asian-American feminist philosopher and activist Grace Lee Boggs and the co-founder of the Black Panther Party, Huey P. Newton. More recent writing in the decolonial and black radical traditions includes work by Cedric Robinson, Sylvia Wynter, Saidiya Hartman, Maria Lugones and Aníbal Quijano, to name but a few key scholars in these traditions, all of whom offer insights on media, race and empire and the politics of resistance.[11] Turning to these theoretical traditions at this particular political conjuncture is useful given that these anti-colonial thinkers and writers were as concerned with re-writing histories from the perspective of the oppressed as they were in creating the terms for collective emancipation.

Bibliography

Adalet, B. (2018), *Hotels and Highways: The Construction of Modernization Theory in Cold War Turkey,* Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.

Alhassan, A. and P. Chakravartty (2011), 'Postcolonial Media Policy Under the Long Shadow of Empire', in R. Mansell and M. Raboy (eds), *The Handbook of Global Media and Communication Policy*, 366–82, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Amaya, H. (2013), *Citizenship Excess: Latino/as, Media, and the Nation,* New York: NYU Press.

Aouragh, M. and Chakravartty, P. (2016), 'Infrastructures of Empire: Towards a Critical Geopolitics of Media and Information Studies' *Media, Culture & Society*, 38 (4): 559–75.

Appadurai, A. (1996), *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization,* Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Bhambra, G. K. (2017), 'Brexit, Trump, and "Methodological Whiteness": On the Misrecognition of Race and Class', *The British Journal of Sociology*, 68 (S1).

Bloom, J. and W. E. Martin, Jr. (2016), *Black Against Empire: The History and Politics of the Black Panther Party,* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Bogues, A. (2010), *Empire of Liberty: Power, Desire, and Freedom,* Lebanon, NH: University Press of New England.

Boyd Barrett, O. (2014), *Media Imperialism*. Thousands Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Browne, S. (2015), *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness,* Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Butler, J. (2010), *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?,* New York: Verso.

Cabral, A. (1966), 'The Weapon of Theory'. In *Address delivered to the first Tricontinental Conference of the Peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America held in Havana in January*.

11 In addition to Robinson (above), see: Saidiya Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery and Self-Making in the Nineteenth Century*. Oxford University Press, 1997; Katherine McKittrick (ed.), *Sylvia Wynter: On Being Human as Praxis*. Duke University Press, 2014; Maria Lugones, 'Heterosexualism and the colonial/modern gender system', *Hypatia* 22 (1) (2007): 186–219; Aníbal Quijano, 'The challenge of the "indigenous movement" in Latin America', *Socialism and Democracy* 19 (3) (2005): 55–78.

Césaire, A. (2000), 'Discourse on Colonialism', *Monthly Review Press*, 7–29.

Chakravartty, P. and D. F. da Silva (2012), 'Accumulation, Dispossession, and Debt: The Racial Logic of Global Capitalism – An Introduction', *American Quarterly*, 64 (3): 361–85.

Chamayou, G. (2015), *A Theory of the Drone,* New York: New Press.

Chavez, L. (2013), *The Latino Threat: Constructing Immigrants, Citizens, and the Nation*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Curran, J. (2011). *Media and Democracy*, Abingdon Routledge.

da Silva, D. F. (2007), *Toward a Global Idea of Race*, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

de Sola Pool, I. (1983), *Technologies of Freedom*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Del Moral, S. (2013), *Negotiating Empire: The Cultural Politics of Schools in Puerto Rico, 1898–1952,* Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.

Dunn, H. (2014), 'Imperial Foundations of 20th-century Media Systems in the Caribbean', *Critical Arts*, 28 (6): 938–57.

Dyer-Witherford, N. and G. de Peuter (2009), *Games of Empire: Global Capitalism and Video Games*, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Enghel, F. and M. Becerra (2018), 'Here and There: (Re)Situating Latin America in International Communication Theory', *Communication Theory,* 28 (2): 111–130.

Fanon, F. (1968), *The Wretched of the Earth: The Handbook for the Black Revolution that is Changing the Shape of the World*, New York: Grove Press.

Garland-Mahler, A. (2018), *From the Tricontinental to the Global South: Race, Radicalism, and Transnational Solidarity,* Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Gilmore, R. W. (2007). *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Goldman, M. (2006), *Imperial Nature: The World Bank and Struggles for Social Justice in the Age of Globalization,* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Graham, S., & Marvin, S. (2001), *Splintering Urbanism: Networked Infrastructures, Technological Mobilities and the Urban Condition*, London: Routledge.

Grandin, G. (2007), *Empire's Workshop: Latin America, the United States, and the Rise of the New Imperialism,* New York: Metropolitan Books.

Grandin, G. (2011), *The Last Colonial Massacre: Latin America in the Cold War,* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Gregory, D. (2017), 'Dirty Dancing: Drones and Death in the Borderlands', in L. Parks and A. Kaplan (eds), *Life in the Age of Drone Warfare,* Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Hage, G. (2016), '*Etat de siege*: A dying domesticating colonialism?', *American Ethnologist,* 43 (1): 38–49.

Hajjar, L. (2012), 'Anatomy of the US Targeted Killing Policy', *Middle East Report*, 264, 10–17.

Hale, C. (2002), 'Does Multiculturalism Menace? Governance, Cultural Identity and the Politics of Identity in Guatemala', *Journal of Latin American Studies,* 34 (3): 485–524.

Hancock, A. M. (2004), *The Politics of Disgust: The Public Identity of the Welfare Queen,* New York: New York University Press.

Herman, E. S. and N. Chomsky (1988), *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media,* London: Vintage.

Hesse, B. (2016), 'Counter–Racial Formation Theory', in P. K. Saucier and T. P. Woods (eds), *Conceptual Aphasia: Displacing Racial Formation,* vii–x, Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.

Hills, J. (2010), *The Struggle for Control of Global Communication: The Formative Century,* Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Jayawardena, K. (2016), *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World,* London: Verso Books.

Kaplan, A. (2005), *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of US Culture,* Boston, MA: Harvard University Press.

Khalfa, J. and R. J. C. Young, eds (2017), *Frantz Fanon: Alienation and Freedom,* London: Bloomsbury. Trans. S. Corcoran.

Kumar, D. (2012), *Islamophobia and the Politics of Empire,* London: Haymarket Books.

Larkin, B. (2008), *Signal and Noise: Media, Infrastructure and Urban Culture in Nigeria,* Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Lee, C. J., ed. (2010), *Making a World after Empire: The Bandung Moment and Its Political Afterlives*, Athens, OH: Ohio University Press.

Lerner, D. (1958), *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East*, Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Levin, D. (2016), 'When the Great Power Gets a Vote: The Effects of Great Power Electoral Interventions on Election Results', *International Studies Quarterly*, 60: 189–202.

Martin-Barbero, J. (1993), 'Latin America', *Journal of Communication*, 43 (2): 181–300.

Mamdani, M. (1996), *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Martin, R. (2007), *An Empire of Indifference: American War and the Financial Logic of Risk Management*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Mattelart, A. (1994), *Mapping World Communication: War, Progress, Culture,* Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

McAlister, M. (2005), *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, and US Interests in the Middle East Since 1945,* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

McClintock, A. (2013), *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest,* London: Routledge.

McCoy, A. W. (2009), *Policing America's Empire*: *The United States, the Philippines, and the Rise of the Surveillance State,* Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.

McCoy, A. W. and F. A. Scarano (eds) (2009), *Colonial Crucible: Empire in the Making of the Modern American State.* Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.

Mitchell, T. (2002), *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-politics, and Modernity*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Mitchell, T. (2006), 'The Work of Economics: How a Discipline Makes its World', *European Journal of Sociology*, 46 (02), 297–320.

Nguyen, M. T. (2012), *The Gift of Freedom: War, Debt, and Other Refugee Passages,* Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Noble, S. U. (2018), *Algorithms of Oppression: How Search Engines Reinforce Racism*, New York: New York University Press.

Nordenstreng, K. (1984), 'Bitter Lessons', *Journal of Communication*, 34 (1), 138–42.

Paik, A. N. (2017), 'Abolitionist Futures and the US Sanctuary Movement', *Race & Class*, 59 (2), 3–25.

Parker, J. C. (2016), *Hearts, Minds, Voices: US Cold War Public Diplomacy and the Formation of the Third World,* New York: Oxford University Press.

Parks, L. and A. Kaplan (2017), 'Introduction', in L. Parks and A. Kaplan (eds), *Life in the Age of Drone Warfare,* 1–23, Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Parks, L. and N. Starosielski eds. (2015), *Signal Traffic: Critical Studies of Media Infrastructures*, Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Prashad, V. (2008), *The Darker Nations: A People's History of the Third World*, New York: The New Press.

Pratt, M.L (2008), 'In the Neocolony: Destiny, Destination and the Traffic in Meaning', *Coloniality at Large: Latin America and the Postcolonialism Debate*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Roach. C. (1997), 'Cultural Imperialism and Resistance in Media Theory and Literary Theory', *Media, Culture & Society,* 19 (1): 47–66.

Robinson, C. J. (1983), *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*, Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.

Roosa, J. (2006), *Pretext for Mass Murder: The September 30th Movement and Suharto's coup d'état in Indonesia*, Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.

Schiller, H. I. (1991), 'Not Yet the Post-Imperialist Era', *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 8 (1): 13–28.

Schiller, H. I. (2000), *Living in the Number One Country: Reflections from a Critic of American Empire*, New York: Seven Stories Press.

Shah, H. (2011), *The Production of Modernization: Daniel Lerner, Mass Media, and the Passing of Traditional Society*, Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Singh, N. P. (2017), *Race and America's Long War,* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Squires, C. R. (2014), *The Post-racial Mystique: Media and Race in the Twenty-first Century*, New York: NYU Press.

Tomlinson, J. (1999), *Globalization and Culture,* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Williams, A.W. (1980), *Empire as a Way of Life,* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wilson-Gilmore, R. (2006), *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis and Opposition in Globalizing California,* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Wilkins, K. (2000), *Redeveloping Communication for Social Change: Theory, Practice, and Power*, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Winseck, D. and R. Pike (2007), *Communication and Empire*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Wolfe, P. (2006) 'Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native', *Journal of Genocide Research*, 8 (4): 387–409.

Chapter 14

THE POLITICS OF REALITY TV

Susan Murray

Reality TV has been an immensely popular prime-time genre for close to two decades now. It has been celebrated, vilified and analyzed. It has moved into every corner of the American cable and broadcast schedule and has become an international pop culture phenomenon. Reality formats and subgenres have solidified almost to the point of parody, with audiences being able to recognize and anticipate familiar character types, plot points and narrative structures. Even more significantly, reality TV has moved from being a genre that engages with the politics and ideologies of the contemporary moment to becoming an actual engine of global politics. Donald Trump's inauguration in January 2017 marked the moment in which the United States was led by a reality TV president: a former reality TV host and who arguably governs through the genre's logics and structures.

During his candidacy, a number of scholars identified Trump's celebrity brand, political persona and platform as all deeply tied to the forms and functions of reality TV. For example, a special section in a November 2016 issue of the journal *Television & New Media* included a set of commentaries by media scholars on what journal co-editor Diane Negra (2016) describes as 'ruminations on Trump as charismatic huckster CEO, apotheosis of the new culture of promotionalism and symbol of new civility conundrums, all emphasiz[ing] his intense formative association with the television medium, showing it to be a key element in the shaping of Trump's political appeal'. The labelling of the Trump presidency as one based in reality TV, did not only come out of academia. In fact, a headline in an issue of *Time* magazine soon after the election declared it outright: 'Donald Trump is the First True Reality TV President' (*Time*, 9 December 2016). In an interview with the *New York Times*, Republican Senator Bob Corker said about Trump, 'When I watch him on television, and even, you know, sometimes – Well, when I watch his performances, you know, it very much feels to me like he thinks as president he's on a reality television show' ('The *New York Times* Interview with Bob Corker' 2017) Many commentators have noted how Trump's humiliation tactics (including name-calling, back-stabbing and public firings) and taste for drama and public are hallmarks of reality TV. Naomi Klein (2017) has argued that the specific way in which Trump constructs chants and insulting nicknames,

fosters feuds and 'plays ringmaster' at his rallies shows that he 'didn't just bring the conventions of reality TV to electoral politics – he mashed them up with another blockbuster entertainment genre also based on cartoonishly fake performances of reality: professional wrestling'. Journalists and public commentators have also noted that the president seems to engage with cable news programmes in a way that suggests he is interested only in crafting a media image and sees himself as a performer in the greatest TV role of a lifetime. As Greg Price remarked in *Newsweek*, in early January 2018: 'President Donald Trump gave the strongest indication yet that he views his current job as another reality-television programme prior to a Cabinet meeting Wednesday afternoon. The Republican quipped non-sequiturs to reporters, such as "Welcome back to the studio," and he praised the "ratings" his meeting on immigration received Tuesday . . . He added the meeting got "great reviews" and the "ratings were fantastic."'

Outside of the deep and often terrifying issues that can result when the supposed 'leader of the free world' acts as though he is on a reality show, the genre itself has also been at the centre of moments of great controversy over the years. Cultural critics have wondered whether producers have gone 'too far' in what they choose to represent or if participants, while others have been concerned that our collective fascination with reality TV and its particular form of celebrity (embodied by that of the Kardashian family) are participating in the trivialization and commodification of our culture and values, serving to distract us from what is more socially and politically pressing, or inspiring the spread of narcissism.

Certainly, Dutch television in particular has seen more than its fair share of attention over the years for outrageous programming ideas such as *I Want Your Child and Nothing Else* (in which a woman selects a sperm donor) and *Miss Ability* (a beauty pageant for women with 'visible disabilities' that was promoted with the tagline, 'Have you ever whistled at a girl in a wheelchair? Checked out the boobs of blind babe or flirted with a girl who has difficulty walking?'). And, of course, *Big Donor Show*, a programme featuring three kidney patients competing for the organ of a woman dying from a brain tumor, which perhaps received the most international coverage and widespread criticism of them all – until it was revealed to be a hoax. In 2015 in the US, many critics and viewers were aghast at the premise of the Lifetime programme *Born in the Wild,* which centred on babies being delivered in the wilderness by women who wished for 'natural' births far away from medical assistance, with one critic calling it 'arguably the most irresponsible reality show ever made' ('22 Worst Reality Shows' 2015). A year prior, *Dating Naked* (VH1) a show following couples on nude dates in a remote tropical island, premiered in the US, but may have seemed almost tame compared to the UK Channel 4's *Sex Box*, which has its participants engage in intercourse on stage inside a box.

What all of these controversial programmes have in common is the showcasing of a specific cultural, political or even economic problem at a heightened historical moment and in a way that seems exploitative, shocking, extreme or even cruel. Reality TV is a genre that tends to feed off of immediate social concerns and issues in order to heighten its claim to realness. While at certain moments in its history,

the genre many have been dismissed as a social distraction or trash, many of these programmes mediate or engage with the most politically relevant issues of the day – albeit in often sensational ways.

Over the years, reality programming has remade television production, economics and aesthetics, and in doing so has challenged and remixed previous forms of representation and content. It has also further complicated our relations of notions of realism or 'reality' and to documentary ethics. Since this latest wave of reality began to take hold of audiences worldwide starting in 2001, scholars have analyzed the ways in which the genre has engaged with and propagated political meaning and ideologies in ways that are both similar to other television formats and that are relatively unique to the genre. Since research on the topic has become plentiful in the 2000s, we can now identify specific trends in the study of the political meaning in reality TV. Beyond the titillation and seemingly endless controversy that reality TV courts, are politically charged representations of and discursive formations around surveillance, voyeurism, confession, cultural identity, sexuality, race, gender, governmentality, capitalism, nationalism, the politics of the self, therapeutic and recovery and more. Yet, we can place recent scholarship on the subject of the politics of reality TV into four broad categories: traditional textual analyzes of representational politics and ideology; political economy; surveillance and voyeurism; and critiques of neoliberalism.

Representational politics

Reality TV has, at times, been praised in the popular press for its representational politics – at least when it comes to the diversity of its casting. In the first decade of the 2000s, the US cable network Bravo was commended for cultivating a queer audience base and in doing so has showcased a wide range of representations of gays and lesbians in their reality programming, while the CBS programme *Survivor* (which has now been on the air for close to twenty years) has at times been lauded for generational and racial diversity, even as scholars have pointed out the show engages in racist tropes such as narratives of essentialism and claims to colour blindness (Drew 2011). In 2009, *LA Times* writer Greg Braxton observed that reality programmes featured a broader range of people in terms of age, race, class, ethnicity and sexual orientation than fictional programmes, reporting that the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) had cited reality as the only genre that does not under-represent non-whites on television. James Poniewozik (2016), the TV critic for the *New York Times*, remarked recently:

> For all the heat they take, reality shows often did more than scripted shows of their time to cast broadly; in 1994 *The Real World* aired TV's first same-sex commitment ceremony, between a black man and a Hispanic man; NBC was still four years away from *Will & Grace*. But the genre has had its own problems of stereotyping and casting: We're still waiting for a black Bachelor or Bachelorette, but we're getting one on Season 2 of *UnREAL*.

However, Jonathan Murray (co-creator of *The Real World*, who was recently awarded the 2017 Banff World Media Festival Diversity Award for *Born This Way,* an A&E reality programme following the lives of seven young adults with Down's Syndrome*,* has pointed out that the reasons for diversity in casting are not always pro-social, as producers assume that placing members of different classes and/or races together will increase the potential for tension and/or drama.

This has certainly been the case for *The Real World* since it first premiered on MTV in 1992 and has also played out around the globe in other shows such as *Wife Swap,* a format created by RDF Media in which families with significant lifestyle or personality differences trade wives for two weeks. One of Channel 4's biggest hits of 2003, the UK *Wife Swap* kicked off with an episode involving a white woman who disapproved of interracial relationships and a black husband in the other family with very conventional ideas about women and the division of household labour. Garnering a viewership of almost six million, this episode became a talking point on race, representation and the ethics of reality TV. ABC decided to air one of its most provocative episodes of the American version of the programme – which paired a lesbian couple with a conservative, Christian heterosexual couple from the South – during February 'sweeps week' in 2005. *A Family Swap*, one of Austria's most popular programmes at the time, copied the *Wife Swap* model and cast an immigrant Turkish family with a family of admitted racists, which again led to high ratings but mixed reception from critics (2004). These programmes showcase diverse families, often ignite public conversations about race, sexuality or class issues, and yet, also, some might argue, exploit difference in the name of advancing the narrative and heightening a programme's dramatic arc.

For these reasons and more, scholars have had complex and varied responses and approached to issues of representation on reality TV. In terms of its core methodological concerns, textual analysis of reality TV does, of course, resemble that which is applied to fictional programming in that images and relationships are typically analyzed in relation to plot point and historical/cultural stereotypes. One might use semiotics or content analysis to get at the meaning of the images contained in a reality show or use feminist theory to understand the representations of gender. However, scholars of reality TV also have to contend with the issue of how to discuss ideology in a text that both functions as entertainment and pretends to traffic in realism and 'real' people. Recognizing that elements such as casting, editing and camerawork function as storytelling devices for the producers of the programme, and that reality TV is far from an idealist experiment in *cinéma-vérité*, means that one must acknowledge the intention and craft behind stories told and characters created. Yet, the truth claims that are inherent in the genre do complicate matters as they imply that what is being shown is simply life unfolding in front of the camera rather than recognizing a text in which intention is present and representations are constructed. (This is an ideological claim in itself.) In order to parse this out a bit more, we can look at the allegations of racism that occurred during one season of the UK's *Celebrity Big Brother*, which led to an uproar in both Britain and India.

Over the course of the 2007 season, housemates Jade Goody, Danielle Lloyd and Jo O'Meara made a number of inflammatory comments to or about Indian actress Shilpa Shetty. Among other things, Goody referred to Shetty as 'Shilpa Fuckawallah' and 'Shilpa Padadum', while her mother Jaickey called her simply 'the Indian'. Lloyd also harassed Shetty, at various times calling her a dog, saying that Shetty 'wants to be white'. While eating a meal cooked by Shetty, Lloyd remarked, 'They eat with their hands in India, don't they? Or is that China? You don't know where those hands have been' (Gibson 2007).

At first Channel 4 denied that there was anything racist about the exchanges, saying that it was simply a 'cultural and class clash between [Shetty] and three of the British females in the house' ('Shetty Speaks of Brother Racism' 2007). However, Ofcom (the UK's regulatory body) was deluged by over 50,000 complaints by viewers about Shetty's treatment on the show and various politicians and editorial writers condemned Channel 4 and the show's producers for showcasing racism, many calling for the show's cancellation. In India, the producers of the programme were burned in effigy, and the Hindu Nationalists as well as the Congress Party both demanded action by and/or an apology from Channel 4 and the producers. Mahesh Bhatt, a Bollywood director interviewed by the *Guardian*, said: 'Big Brother is holding a mirror to British society. It is no aberration. We should thank Channel 4 for revealing the hidden biases of Britain' (Gibson 2007). Goody's reputation was ultimately redeemed to a certain extent after she announced in 2009 that she had stage four cervical cancer and, as Su Holmes and Deborah Jermyn (2014) describe, her image 'took on martyr-like connotations' and was rehabilitated in 'peculiarly feminine ways: first as a self-sacrificing mother who insisted on working until her final days . . .; and second as a woman who left a bequest of health-awareness to other women, insofar as Jade's illness was directly credited with having increased levels of cervical screenings among young women' (42).

In these episodes of *Celebrity Big Brother,* it was the words of the 'real-life' characters of the show that caused an international uproar. These were not (as far as we know) words conjured up in a writer's meeting. In some ways this takes the onus off the show's creators as they might claim that the participants were acting of their own accord and are just another example of the way that uncensored realism functions in the genre. Or, as Channel 4 initially responded, position the situation discursively as simply being a result of cultural or personality clash that, as viewers know, tends to be the primary force driving the plot. That said, the creators of the programme did choose to cast individuals whose characters might be explosive or who had the potential for conflict when paired with someone who was different from them. For instance, Goody had become famous for her often inappropriate and provocative behaviour on *Big Brother 3*. She was also known and ridiculed for her ignorance and became tabloid fodder as a result of her tumultuous and troubled personal life. Producers must have known that casting her would virtually guarantee a dramatic arc to *Celebrity Big Brother 5*. Catherine R. Squires (2014) has argued that reality TV 'borrows from and depends upon racial conventions and constructions from other genres: news, talk shows, sitcoms, and soap operas' which 'provide easily accessible plot points and stereotypes for

producers and editors to use when shaping their preferred reading of how "real people" deal with racism or embody racial identities' (265).

Reality TV producers offer us not only strategic casting to create potential for conflict and drama, but also create situations that will likely push people psychologically or test the limits of their self-control. By sequestering guests and limiting their contact with the outside world, scheduling long or even endless shoots (like *Big Brother*, which records action in the house twenty-four hours a day) or providing participants with large amounts of alcohol or encouraging a party-like atmosphere, producers provide the elements for moments of emotional or even physical combustion. Indeed, one can find the results of such casting and the fanning of interpersonal conflict and bad behaviour in the successful *Real Housewives* franchise on Bravo. Starring a group of wealthy women from a specific geographic location (such as New Jersey and Atlanta) and sometimes representing a singular racial or ethnic group (Italian Americans, African Americans), the franchise traffics in long-standing representations of the feminine (materialist, vain, emotional, superficial, relational, trivial and excessive) while being driven almost exclusively by conflict and aggression.

June Deery (2015) has argued that producers of reality TV perpetuate 'hyperbolic portraits: the hollow trophy wife, the sexy guido, the Black diva, the flamboyant gay' because of the way that they ultimately wish to attract viewer attention and ratings and, as a result, is 'a commercial diversity born of the niche broadcasting of differentiated products' (100). And yet there are examples of moments in which reality TV seems uniquely positioned as a platform for visibility and social change. In an article first published two decades ago, José Muñoz (1998) argued that a contestant on an early season of *The Real World* actually used the programme's formulaic casting as a platform for AIDS activism and created a space for queer and Latino counter-publics in a 'phobic public sphere' (196). As a young man with AIDS on an incredibly popular reality programme, Pedro Zamora took a radically different subject position to any other queer *Real World* participant had. As Muñoz holds, Zamora:

> fit a larger corporate schema as to what MTV wanted for the show, and these reasons led to his being represented: he used MTV as an opportunity to continue his life's work of HIV/AIDS pedagogy, queer education and human rights activism. Unlike his queer predecessors, he exploited MTV in politically efficacious ways: he used MTV more than they used him.
>
> 1998: 206

The politics of representation in reality TV is a wide and varied research area in regard to both topic and approach. Whether it is addressing gender and reality dating shows, the queer politics of the 2018 Netflix reboot of *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* or *Project Runway*, or issues of race and nation in *American Idol*, the study of the specific way that subjectivity intersects with claims to realism continues. For as Derek Kompare (2008) has noted, 'Media representation per se has become the "truth" of contemporary genres of actuality . . .' (110).

Political economy

Since reality TV has helped change the production and business practices pf television and altered the global flow of media texts and formats, political economy has become an exceedingly useful tool in its analysis. In terms of the macro picture, scholars such as Chad Raphael (1997) and Ted Magder (2009) have tracked the way that the genre has developed in the US in relation to historically specific economic pressures on networks, while scholars such as Silvio Waisbord (2004), Michael Keane and Albert Moran (2008), John McMurria (2008a) and Marwan Kraidy (2010a, 2010b) have related more general patterns of globalization to the spread and popularity of reality TV.

By connecting business and production practices to the development and expression of a genre or format, scholars can not only reveal industrial/economic motivations, but also locate the origins of particular textual or generic features. The most recent wave of reality TV, like the last one that came in the late 1980s, has been accompanied by significant economic and technological changes in the industry. In the year 2000, when *Survivor* and *Big Brother* first appeared on US television, networks had already been feeling the pressures of increasing competition from cable, the appearance and popularity of digital video recorders (DVRs), a rise in production costs of fictional programming, and the increasing threat of the internet and its potentialities. Using formats such as those created by European companies like Endemol (which had over 500 formats – mostly reality and game shows – for sale by 2001) provided opportunities for new revenue streams (product placement and merchandising, for example) and advertising strategies and more occasions to bring television 'outside the box' through texting, streaming video and the like. Formats also provided the opportunity for not only low-cost programming, but also programming that was low risk, as the format has commonly already proven successful in other countries.

In comparing the funding and production of reality TV to that of traditional dramas and situation comedies, scholars such as Magder (2009) are able to explore the particular way that the genre both manifests industrial anxieties and provides new avenues for networks to reach audiences, satisfy advertisers, and better compete in the digital age. In an article first published in *Jump Cut* in 1997, Raphael looks at how the economic conditions of the late 1980s and early 1990s resulted in more prime-time reality programming on network television – including shows such as *COPS, America's Most Wanted* and *America's Funniest Home Videos*. Noting the role that the writers' strike of 1988 played in this, Raphael (2009) reminds us of how essential the issue of labour is to our understanding of the genre.

Reality TV works to both reveal and conceal the labour behind its making. As Heather Hendershot (2008) has pointed out, reality TV seems to focus relentlessly on labour – within the text, at least. Whether it is the labour of *Face-Off* make-up artists or *The Great British Bake Off* cooks, the obstetricians on *Deliver Me* or the designers on *Project Runway*, we, as an audience, are deriving pleasure from watching other people work. Yet, some of argue that we are working too in these moments. Mark Andrejevic (2004) suggests that we are labouring for the industry

when we participate as viewers in the interactive components of reality TV (which means that we are doing the work of audience measurement enabling an economy of 'mass customization') and when we become participants in these shows.

With all of this focus on labour within reality TV tests and in their call to audiences, it is interesting to note that the industry has been reluctant to recognize the labour involved both in front of and behind the cameras. As Raphael (2009) points out, the use of non-professional participants and their use of few – if any – writers have proven to be a convenient way for networks to bring down the cost of production by side-stepping unions and their rules and rates. In fact, these programmes tend to use almost no unionized labour, including producers, contractors, editors or directors, and often get by with skeleton crews who are vastly underpaid and overworked compared to their counterparts working on fictional programmes (Nolan 2014). They also work without job security, health insurance, pension benefits and contracts, and are rarely credited for their work. In 2005 the Directors Guild of America filed suit on behalf of a group of writers, producers and editors against a number of reality shows after they refused to negotiate with them for better terms. The Writers and Screen Actors Guilds respectively have had mixed success in their efforts to get better representation for those working on reality shows. When the writers for *America's Next Top Model* (ANTM) went on strike in 2006, the Writers Guild of America supported them but ultimately failed and the ANTM writers were let go. Writers for the ITV Studios and Atlas Media organized in 2010, voting to be represented by the Writers Guild and, after pushback from management, ultimately won the right to organize by the National Labor Relations Board.

Reality TV programmes get around the unions by asserting that they are non-scripted. It is their claim to reality and the way that they align themselves with documentary practice that enable them to skirt the usual limits on the economics of the television production model. While these programmes are often sold to audiences as opportunities for ordinary people to become involved in television and to make it more democratic, they are also exploiting labour and weakening the structures set in place to protect industry workers. Many complain that they are also taking away jobs from card-carrying members of the union. In contrast to what is occurring in the US, the highest court in France ruled in the spring of 2009 that all contestants in reality programmes were entitled to contracts and payment equal to the compensation of professional actors. As a result of the genre's vexed relationship to labour, scholars have begun to research the particularities of the organizational structures of reality TV and the experiences of reality workers. For instance, Vicki Mayer (2014) employed a critical enthnographic approach in a four-year long field study of the business of 'reality casters', those who are involved in 'cast selection, cast promotion, and event planning.' (60) She concludes that this work involves visible and invisible labour, some of which was emotion work and that the professional category was one that was highly feminized and 'thus crystalized the associations between women and lower forms of unwaged work that have historically been associated with caregiving' (68). On the other side of the casting equation, Laura Grindstaff (2014) has studied how the 'ordinary celebrity'

of potential reality TV participants is cultivated and managed through instructional media (reality TV schools, online magazines and casting calls) and then eventually on-set. Ordinary celebrity as an 'institutionalized mode of media visibility' can be used to 'describe a growing and increasingly institutionalized space situated between "real" celebrity (rooted in sustained media visibility) and "real" ordinariness (located largely outside media visibility)', argues Grindstaff (325).

The international distribution of media texts has been a long-standing concern of media scholars, specifically in terms of the direction of their flow and the politics of their potential cultural impact. In the 1980s, the American prime-time soap *Dallas* came to stand in as the example of cultural imperialism as it was a US programme that became extremely popular in a large number of mostly European countries, and seemed to participate in the Americanization of global popular culture and ideological dominance. In the 2000s, some wondered if reality TV formats represented a sea change in at least the flow of popular culture and a realignment of the centres of its production. Could the dominance of format producers such as Endemol and FreemantleMedia in the international television market mean the end to the *Dallas* era of cultural imperialism? John McMurria (2008a) might answer with a qualified 'no', as his study of the international market revealed that:

> Reality TV propagates the international divisions of labour that have characterized the exploitative patterns of world capitalism ... [and] represents neither a fundamental break from the forces of a globalizing modernity nor another western imperialist cultural form, but rather, a new development in global television worthy of serious attention, contestation, and study within particular localized contexts.
>
> 2008: 197

Others who have studies the global movement of reality TV hold similar views and have studied its impact in, as McMurria calls for, localized contexts. In doing so, many have noted the multifaceted ways that the local and global meet in these programmes, while also recognizing that while the global flow of programming may no longer appear unidirectional, it is still unequal and steeped in power relations between East and West and First and Third World countries.

The industrial context for the international popularity of reality formats is, of course, related to the move away from public service or nationalized television systems in many countries and towards commercial multi-channel platforms, which has created a demand for more affordable programming options that will adhere to those protectionist laws still in effect. Meant to protect national industry and culture, many governments have instituted quotas for locally produced programming, thereby limiting the amount of foreign programming that can be shown by a station/network. Reality formats are a way around those laws. Formats also provide the consistency and predictability of a pre-sold, proven product, thereby increasing a programme's chance of popularity and profitability. Silvio Waisbord (2004) points out that the widespread use of reality TV formats is related

to both the international standardization of television and to the integration of those systems through global business and professional networks (263–4). One could argue, then, that the politics of global reality formats are the politics of globalization writ large.

One question that researchers have asked is whether or not the elements of the format itself are a product of the culture in which the format was created. Is it actually possible to evacuate a format of all its cultural particulars as it travels from one country to the next? Since formats are sold with basics – plot/game structure, logos and merchandising, a playbook which guides the producer through how to construct the basic elements and look of a programme – and yet are produced locally, it might at first seem that they are an ideal global product for our time as they allow us to share in a global experience while preserving national and cultural differences. Arguing that formats reveal the dynamics and economic imperatives of glocalization, Waisbord writes that 'formats are culturally specific but nationally neutral. The DNA of formats is rooted in the cultural values that transcend the national [i.e. capitalism, individualism, etc.] … However, format shows are less prone to have specific references to the local and the national, precisely because they are designed to "travel well" across national boundaries' (368). Minna Aslama and Mervi Pantti (2007) have used a Finnish reality programme called *Extreme Escapades* as a case study for how reality television might be altering the meaning of national television in an era of globalization. Perhaps unsurprisingly, they found that this programme propagated Finnish national identity through the use of traditional myths and stereotypes while also participating in the wider global culture. The content of these types of texts – setting, selection of characters, language, behaviour, dialogue – can obviously be rooted in, and carry with them, identifiers of a national culture. In the case of *Big Brother Africa*, however, national identity itself became the focus of competition and audience identification as each house member was chosen to represent a different country from the continent. And in this context, specific national identities can be altered or shored up in relationship to the politics of globalization. As Sean Jacobs (2010) argues, '… Big Brother Africa has been more than just a reality show and has reflected, and managed to insert itself, into larger debates about cultural politics and economic globalization, both in South Africa and elsewhere on the continent.' (181)

It is also possible for a nation's cultural values to be at odds with a reality format. Packaged as '*Blind Date* meets *Big Brother*,' *On Air, Together* put eight young Arab women in a house together as they competed to marry one man. The show offended many viewers and cultural leaders; as did *Big Brother* in Bahrain (called *al-Ra'is*), which was denounced and eventually taken off the air. In his detailed and complex analysis of the *al-Ra'is* controversy, Marwan Kraidy (2010a) concludes that while much of the focus was initially on religious concerns about unmarried women and men living in a house together, the show's cancellation also turned on the appearance of the 'trope of imperialism' in critiques of the programme, 'which had not surfaced in initial clerical objections to 'al-Ra'is, was tailor made for both secular-Arabist and Islamist segments of al-Jazeera's audience. It also put forth the notion that reality television shows, even when shot in Arabic, with Arabic

participants, and in an Arab country, are foreign, non-authentic, and pernicious – the hybrid as subversive. The culmination of this argument was that reality television was incompatible with Arab reality' (548).

In many ways, reality TV is a perfect fit for the new economy, which has extolled the virtues of globalization while, at least in the popular imagination, downplayed issues of the unequal distribution of power and wealth between nations. Global formats seem to highlight our similarities rather than our differences, while respecting the need for cultural specificity and local tastes and preferences. However, the interlocking relationship between economic, production and political interests and ideologies continues to need attention from and study by media scholars as it is ever-changing and can be difficult to locate.

Surveillance and voyeurism

The ideologies and politics of globalization that have accompanied the turn of this century have also been impacted by the events of 9/11 and their aftermath. The rise of reality TV – while certainly a result of industrial needs and desires – can also partially be attributed to 9/11 politics and culture. In the early fall of 2001, television comedy and satire were declared dead in the US, as people found it difficult to imagine being lighthearted enough to enjoy such simple pleasures. Of course, that didn't turn out to be true (although the sitcom did decline in popularity for other reasons), but television programming was altered as those genres and programmes that spoke to the changing American political landscape. Among other things, reality TV provided viewers with the opportunity to experiment with, and perhaps even be trained in the ways of, surveillance and voyeurism.

The Bush administration skillfully exploited the anxiety felt by American citizens after the attacks to convince them to hand over many of their civil liberties and help mobilize and justify the implementation of new security and surveillance measures. The Office of Homeland Security, which consolidated a number of executive branch organizations including Immigration and Customs and the Secret Service, was established in 2002 in an effort to combat terrorism. It has been highly criticized for employing data mining and other surveillance techniques that infringed on the privacy of US citizens and foreign nationals. Surveillance on public and private property increased in the early 2000s as parks, airports, shopping malls and commercial buildings increased their use of closed-circuit television in an attempt to prevent acts of terrorism or suspect behaviour occurring on their sites. Citizens were told be on the look-out for suspicious behaviour in those around them and were required to be more cognizant of the implications of their own attitudes and actions. It has been argued that reality TV softened viewers to the techniques and implications of watching and being watch under the new norms and procedures of the Bush administration. *Big Brother* provides the most extreme model for this as its numerous hidden cameras capturing the movements of sequestered houseguests result in a quite obvious aesthetic of surveillance (Couldry 2008). And yet we can also see some level of fascination with confession,

Media and Society

exhibitionism, and voyeurism in the majority of reality programmes that came on air throughout the 2000s. Clay Calvert (2000) noticed this trend beginning as early as the 1990s with shows such as *The Real World*, dubbing the US of the new millennium a 'Voyeur Nation.'

The public surveillance of private citizens for fun and profit is certainly not the sole domain of reality TV. The proliferation of social networking sites has meant that many people – especially those who are young – have public places to display their personal selves, or at least a performance/construction of that self. Twitter, Facebook and Instagram encourage personal revelation while allowing participants to feel as though they are being looked at/tracked/watched by friends and the public. In this way, they too can enact the self-branding behaviours they are seeing in reality celebrities such as the Kardashians. This too normalizes surveillance and exhibitionism as we seem to be increasingly ready to share our every thought publicly, and we expect others to do the same. There are not only social implications to this cultural and psychological shift, but also (mostly positive) effects on marketing and business, as organizations can now accumulate not only basic demographic information through such sites and others, but can also acquire information about people's interests and preferences on a rather granular level. The results of data mining – a method of processing data that reveals hidden patterns – are used by networks, streaming services, advertisers and businesses to better sell to consumers/viewers and by governmental agencies for surveillance. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Andrejevic (2008) posits that we are actually performing labour when we allow ourselves to be watched. We are working for marketers by providing them with information about ourselves through interactive sites and that reality TV works to reinforce the logics and functions of a 'surveillance based interactive economy' (103)

Andrejevic cautions us not to take too simple of an approach to the notion of 'voyeur TV'. While he agrees that there is voyeurism and exhibitionism at work in the popularity of reality TV, the origins, pleasures and ramifications of this interplay are far more complex than they would initially appear. Referring to Freud's concept of the 'scopic drive' and Lacan's interpretation of it, Andrejevic acknowledges that viewers don't like to think of themselves as cultural dupes and are therefore engaged in a self-conscious performance of 'savvy skepticism':

> The viewer who strives to see behind the curtain of façade is simultaneously engaged in displaying him – or herself to be 'unduped' by appearances. The pleasure of voyeurism and that of self-display are, in other words, intertwined. The role of the savvy voyeur defaults to what the philosopher Slavoj Žižek describes as a form of active submission – participatory passivity – that fits neatly with an increasingly surveillance-based economy, one in which the voyeuristic 'appeal' of reality TV serves as a means of enticing submission to the increasingly monitored activity of viewing.
>
> 2008: 325

Reality TV functions alongside a cultural fascination with the process of watching and being watched. It promises access to the truth, self-realization, intimate

knowledge and even fame and fortune as it puts ordinary people on display and encourages the participation of its viewers in the interactive economy. Reality TV profits from the 'work of being watched', turning viewers and participants into 24/7 labourers. This is one of the truths of life under neoliberalism.

Governmentality and neoliberalism

The most popular, and perhaps most powerful, critique of reality TV at the moment is one that argues that the genre reveals and reinforces ideologies attached to neoliberalism and governmentality. Working with the theories of Michel Foucault and related to the political economy approach discussed above, scholars have found that the manner in which many reality TV programmes focus on the management of the self and body are telling of the relationship between subjects and state in our current historical moment.

Neoliberalism is political philosophy enacted through governmental practice that relates everything to the market and competition. Neoliberalism – which began to fully take hold under Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s – maintains that markets are rational and therefore should not be regulated, and that public services such as social welfare structures should be outsourced to businesses, individual volunteers and charity groups and public-private partnerships. Citizens under this practice are considered primarily as always-available labourers and are required to rely on only themselves – through techniques of self-governance – instead of on government support.

The logic of neoliberalism has created new subjectivities as individuals are trained to be good citizens through cultural technologies such as television. Television provides templates of civic virtues and models of self-reliance and self-discipline.

Reality television is particularly adept at this as it is not only using 'ordinary' people and making claims to realism, but it also, more often than not, asks participants to discipline or refashion themselves and their lives in particular ways, and rewards them for doing so. For example, makeover shows such as *Revenge Body with Khloé Kardashian* and *Biggest Loser* make implicit promises that by remaking and disciplining one's body into a more palatable package and investing in consumerism, many of the economic and social problems we experience will simply fall away. In this way the reality makeover is more than just an exercise in improving a person's appearance, it is social reform. In their book *Better Living through Reality TV* (2008), Laurie Ouellette and James Hay write, 'In certain respects, reality and lifestyle TV represents nothing short of the current conception of social welfare, or the means through which all citizens – whatever their resources and histories of disenfranchisement – are expected to "take responsibility" for their fate' (18).

In the critical analysis of reality TV's expression of the tenets and aims of neoliberalism, Michel Foucault's work is frequently employed. Foucault's concept of governmentality is especially useful as it provides a model for how the state

works to imbed its objectives and rationale into the everyday lives of its citizens. It can do this by encouraging or instituting self-governing and self-disciplining practices in its populace through, among other things, ideals of individual sovereignty and technologies of power. One form of technology of power – technologies of the self – can serve as a helpful theoretical tool to understand the way that reality television functions within neoliberalism. As Foucault has discussed, technologies of the self are those practices, techniques, methods and behaviours that individuals use to represent or constitute themselves in relation to society and within a system of power. Such technologies may include 'responsibilization' (taking responsibility for your health, employment, relationship to social and financial risk), self-esteem and normalization. These practices and beliefs are readily found within many reality TV texts.

As mentioned earlier, the makeover programme is certainly one reality subgenre ripe for this type of analysis. In shows such as *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* and *What Not to Wear*, individuals are first derided for their taste, confronted by a pitiful image of how the world supposedly sees them, and told they suffer from low self-esteem and/or issues with their body. After they have been broken down and comply with the makeover plan, participants are rebuilt by style and fashion experts in a way that not only promises to change their looks, but also their lives. Within these texts we find the fundamental ideologies of neoliberalism along with various technologies of the self as the participant is (re)constructed as an ideal neoliberal subject.

John McMurria (2008b) finds a similar link to the practice of neoliberalism in a related programme, *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition* (EMHE), which he considers to be part of a subgenre he refers to as 'Good Samaritan' reality TV (307). In EMHE the participants (who are most commonly working class) are first shown as suffering under current neoliberal policies (unemployment, lack of affordable healthcare and childcare, etc.) and yet are keeping a positive outlook and having an uncritical relationship with the state. They are then rewarded for their attitude and predicament with a type of corporate philanthropy (privatized social service – in this case, ABC and Home Depot) that transforms their situations through consumer goods. McMurria notes that not only is there a neoliberal agenda of individual responsibility and privatization of social services at work in this text, but also a connection to neoliberal housing policies – which privilege home ownership and the accumulation of debt over governmental supports or renting (315).

Other shows that follow families and their problems include *Supernanny* and *Nanny 911*. Although on the surface the issues appear to be about undisciplined children, these programmes reveal – and then 'cure' – family dysfunction that exists on a number of levels. Ron Becker (2006) notes that, 'By framing the American family, its problems, and its solutions as they do, Supernanny and *Nanny 911* work to reinforce the ideological notion that families – at least these two-parent, heterosexual families – can be self-sufficient' (186) and adds that 'for a politics of privatization, American families and their single-family homes must at least seem strong enough to carry the growing burden of post-welfare-state

responsibilities' (189). Even 'gamedocs' such as *Survivor* and *The Apprentice* can be rather easily analyzed within this framework.

Certainly, the sometimes brutal competition for cash prizes and the focus on the individual are obvious links to capitalism and neoliberal values. We can also find the tenets of neoliberalism at work in programmes such as *Keeping Up with the Kardashians* which operate on both a textual and intertextual level as displays of, and lessons in, individual self-branding and commodification. In looking at this programme, Nina Pramaagiore and Diane Negra (2014) conclude that 'dedicated to repairing the contradictions between a neoliberal economic structure and idealized family life, postfeminst reality sitcoms such as *Keeping Up with the Kardashians* want to reassure us that the intense commodification of identity and the relentless drive for profits need not threaten family intimacy and solidarity' (93).

Anna McCarthy (2007) has described reality television as a 'neoliberal theater of suffering', for in the genre's need to push its participants to emotional and physical extremes (virtual starvation on *Survivor*, skin removal surgery on *Skin Tight*, the sequestered *Big Brother* contestants, the family confrontations on *Intervention*) these programmes enact a 'painful civic pedagogy' (19) which reveals how the witnessing of trauma is connected to self-management under neoliberalism. McCarthy writes:

> Far from being a debased piece of mass cultural detritus, then, it would seem that reality television is something of a privileged site, annotating transformations in the institution of the individual (citizenship's raw material) through its consolidation of connections between three discursive apparatuses for the formation of citizen and self: state, family and cultural texts … But it also constitutes the reality genre as a realm of excess, not simply a set of techniques and procedures but also, very concretely, a neoliberal theater of suffering … the genre's affective dimensions might have something new to teach us about the processes of self-organization in which modern subjects find themselves caught.
>
> 2007: 19

In approaching reality TV as a neoliberal text, scholars such as McCarthy, Becker and Ouellette are recognizing elements of the text that are socially instructive and echo larger social and ideological patterns occurring at this historical moment. It would seem that they have made very convincing arguments, as ever more of their peers are employing this approach.

Conclusion

Like most television genres, reality TV is more than simply entertainment. It is politically, culturally, economically and socially tied to the particulars of the historical moment. Yet, unlike fictional texts, its claims to authenticity, realness and its use of 'ordinary' people, make it an especially rich and complex genre to analyze.

Since the early 2000s, media scholars have worked to understand the reasons behind TV's rapid international proliferation. Some have focused on the economic and industrial factors, while others have been interested in relating the genre's rise to the current political and social climate. In this chapter, I have placed the research of reality TV into four rather broad categories. However, it is important to understand that these categories are not always mutually exclusive of one another. Even in this rather short overview, we've seen overlap between the arguments involving surveillance and political economy with those of neoliberalism. I also should note that not every study of reality TV falls within one of these four categories. However, these are the areas/issues that appear to be getting the most attention and are the most intellectually generative. I am sure that as reality television continues to morph into various generic permutations, and continues to be used in different cultural and industrial contexts, scholars will find new, and equally provocative and productive, ways to unearth its meanings and implications.

Bibliography

'22 Worst TV Shows of All Time', *Entertainment Weekly*, 4 March, 2015. [Online. Accessed May 2018.] Available at: http://ew.com/gallery/worst-reality-tv-shows-ever/born-in-the-wild-lifetime-2015

Andrejevic, A. (2004), *Reality TV: The Work of Being Watched*, Lanham, MD: Rowan & Littlefield.

Andrejevic, A. (2008), 'Visceral Literacy: Reality TV, Savvy Viewers and Auto Spies', in S. Murray and L. Ouellette (eds), *Reality TV: Remaking Television Culture*, 321–342, New York: New York University Press.

Aslama, M. and M. Pantti (2007), 'Flagging Finnishness: Reproducing National Identity in Reality Television', *Television & New Media*, 1 February, p. 8.

Becker, R. (2006), '"Help is On the Way!": Supernanny, Nanny 911, and the Neoliberal Politics of the Family', in D. Heller (ed.), *The Great American Makeover: Television, History, Nation*, 175–92, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Braxton, G. (2009), 'The Greater Reality of Minorities on TV', *Los Angeles Times*, 19 February. [Online. Accessed April 2009.] Available at: http://articles.latimes.com/2009/feb/17/entertainment/et-realitytv17

Calvert, C. (2000), *Voyeur Nation: Media, Privacy, and Peering in Modern Culture*, Jackson, TN: Westview Press.

Couldry, N. (2008), 'Reality TV, or the Secret Theater of Neoliberalism', Review *of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies*, 30 (1): 3–13.

Deery, J. (2015), *Reality TV*, New York: Polity.

Drew, E. (2011), 'Pretending to Be "Postracial": The Spectacularization of Race in Reality TV's Survivor', *Television & New Media,* 12 (4): 326–46.

Gabler, N. (2000), 'Behind the Curtain of TV Voyeurism', *Christian Science Monitor*, 7 July, p. C1.

Gibson, O. (2007), 'Racism, Ratings and Reality TV: Now Big Brother Creates Diplomatic Incident', *The Guardian*, 18 January. [Online. Accessed April 2009.] Available at: http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2007/jan/18/bigbrother.politics

Grindstaff, L. (2014), 'DI(t)Y, Reality-Style: The Cultural Work of Ordinary Celebrity', in L. Ouellette (ed.), *A Companion to Reality Television*, New York: Wiley.

Hendershot, H. (2008), 'Belabored Reality: Making It Work on The Simple Life and Project Runway', in S. Murray and L. Ouellette (eds), *Reality TV: Remaking Television Culture*, 243–59, New York: New York University Press.

Holmes, S. and D. Jermyn (2014), 'The "Pig," the "Older Woman," and the "Catfight": Gender, Celebrity and Controversy in a Decade of British Reality TV', in B. R. Weber (ed.), *Reality Gendervision: Sexuality & Gender on Transatlantic Reality Television*, 37–53, Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Jacobs, S. (2010), 'Continental Reality Television and the Expansion of South African Capital', in M. M. Kraidy and K. Sender (eds), *The Politics of Reality Television: Global Perspectives*, New York: Taylor & Francis.

Keane, M. and A. Moran (2008), 'Television's New Engines', *Television & New Media*, 9(2): 155–69.

Klein, N. (2017) 'W.W.E. the People', *Harper's Magazine*, September.

Kompare, D. (2008), 'Extraordinarily Ordinary: The Osbournes as "An American Family"', in S. Murray and L. Ouellette (eds), *Reality TV: Remaking Television Culture*, 100–119, New York: New York University Press.

Kraidy, M. (2010a), *Reality Television and Arab Politics* (Contention in Public Life), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kraidy M. (2010b), 'Reality Television in New Worlds', in M. M. Kraidy and K. Sender (eds), *The Politics of Reality Television*, New York: Taylor & Francis.

Kraszewski, J. (2008), 'Country Hicks and Urban Cliques: Mediating Race, Reality, and Liberalism on MTV's The Real World', in S. Murray and L. Ouellette (eds), *Reality TV: Remaking Television Culture*, 205–22, New York: New York University Press.

Magder, T. (2009), 'Television 2.0: The Business of American Television in Transition', in S. Murray and L. Ouellette (eds), *Reality TV: Remaking Television Culture*, 141–64, New York: New York University Press.

Mayer, V. (2014), 'Cast-aways: The Plights and Pleasures of Reality Casting and Production Studies', in L. Ouellette (ed.), *A Companion to Reality Television*, New York: Wiley.

McCarthy, A. (2007), 'Reality Television: A Neoliberal Theater of Suffering', *Social Text* 93, 25 (4): 17–41.

McMurria, J. (2008a), 'Global TV Realities: International Markets, Geopolitics, and the Transcultural Contexts of Reality TV', in S. Murray and L. Ouellette (eds), *Reality TV: Remaking Television Culture*, 179–202, New York: New York University Press.

McMurria, J. (2008b), 'Desperate Citizens and Good Samaritans: Neoliberalism and Makeover Reality TV', *Television & New Media*, 9 (4): 305–32.

Muñoz, J. E. (1998), 'Pedro Zamora's Real World of Counterpublicity: Performing the Ethics of the Self', in S. Torres (ed.), *Living Color: Race and Television in the United States*, 195–217, Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Negra, D. (2016) 'The Reality Celebrity of Donald Trump', *Television & New Media*, 17 (7): 646.

Nolan, H. (2014), 'The Grim Realities of Reality TV: Workers Speak,' *Gawker*, 30 June. [Online. Accessed May 2018.] http://gawke r.com/the-grim-realities-of-reality-tv-workers-speak-1598101524

Ouellette, L. and J. Hay (2008), *Better Living through Reality TV*, New York: Blackwell Publishing.

Poniewozjik, J. and W. Morris (2016), 'Why Diverse TV Matters. It's Better TV. Discuss', *New York Times*, 10 February.

Pramaggiore, N. and D. Negra (2014), 'Keeping Up with the Aspirations: Commercial Family Values and the Kardashian Brand', in B. R. Weber (ed.), *Reality Gendervision: Sexuality & Gender on Transatlantic Reality Television*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Price, G. (2018), 'Trump all but Admits His Presidency is A Reality TV Show as he Welcomes Media "Back to the Studio"', *Newsweek*, 10 January.

Raphael, C. (1997), 'Political Economy of Reali-TV', *Jump Cut*, 41: 102–09.

Raphael, C. (2009), 'The Political Economic Origins of Reali-TV', in L. Ouellette and S. Murray (eds), *Reality TV: Remaking of Television Culture*, 123–40, New York: New York University Press.

'Shetty Speaks of Big Brother Racism' (2007), BBC News Online, 18 January. [Online. Accessed April 2009.] Available at: http://www.news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/entertainment/6272584.stm

Squires, C. R. (2014), 'The Conundrum of Race and Reality Television', in L. Ouellette (ed.), *A Companion to Reality Television*, 264–82, New York: Wiley.

'The New York Times Interview with Bob Corker' (2017), *New York Times*, 9 October 2017. [Online. Accessed May 2018.] Available at: https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/09/us/politics/bob-corker-trump-interview-transcript.html?smid=tw-share

Waisbord, S. (2004), 'McTV: Understanding the Global Popularity of Television Formats', *Television & New Media*, 5 (4): 359–83.

Wyatt, E. (2009), 'Television Fledgling Keeps It Real', *New York Times*, 23 July.

Chapter 15

Democratic Functions of Entertainment

James Curran

Political communication research is so embedded in the discipline of political science, so proud of its technical virtuosity, and so entrenched in set ways that it pays little heed to wider currents of intellectual life such as those encountered in history or cultural studies.[1] This helps to explain an otherwise inexplicable phenomenon: the way in which political communications researchers routinely ignore most of what people consume in the media most of the time even though, as this essay will seek to demonstrate, much of this content has a political significance. Films, television drama, computer games, human interest stories, TV reality shows, women's magazines, and the vast quantity of entertainment on the Web and social media are largely a closed book to political communication scholars.

It is as if they hark back to the politicized newspapers of the late eighteenth century, and confine their gaze to media with content that resembles these pioneers. The vast explosion of media entertainment since 1800 largely passes them by. On the rare occasions when they break ranks, it is usually to consider 'cross-over' content: entertainments that address directly politics such as the satirical *Daily Show* (Brewer and Marquardt 2007; Baumgartner and Morris 2006) or a drama like *The West Wing* about an American president (Parry-Giles and Parry-Giles 2006; Holbert et al. 2003).

If this seems an overstatement, consider the journal *Political Communication*. It is published jointly by the American Political Science Association and the International Communication Association, and is thus the organ of officially

1. This critique of the political communication research tradition is not, of course, an attack on individual researchers within it. I felt privileged to work with very clever political communication academics for a few years as an intellectual break. And since I refer to the journal *Political Communication*, let me add that its scope broadened when Shanto Iyengar was editor (see, for example, the reference in note 3), though it remained constrained by the articles submitted to it. Iyengar is the foremost empirical analyst of the media's political impact in the United States.

accredited wisdom. With a high 'impact factor', it is the go-to place to discover the latest thinking and analysis in the field of political communication. In 2017, it published a total of thirty-seven articles and 'discussions'. Not one of these thirty-seven items had as its focus media content that was not explicitly political.

A similar exclusionary process has shaped the development of democratic theory. The standard conception of the political role of the media – to inform, to provide a forum of debate, and to represent the public – was formulated in the eighteenth century in relation to the press. Subsequent commentary has elaborated and added to this liberal tradition but usually within a restricted framework centred on journalism. Thus, providing a forum of debate has been reconceived not as just hosting different opinions but as enabling communication between government and governed, and between different groups of society, in order to assist society's political co-ordination and adaptation to change. Similarly, the media's role of representing the public is said to include 'telling truth to power', relaying public opinion, mobilizing public pressure on governments to act and (in some versions) guiding the public direction of society. However, this and other theorizing about the democratic role of the media largely excludes media entertainment (e.g. Overholser and Jamieson 2005).

A small group of analysts has called into question the exclusion of media entertainment from the analysis of political communication (Wu 2017; Williams and Delli Carpini 2011; Curran 2011; Tenenboim-Weinblatt 2009, Van Zoonen 2004; McGuigan 2005; and Street 1997). Their impact has been minimal. Notwithstanding this indifference, this chapter represents a further attempt to dislodge academic convention.

Values

The first way in which TV drama, films and social media entertainment contribute to the democratic process is to stage a debate about the social values that underpin politics. Values have assumed an increasing significance in contemporary politics, and can eclipse in some contexts economic self-interest as the main influence on voting (Frank 2004). Nations also differ in terms of their values (Inglehart et al. 2014), and this shapes both their politics and public policies. A value-shift in society can also give rise to political change. For example, increasing individualism contributed to the rise of neoliberal politics in the later twentieth century (Judt 2009). Debates about values thus affect politics in terms of voting, public policy and political change. So, when entertainments uphold different values, and implicitly invite audiences to choose between them, they are contributing to the political process. This will be illustrated by entertainments that champion respectively individualism and collectivism – the value clash that remains central to European politics.

The magical realist film, *Chocolat* (2000), directed by the Swedish film director, Lasse Hallström, was an international success when it was first released. It has also had an afterlife as a much-repeated film on TV networks. It has been selected here

for consideration because it gives powerful expression to individualistic values linked to social liberalism. Without once discussing politics, it is a profoundly political film.

Chocolat begins with a mysterious woman, and her daughter, arriving in a small French town, and opening a chocolate shop during Lent. The mayor and the priest urge local people to boycott the shop because it is encouraging people to transgress Lenten vows of abstinence. A battle ensues between the shopkeeper and the leadership of the local community in which the shopkeeper gradually prevails. Her shop, serving chocolates and hot cocoa with magical properties, radiates social healing and contentment. A sour grandmother establishes a rapport with her grandson; a battered wife is rescued from her husband; an elderly man gains the courage to make welcomed overtures to a widow; and a formerly shunned Irish Traveller acquires local friends. The village sloughs off its inherited culture of tradition, hierarchy and repression, and embraces a new spirit of generosity. The forces of reaction are defeated. A key symbolic moment of surrender occurs when the mayor gorges himself on the magical chocolate, and is transformed. He comes to terms with the fact that his wife has left him, never to return, and reciprocates his secretary's love. The priest also relents and, warming to the new mood in the town, delivers a sermon celebrating liberal tolerance and social inclusion.

Although the film does not concern itself with the political realm, its characterization of the mayor as a stiff, authoritarian aristocrat and of the priest as his weak, callow mouthpiece, its identification of 'tradition' with a gendered, class-based hierarchy, and its association of Catholicism with cruelty and hypocrisy, make it a sustained onslaught on the culture and values that supports faith-based parties of the right in Catholic Europe. Indeed, the film is unwilling to acknowledge *any* positive aspect of the tradition it attacks. The priest and the mayor are portrayed in a partly sympathetic light only when they recognize the error of their ways, and embrace their opponents' values. The film is a manifesto for an anti-clerical, secular, left politics that is immediately recognizable in the context of continental Europe.

However, it also expresses a political meaning within an Anglo-American orbit that is not dependent on local contextual references. The film embraces progressive liberal values in being overtly anti-racist, reflected in the way that 'decent' people recoil in horror at an arson attack on the Irish Traveller's boat. It is also overtly opposed to Catholic patriarchy. As one woman protests: 'If you don't go to confession, if you don't . . . dig your flowerbeds, or if you don't pretend . . . that you want nothing more in your life than to serve your husband three meals a day, and give him children, and vacuum under his ass, then . . . you're [judged to be] crazy.' By contrast, the core value that is celebrated is liberal individualism. Characters in the film discover happiness and acquire the virtue of tolerance by rebelling against the conformity, sexual repression and bigotry of an authoritarian *collectivist* culture.

They learn to be true to their selves, to respect difference in others, and to find contentment. Thus, a grandmother is applauded for electing not to go into a nursing home to be 'caged', monitored and controlled. Instead, she chooses to lead

a full, if shortened, life, and in the process gains friends and reciprocated love that she did not have before. This is revealed to be right for her, unlike the 'sensible' course of being cared for in an institutional setting urged by her daughter (who really wants to be rid of her). Doing your own thing, the film tells us, makes for happiness; and respecting other peoples' right to do their own thing makes for all-round serendipity.

If the values of this film have a strong political resonance in a European continental context, they also have a political history in Britain. The growth of progressive individualism, reacting against an authoritarian culture, gave rise in 1960's Britain to the weakening of censorship, the legalization of abortion, easier divorce, and decriminalization of adult homosexuality (Morgan 2001). It was an important current also in the adoption of anti-racist, anti-homophobic and feminist policies in the subsequent period (Curran, Gaber and Petley 2018). And it is a powerful element within the American Democratic Party that is strongly committed to protecting the civil liberties of minorities.

But if the individualism extolled in *Chocolat* is progressive, individualism can also take a more conservative form. This is exemplified by the American television reality show, *Random 1*, dissected by Anna McCarthy (2007). Transmitted on the Arts and Entertainment TV network in 2005, it is a makeover programme where a 'tracker' and 'case worker' befriend at random someone in need, and enhance his or her life. Thus, one programme features Bruce, a 'drifter', with a stunned, palsied face, who is missing a leg as a result of a childhood accident. He is currently sober, and in need of considerable help, not least because his artificial leg is falling apart. The TV case worker intervenes, and raises cash from well-wishers for a new artificial leg. The implication is that Bruce can now confront his inner demons, and make something of his life. He has been given a new start, and it is up to him to avail himself of the opportunity that private charity has created for him. The TV case worker concludes: 'with the leg no longer an obstacle, Bruce can decide if and when to rebuild his life'. Bruce seems to agree, saying 'I got my freedom'.

The programme trumpets more generally the value of self-help. The trailer to the programme proclaims '*Random 1* . . . asks the question, "What can we do to help you to help yourself?"' But as Anna McCarthy (2007: 330) points out, 'the program is not, ultimately, a makeover but rather an extended meditation on the nature of making over . . .'. Thus, Bruce remains seemingly homeless and jobless, and his life is visibly not remade. But the programme's point is that he has been given the chance to assume personal responsibility, and the rest is up to him. The same neoliberal gospel of individual self-help is transmitted by other American entertainments such as the successful CBS courtroom show, *Judge Judy*, in which the troubled, disadvantaged 'other' are cajoled and humiliated. In essence, argues Ouellette (2003: 232), this top rating show acts as a civics lesson in which TV viewers are encouraged 'to function without state assistance or supervision as self-disciplining, self-sufficient, responsible, and risk-averting individuals' (see also Chapter 14).

These two entertainments thus champion two sides of the coin of individualism: one progressive, and the other conservative. Standing in opposition to the values

expressed in these are the *collectivist* values of the successful, primetime British TV hospital drama series, *Casualty*, which started in 1986 and is still going strong in 2018.

Patients are more prominent in *Casualty* than in most other hospital soap operas. They come from enormously varied backgrounds: for example, a restaurant manager with a missing finger (left in a strawberry sundae), a doctor who is seriously ill (and asks to die), teenagers with dodgy DIY piercings, a women with a stomach full of condoms filled with heroin, a suicidal Catholic woman made pregnant by her brother-in-law, a bald man with a wig glued to his head, a badly beaten prostitute, and so on. In the accident and emergency department where the show is set, these patients are well cared for, with priority going to the most desperately ill. The way in which Britain's health is organized as a state-funded, comprehensive care system available to all, with priority determined by need, is implicitly presented as the way it should be. Indeed, the political power of the show is conveyed through its effacement of politics. Britain's collectivist organization of health care is *naturalized*: it is made to seem outside of politics, the expression of a shared way of doing things and looking after one another.

Casualty is also a soap opera, with a weekly dose of trouble. Some colleagues clash; others fall in and out of love; and others, still, have troubled home lives. Bad things can happen, as when a desperate asylum seeker commits suicide by hanging himself from the hospital roof. But the impression is still conveyed that Britain's public health system is fundamentally effective, and that front line hospital staff – whatever their human flaws – are motivated by a strong sense of public service (a central theme incidentally of another popular BBC TV series, *Call the Midwife*).

This celebration of public service is exemplified by an episode of *Casualty*, transmitted in 2001, featuring a hospital paramedic, Josh Griffiths.[2] He has resigned and returns to the hospital only to hand in his kit. His regular encounter with human tragedy has become too much for him. 'I can't go on seeing the things we see,' he says, 'and then seeing them again when I shut my eyes.' However, Josh is persuaded to go out one last time to a car crash because there is a staff shortage. He finds a young woman, whom he has met briefly before, trapped in her car. The medical team realize that she is dying and beyond help. She complains that 'it hurts everywhere', and is terrified. Josh dulls the pain, and with a perfect choice of words – expressing warmth and understanding, but also offering distraction and hope – comforts the woman before she dies. Afterwards, Josh laments that he was unable to help her. 'You were there,' replies his colleague, 'you made her feel safe. You cared. And she knew.' Another colleague commented, 'if that were me, I would want someone to talk to . . . He was the last person for her.' The episode ends with Josh withdrawing his resignation since he is good at his job, and it gives meaning to his life. 'I'm a paramedic, me. Nothing else makes sense,' he declares. 'Course I

2. 'Distant Elephants', *Casualty*, Season 16, Episode 9, (first transmitted on BBC 1, 10 November 2001).

am coming back!' The implication is clear. Josh can no more walk away from his job than a priest can walk away from his vocation.

The dedication of NHS staff is also celebrated in the second story thread of this episode, though this time with a touch of vinegar. Comfort Jones, another paramedic, is casually stabbed in the leg when she attends a victim of a street brawl. She had not taken her booster immunization jab, due two weeks before, and she is in danger of being infected by hepatitis D, and losing her job as a paramedic. The results come through and she is alright for now, but her manager (already revealed to be objectionable) says that her negligence is a disciplinary matter. Jones erupts into an impassioned speech at the injustice of it all. She had not taken the jab because she was working a double shift due to a staff shortage. It was because of people like her that 'the station is running like, what you call it, a well-oiled machine'. Having just seen her in action handling with great skill an emotional teenager, the viewer knows that she is right (as does the manager to judge from his embarrassed silence). Jones dissolves into tears at the end of the day, and her partner responds with a hymn of praise. 'You go out every week saving people's lives. That is why I love you. Because you care.'

Thus, each of these dramas has a different political significance. *Chocolat* champions a progressive social individualism; *Random 1* endorses a conservative individualism, in which private charity nurtures self-reliance; and *Casualty* affirms a progressive collectivism which supports a tax-funded welfare state.

Our final example does not exemplify the fourth option of right-wing collectivism but illustrates instead the way in which right-wing entertainment can stage a one-sided debate about values in a form that feeds into the political process. The American TV action series *24* was an enormously popular show that ran between 2001 and 2010, with subsequent less successful revivals. It features Jack Bauer (of the Counter Terrorism Unit and subsequently the FBI) battling against America's enemies. In successive seasons, Bauer prevents the assassination of the American president; the blowing up of Los Angeles with a nuclear bomb; the spread of a deadly virus; carnage masterminded by evil Habib Marwan; the release of a deadly nerve gas in a shopping mall; the explosion of nuclear devices in suitcases; and the subversion of America's energy, water and air traffic control systems. Bauer is a patriot who has suffered grievously in the service of his country. His wife has been killed by a traitor; his best friend is blown up in a car bomb; his girlfriend is assassinated; and his only daughter is placed in danger. But he will stop at nothing to save American lives, including if necessary torturing terrorists in order to obtain vital information – something that he explicitly justifies in the series.

24 triggered a national debate about the use of torture, partly because the show was so popular that it provided a shared experience for millions of people. It also seemed topical and relevant because information leaked out that the American authorities were in fact using torture as an interrogation technique. A Google search for items about 'Jack Bauer and torture' on 16 October 2009 elicited no less than 39,100 items (Curran 2010). Among these, a Supreme Court judge seemingly condoned Jack Bauer's use of torture; Bill Clinton condemned torture but at the

same time saw merit in Jack Bauer; an American Brigadier-General criticized *24* as having potentially a corrupting effect on ordinary soldiers; and a left-wing cartoon strip featured little Jack Bauer taking after his father and torturing Arab children at a cub scout camp, eliciting ironic laughter in Yahoo chatrooms. A Pew survey in April 2009 reported that the majority of Americans supported, in some circumstances, the use of torture on suspected terrorists, with only 25 per cent saying that torture was always unacceptable (Pew 2009).

However, President Obama ordered in 2009 that American state policy on interrogations should comply with international law. By contrast, President Trump declared in 2017 that torture 'absolutely' works and that the US should 'fight fire with fire' (Weaver and Ackerman 2017). Gina Haspel, the new Director of the CIA appointed in 2018, is allegedly linked to aggressive interrogation techniques. Entertainment does not only entertain.[3]

Perceptions

If the full spectrum of media entertainment – TV drama, films, social media, women's magazines, human interest stories, reality shows etc. – facilitate a debate about values that underpins politics, they can also impinge on public life in another way. They can potentially influence public perceptions of society.

Drama can offer a way of visualizing the totality of society, and its component parts, in a way that goes beyond anything that an individual can experience at first hand. It can also represent what is happening in the wider world, with implicit explanations and implied solutions. For this reason, drama can be politically significant even when it has nothing explicit to say about politics.

A case in point is provided by the 2015 film *Veteran*. It is one of the highest-grossing films ever made in South Korea, and has won a string of awards. It is the product of a society dominated by large corporations (*chaebols*) with close ties to political and administrative elites. The country's president at the time of the film's release was Geun-hye Park, the daughter of a former military dictator, who was subsequently indicted for receiving large corporate bribes. South Korea is a conservative society but one with a substantial radical opposition, rooted in trade unions, universities and a critical youth movement. The film comes out of this oppositional culture, and offers – though a comedy action movie – an arrestingly critical representation of South Korean society.

The film revolves around a story of injustice and unaccountable power. Lorry drivers join a trade union, go unpaid by the contractor, and protest outside the parent trading company. One of the lorry drivers is invited into the company headquarters, humiliated in front of his son, beaten up, and then almost killed by a corporate princeling (son of the chairman). The crime is covered up by subordinates who stage a 'suicide' by tipping the protestor down a stairwell. However he survives the attempted murder, and is taken to hospital.

3. For a good development of this theme, see Tenenboim-Weinblatt (2009).

Executives move with well-oiled efficiency to cover up the crime. A fake text is sent to the protestor's wife, seemingly coming from the husband announcing his intended suicide. The protestor's medical treatment is taken care of. The local police are bribed to look the other way. A senior officer at the Seoul Metropolitan Crime Bureau, told that his children's careers will be helped, reassigns the troublesome detective, Seo Do-cheol. When Do-cheol persists in his enquiries, he is reminded by his immediate superior of what happened to a colleague who stepped out of line: he lost his job, became divorced and is now a waiter. The police commissioner sends in an Internal Affairs Unit to press fake charges against Do-cheol. Unbowed, the detective leaks incriminating details to the press but the story is killed in response to *chaebol* pressure. The princeling is told to lie low in a foreign country, until things quieten down. He departs for the airport, but after a climactic chase and hand-to-hand fight, he is arrested by his nemesis, Detective Do-cheol.

The film has slapstick gags and martial arts action scenes that lighten the plot. It also has a satirical edge. Top executives at the *chaebol* are given incontinence pads to help them to sit through the chairman's endless speech without leaving to go to the toilet. The film's hero, the righteous detective, is no hero to his wife who complains that he is a 'loser'. However, this maverick entertainment has as its backdrop a 'taken-for-granted' depiction of South Korea as a corrupt, crony-driven country controlled by conglomerates whose influence extends almost everywhere. The outward beneficence of the conglomerate at the heart of the film – its acts of public generosity and the ceremonial courtesy of its senior executives – is contrasted with its private ruthlessness, feudal ethos, and manipulative power. The crime is solved not by one 'good man' in a Hollywood style drama but by a collective act of rebellion in which *chaebol* victims come forward with incriminating evidence, and the detective is eventually backed up by his colleagues and immediate boss. Collective action, the film tells us, is needed to secure justice.

But if this film offers a sharp indictment of corporate-dominated South Korea, many American films by contrast have been uncritical – indeed sometimes cheerleading – in the way that they have affirmed the need for the US' Leviathan national security state to protect American citizens. During the height of the Cold War, a stream of films dramatized the threat posed by the Soviet Union. Some were comedies, such as *My Son John* (1952) about an uppity young man who infuriates his father, worries his loving mother, becomes ensnared by Communists, repents, but is killed before he can disclose the names of Commies to the authorities. Others were compelling thrillers such as Hitchkcock's classic *North by Northwest* (1959), featuring a hapless business man caught in the web of a communist spy network which is ruthlessly efficient, lavishly funded and led by a person who speaks with disarming, upper crust authority. Others, still, took the form of allegorical sci-fi films such as *Invaders from Mars* (1953) in which aliens take over the minds of good people and are hard to detect, or *Them* (1954) in which the Communist threat is presented in the form of giant mutant ants.

When the West won the Cold War in 1989–91, some films trumpeted America's manifest destiny in thinly disguised imperialist fables. Thus, in *Independence Day*

(1996), American armed forces lead the world's remnants of resistance to an alien invasion of earth. People in faraway countries pray for the success of the American military, and then greet its heroic triumph with grateful joy. Similarly, *Armageddon* (1998) climaxes with two American military shuttles – called *Freedom* and *Independence* – racing to prevent an asteroid from destroying the planet. The earth is saved, and the surviving crew of *Freedom* return as heroes.

During this interim phase, there was a soft drum beat of hatred directed at threatening Muslims. Thus, in the film *True Lies* (1994), wicked Salim Abu Aziz threatens to explode nuclear devices in the US unless the American military withdraws from the Persian Gulf. *Executive Decision* (1996) features evil Nagi Hassan who announces his intention to import a deadly toxin into the US with the chilling words: 'I will strike deep into the heart of the infidel.'

When the War on Terror was proclaimed following the 2001 Twin Tower attacks, the number of fictional Muslim terrorists multiplied. Most of Jack Bauer's heroics, mentioned earlier, were directed against Muslim terror. His mission was 'extended' in *Homeland*, a popular American TV action series (2011–19), featuring overseas CIA operative, Carrie Mathison. As one critic, Laura Durkay (2014), complains: 'The entire structure of *Homeland* is built on mashing together every manifestation of political Islam, Arabs, Muslims and the whole Middle East into a Frankenstein-monster global terrorist threat that simply doesn't exist.' The series' lack of knowledge of the Middle East was betrayed by a series of mistakes: consistently mispronouncing the name Issa (son of lead terrorist, Abu Nazir); supposing wrongly that a Koran has to be buried if is dropped to the ground; and giving a Palestinian a Persian name. These gaffes culminated in shots of wall graffiti saying in Arabic: '*Homeland* is racist.' No one on the production team had seemingly sufficient knowledge of Arabic to notice. However, from its fifth season onwards, the series modified its Manichean view of the Muslim world.

More generally, a large number of American war films portrayed, over decades, the heroism and self-sacrifice of American armed forces in defence of their country and the cause of freedom (Slocum 2006). This is why the Pentagon routinely gave logistical and technical support – in effect, a hidden subsidy – to Hollywood film-makers, providing their film scripts projected a positive image of the military (Valentin 2005).

However, this is not the only note struck in American film drama. A significant number of American films, such as *Platoon* (1986) and *Jarhead* (2005), challenge the glorification of war. Their common theme is that war is brutalizing to everyone involved, and is best avoided if at all possible. A second cluster of radical democratic films, from *Three Days of the Condor* (1975) through to the Bourne franchise (*Bourne Identity* (2002), *Bourne Supremacy* (2004), *Bourne Ultimatum* (2007), *Bourne Legacy* (2012) and *Jason Bourne* (2016)), feature a murderous, corrupt group of operatives in the CIA. Their implication is that a democracy needs to exercise control over its security forces. Thus, *Three Days of the Condor* ends with the CIA hero walking towards the *New York Times* building as a whistle-blower, while *Bourne Ultimatum* has as its finale a news report of a US Senate hearing into CIA abuses. There is a third, small group of popular anti-imperialist films. This

includes the remake of *The Quiet American* (2002), which draws attention to an American CIA agent's moral ambiguity, implying that he had been implicated in a massacre in French Indochina; *Rendition* (2007) which depicts the CIA as being involved in the abduction and torture of an innocent engineer, who is induced to 'confess' to terrorism that he never committed; and *Syriana* (2005) which portrays the American state as being hand-in-glove with the oil industry, and deploying arms to prevent a moderate Arab from introducing democracy, establishing the rule of law and advancing the position of women in a Gulf emirate. Here, the American state is portrayed as using violence to prevent the promotion of freedom, democracy and human rights overseas – the complete opposite to countless American films.

Thus, although Hollywood has tended to strengthen perceptions that support the country's vast outlay on defence and homeland security, as well as its extended deployment of armed forces around the world, it has also voiced dissenting perspectives. It both fosters support for a high-cost national security state, but also invites some degree of debate, in a one-sided but not monolithic output.

Identity

The third way in which entertainment contributes to the political process is by contributing to the formation, maintenance and, sometimes, adjustment of social identity.

People can 'select' what identities matter to them from a range of identities, linked to nationality, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, religion, age or region. The identities which they embrace can strongly influence, in turn, their political preference. This is partly because what people think is in their best interests can depend not merely on their 'objective' situation but also on which group they identify with, and whom they feel threatened by.

Media (including social media) that encourage strong identification with masculinity, whiteness, Christianity and nationalism have tended to fertilize support for the right. Thus Diana Mutz (2018) argues, on the basis of a longitudinal panel study, that support for Trump in the 2016 election was prompted in part by the fear among white, Christian and male-identifying voters that their traditional dominance was threatened by social change. They rallied to the presidential candidate most likely to restore the group status hierarchy of the past. Similarly, ardent patriots concerned that the US' position as the world's superpower was in decline also tended to back Trump because he seemed more likely to 'make America great again'.

On the other hand, media encouraging identification with the working class have tended to advantage left parties, committed to advancing the interests of 'working people'. But working class identity, forged in the culture of production, weakened from the 1960s onwards in favour of other identities shaped by the culture of leisure and consumption. Social democratic parties responded to this identity shift in two ways. They 'professionalized', crafting electoral offers – shaped by market research –

to consumers in the electoral marketplace as a way of adapting to increased individualism. They also sought to relate to a more diverse society by making an appeal to groups with a strong sense of identity based on gender, sexuality and race. However, both strategies weakened these parties' ties to their traditional working class base. This base also became increasingly resentful about being 'left behind' as a consequence of de-industrialization; and this resentment sometimes found a lightning rod in increasing hostility to migrants. As a consequence, many social democratic parties in Europe are not just in decline but in deep crisis.

So, media consumption that influences peoples' understanding of who they are, where they fit in, whom they are for and whom they are against, are all central to the dynamics of contemporary politics. Yet, it can be simplistic to think that the formation of social identities has automatic political consequences. The identity–politics link can mutate in response to ideological influence. Thus feminism has long been associated with the left because it is committed to promoting greater equality. But researchers point to the way in which certain lifestyle magazines and popular TV series have fostered the conviction that women can through self-monitoring, self-discipline and self-determination take control of their lives, and shape their destinies (Blackman 2005; McRobbie 2008). The 'fiction of autonomous selfhood', they argue, is incubating a new strain of conservatism, centred on a strong sense of individualistic female identity in a context where neoliberalism has become dominant.

Another illustration of this mutation process is provided by Dick Hebdige's study of skinheads. Although a strong working class identity has traditionally been associated with the left in Britain, the articulation of class to other identities can lead to a switching of political tracks. Hebdige (1981) found that 'skinheads' in early 1980s Britain responded to their low social status as young working-class men, and planners' disruption of their neighbourhood communities, by developing a sub-cultural style – expressed in their clothes, hairstyle and preferred music – that invoked an exaggerated, nostalgic evocation of traditional 'lumpen' working-class life. To this were added two further elements – a stress on masculinity and white Britishness – that also offered compensation for young workers' low status and sense of loss. This re-routed the skinhead style towards angry working class conservatism (and in some cases the radical right).

Research of this kind draws attention to the importance of popular music as a signifier of social identity and political meaning. Sometimes this is immediately apparent because it is registered explicitly in lyrics and tone, as in the radical African-American rap music of the early 1990s that protested against industrial decline and urban deterioration (Kellner 1995). More often, it is the conjunction of one or more elements – lyrics, rhythm, genre, musicians (and their known views), audience appropriation, context and time – that turn particular forms of music, or particular songs, into social or political 'statements' (Van Zoonen 2004; Street 1997).

This cultural studies tradition also points to the importance of teenage popular culture as the seedbed of identity formation. Families are important agencies of political socialization, which is why children tend to follow their parents' political affiliation. But families are also arenas of teenage conflict. The consumption of

popular media, and associated clothes, hair, fashion and accent, are experimental laboratories for the production of self at a time of transition from childhood to adulthood. They provide a means of seeking peer group membership, and of excluding others. They represent ways of exploring and realizing a satisfying social identity, in a specific social and economic context (Gelder 2005). What happens in these teenage years, when popular media consumption is an important form of experimental self-expression, can shape who the person becomes in both a personal and political sense.

Norms

The fourth way in which the media entertainment impinges on public life is through contributing to the maintenance and revision of public norms. These are the rules and conventions that guide individual behaviour, and shape social interactions between people. In particular, norms generate shared understandings about what actions are appropriate and inappropriate, and establish what it is reasonable to expect from others.

However, public norms change over time. They are also variable: they can be strong because they are consensual and enforced by law, or weak because they are contested and often breached. Norms can also demarcate very sharply the boundaries of what is acceptable, or leave a wide spectrum of behaviour as a matter of individual and group choice. But whatever form they take, they are an essential part of the way in which society regulates its common social processes. They constitute, in a sense, an informal system of self-governance. Normative shifts in society can also lead to changes in the law.

Media entertainment is linked to the normative order. Entertainment conveys what is normal and natural. It can enforce norms by demonizing deviants: or weaken them by depicting deviants in a favourable light. The media can also generate a debate about social norms – about whether they are valid or need to change – that can lead to their reaffirmation or revision.

If this seems abstract, it can be rendered more concrete through two brief historical sketches. We will consider first the evolving gender order, culminating in an analysis of the comedy series, *Sex and the City*.

In 1900, the weight of tradition – underpinned by religious interpretation and biological theory, supported by early socialization, reinforced by peer group pressure and popular culture, and underwritten by patriarchal authority – projected a clear normative understanding of gender difference in Britain. This ordained that the women's place was *rightfully* in the home (though this was often breached in practice), and that men should be the principal breadwinner and play the dominant role in public life. It also portrayed the character and psychology of women as being inherently different from men. Thus, it was widely believed that men were by nature especially 'ardent' (meaning highly sexed), initiating, rational and independent, while women were naturally disposed to be demure, dependent, emotional and nurturing.

This Victorian inheritance had strong support in popular culture in the first sixty years of the twentieth century. Thus, an episode of *I Love Lucy*, the 1950s American hit TV comedy series, features a job swap between housewife Lucy and her husband Ricky. Lucy goes out to work for a day and finds it unbearable; the husband stays at home for the day, and cannot cope. The episode ends with each agreeing that they should stick to what they do best (Kaplan 1990).

Similarly, popular films during the period 1945–65 tended to symbolically punish autonomous, independent women: many came to an unhappy end, or were portrayed as ultimately unfulfilled and incomplete (Thumim 1992). Popular British women's magazines were also steeped in traditional gender values during this period (Ferguson 1983).

Yet, the gender order changed during the twentieth century. Two waves of feminism secured the vote for women (1918 and 1928), and legal protections against gender discrimination (especially from 1975 onwards), while also influencing contemporary attitudes. Changes in the economy led to more women securing paid work and greater economic independence, while educational advance resulted by 2017 in more women than men going to university in Britain. Attitudes towards gender differentiation also shifted. Whereas in 1987 48 per cent of the British population agreed that 'a man's job is to earn money' and 'the woman's job is to look after the home and family', only 13 per cent took this view in 2012 (Scott and Clery 2013). Media representations of gender were also modified. In particular, popular TV drama from the 1980s onwards featured an increasing number of autonomous heroines who were successful, fulfilled and sympathetic (Lotz 2006).

However, the tempo of change was uneven. In some parts of the media, traditionalist gender perspectives persisted (Krijnen and Van Bauwel 2015). The stigma attached to feminism also lingered on. In 2015, only 7 per cent of British adults (and just 9 per cent of women) defined themselves as feminists, principally because feminism was associated with being extreme, polarizing and political (Olchawski 2016). The higher reaches of British society still remained male dominated. In 2015–16, women made up only 39 per cent of senior civil servants, 14 per cent of police commissioners, 21 per cent of high court judges, 17 per cent of university vice-chancellors and 26 per cent of FSTE 100 board directors (Fawcett Society 2016). The division of labour in the home between men and women also remained unequal, causing six out of ten women to complain that they did more than their fair share of household work (Scott and Clery 2013).

In brief, some things had changed rapidly, and other things had remained constant or slow-moving. This provides the key to understanding the wider significance of the American TV series *Sex and City* (1998–2004), and also why it had so strong an appeal among young British women. As well as being intelligent, funny and well acted, the series provided a way of making sense of a gender order in flux. This is despite the fact that that the series features four professional women living the life of the very rich in Manhattan. They do not have the kind of jobs or private incomes that would sustain their opulent lifestyle, and seem remarkably free most of the time from pressing work pressures. *Sex and the City* is thus both an unrealistic fairy tale, and divorced from the material circumstances of most of

its fans. Yet, it spoke to a generation of women not merely in Britain but in many parts of the world. Research shows that in Taiwan, for example, the series enthralled numerous young women, caught between the traditionalist demands of their families and what they and their friends wanted (Kim 2010).

Sex and the City enabled female viewers to explore what it is to be a contemporary woman at a transitional time. This was facilitated through four narrative devices. Firstly, it was aided by the monologues of the journalist, Carrie, as she writes or thinks about her weekly sex column. One of her recurring themes is that there is a tension between expectations shaped by popular culture and the reality of her life and that of her friends. 'No one has "Breakfast at Tiffany's" and "Affairs to Remember", she laments. 'Instead we have breakfast at 7am and affairs we try to forget as quickly as possible.'

The second way is through the contrast represented by the four friends at the heart of the series, each of whom has different aspirations. At one end of the continuum is Charlotte, an art gallery director who yearns for a Tiffany engagement ring, marriage to a perfect WASP husband, and fulfilment as a mother and wife. Her search is unrelenting: 'I've been dating since I was fifteen,' she declares. 'I'm exhausted. Where is he?' Samantha, the head of a small public relations company, represents the other end of the spectrum: the female equivalent of a 'laddish' male, who regards the idea of eternal love as an illusion, abhors the idea of marriage, and is a confident, initiating libertine. 'I am try-sexual,' she explains, meaning that she will try anything. Situated between these two is journalist, Carrie, who oscillates between romantic yearning and the sceptical detachment of a journalist-ethnographer; and Miranda, a Harvard-trained lawyer who is focused on her career, does not want a child, and makes occasional feminist observations. Exasperated by the men-talk of her friends, she exclaims on one occasion: 'How does it happen that four such smart women have nothing to talk about but boyfriends? It's like seventh grade with bank accounts. What about us – what we think, we feel, we know? Christ . . .'

The third way a dialogue about gender roles is staged is through the ritual meetings that take place between the four friends, in almost all ninety-four episodes, in a restaurant, bar, coffee shop or apartment. These meetings become occasions for sharing recent experiences or future plans, and generate contrasting reactions. Thus, when Charlotte announces that she intends to give up her job as the head of a fashionable art gallery in order to get ready for her marriage and help her fiancé through volunteer fund-raising, she gets a strongly disapproving response from her friends. 'Are you are sure that you are not just having a bad day?' she is asked. In a subsequent heated phone conversation, Charlotte defends her gender traditionalism by declaring: 'the women's movement is supposed to be about choice', and giving up her job is what she wants to do.

The fourth device for critically reflecting on contemporary gender norms is that the four women respond in different ways to what happens to them. While Charlotte secures seemingly a 'dream husband – a blue-blooded surgeon', the dream turns out to be an illusion, like 'a fake Fendi – just shiny and bright on the outside'. The dream's emptiness is underscored when Charlotte poses for a

fashionable magazine with her estranged husband in their soon-to-be-sold Park Avenue apartment – generating the kind of article that had nourished her romantic yearning for years.

Although Charlotte's home-making ambitions do not change, she becomes wiser and more realistic. Similarly, the fiercely independent Samantha acquires a sense of vulnerability, as a consequence of ageing and getting cancer, and settles for the emotional stability of living monogamously with a young, loving actor. Carrie secures the romantic, exciting man of her dreams, but not before discovering – from a period of being a lonely, pampered doll in Paris – that the combination of romance *and* a career is what makes her happy. Miranda has a child that she had not bargained for, and settles for a nurturing man who becomes the principal home maker in a traditional gender role reversal. Each woman thus opts for a different gender settlement.

Of course, at one level, the series is steeped in convention. It is based on a male-hunting narrative that ends in all four women getting their man. Three out of their four partners could have stepped out of the pages of a Mills and Boon novel. The series' seeming traditionalism has prompted some critics to dismiss it as a return to a reactionary pre-feminist past (McRobbie 2005). However, this dismissal does not engage with the complexity of the TV series – a complexity that helps to account for its appeal to very different types of women.

The four friends in *Sex and the City* have in a sense everything: they are clever, successful, witty, good looking, warm, imaginative and emotionally intelligent. This is in marked contrast to most men they meet. However promising they first appear to be, these men prove to be variously self-obsessed, emotionally immature, unable to commit, blighted by unexpected character defects or, in the case of the best-drawn male character (Aidan), turn out to be just too ordinary. This depiction of the underlying inequality between the four female friends and the men they encounter is the dynamic that subverts the traditionalist formula on which the series is based. The women in *Sex and the City* also have demand rather than supply-side problems in finding a man. Although they are sometimes rejected, they more often turn down men as not being good enough. And although they all seem anxious to find a man, each (apart from Charlotte) have actually rather ambivalent feelings. One (Miranda) is centred on her career, another (Samantha) on recreational sex, and the third (Carrie) is enjoying her freedom and independence, and has a panic attack when she tries on a wedding dress. These are women who have come into their own, and are seeking out new relationships and solutions. So, to see the series as simply a reversion to a patriarchal era in which women yearn to be married, and only find fulfilment through their relationship to men, is to overlook the subversive contradictions at the heart of the series.

This is also what makes *Sex and the City* more than just an entertainment. An utterly unrealistic fairy tale about privileged women became, paradoxically, a popular drama that encouraged women (and some men) to think about what they wanted out of changing gender relationships. In this sense, *Sex and the City* is a 'democratic' drama that facilitated a debate about changing gender

norms. However, it had resonance only for a time. Gender attitudes shifted (making Charlotte seem dated), while the representation of in-control women did not correspond to what seemed salient after the 2008 crash. The principal successor to *Sex and the City* is *Girls* (2012–17). It has as a central theme the precarity of life for young middle-class women trying to make their way in the world.

Our second historical example is about sexual minorities. It illustrates the way in which the media can monster outsider groups, reinforcing the opprobrium and retribution directed against them; and also the way in which this monstering can change, encouraging a shift of public attitudes and changes in the law.

In 1900, gay men were condemned by the churches, abhorred by society, and their love-making criminalized. Lesbians were less the object of attack until the 1920s. Popular media reinforced this prejudice. Thus, gay men tended to be depicted as silly and comic or as sinister, predatory and menacing in Hollywood films during the inter-war period (Gross 1998).

In 1967, adult gay sex was decriminalized. Some media portrayals of gay men were more sympathetic (including a notable film, *Victim* (1961), in which the hero is a blackmailed homosexual). But even in these more positive portrayals, gays and lesbians tended to be portrayed as 'other', in other words as not normal. Sporadic violence against gay men in public places remained an ever present danger.

After the 1980s AIDs moral panic subsided, there was a profound shift in media representations of gays and lesbians. Almost for the first time, they were portrayed as 'ordinary', a notable landmark being the British TV series, *Queer as Folk* (1999–2000), whose narrative, camera gaze and sex scenes normalized being gay. This was followed by a succession of films that affirmed the value of gay relationships, most notably *Weekend* (2011), *Pride* (2014), *Lilting* (2014) and *God's Own Country* (2017).

This was accompanied by a sea-change in public attitudes. Whereas 74 per cent said that same-sex relationships were always or mostly wrong in 1987, only 16 per cent took this view in 2016 (Swales and Taylor 2017). In 1983 only 41 per cent thought it was right for a homosexual person to be a teacher at a school, compared with 83 per cent in 2012. Similarly, a bare majority (53 per cent) in 1983 thought that it was acceptable for a homosexual 'to hold a responsible position in public life', whereas nearly everyone (90 per cent) was comfortable with this in 2012 (Park et al. 2013).

In line with this, physical attacks and verbal abuse directed at gays and lesbians diminished (though only up to a point). Laws were belatedly changed. In 2001, the age of consent for gay sex was lowered from twenty-one to sixteen (same as for heterosexual sex). In 2002, same-sex adoption was legalized. In 2004, gay couples were given the same rights as heterosexual couples through the Civil Partnership Act. And in 2013, gay and lesbian marriage was legalized. Centuries of official harassment were rolled back in response to changing social norms and more positive representations of the LGBT community in drama and media entertainment more generally.

Although the flow of causation between media portrayals, normative attitudes, behavioural and legal change is difficult to establish, they are clearly interconnected. If this is accepted, then representations of sexual minorities (like other minorities

subject to discrimination) in popular entertainment are 'political' because they have consequences for how these minorities are treated in society, and regulated by law.

To summarize, media entertainment connects to politics and the democratic process in four (overlapping) ways. It influences public perceptions of society. It provides a way of debating social values. It contributes to the formation of social identities that influences political preferences. And it helps to maintain and revise the public norms that regulate our lives, and feeds into the democratic process.

Political communication research is wrong to neglect these inputs. 'Entertainment' accounts for most media consumption, whereas journalism (and campaign communication) – on which attention is fixed – accounts for relatively little. The political communications research tradition has a blind spot about this, and needs to change.

Functioning of democracy

The case for thinking that the mediation of political communication through popular culture requires more attention is the easy part of the argument. Much more perplexing is the implication of this argument for thinking about the functioning of democracy. In the limited space available, there is scope only to make one extended point.

The *rational choice* model of democracy has gained a growing number of adherents, especially in the United States.[4] In its hard-nosed form, it argues that a citizen is more likely to be run over by a car when crossing the street than to influence a specific public policy. Citizens have no need to become news junkies, given their limited political influence. Life offers more fulfilling pleasures than becoming expert on the latest developments on Capitol Hill. Indeed, most people are happy to delegate the business of politics to politicians, activists and policy experts.

Of course, goes the argument, citizens should vote and, if the situation demands it, take political action. But it is not necessary to be a walking news encyclopaedia in order to prepare for this. Most people resort to shortcuts. They turn to trusted intermediaries – their chosen political party or favoured interest group – to advise them about which candidate to vote for. They also place faith in news media not only to entertain them but to sound the alarm if there is a political emergency that requires their attention. This leaves them free to get on with life, and take pleasure in the things that matter.

This model justifies the US' entertainment-centric media system and elite domination of politics without ever quite saying so. Perplexingly, it is easy to anticipate how the central argument of this essay – that media entertainment provides a rich delta of political meaning feeding democracy – can be adopted by

---

4. For a sophisticated presentation of the rational choice argument, see Schudson (1998), or Zaller (2003) for a more provocative one.

rational choice advocates. People have 'heuristic' devices, they argue, for discharging their civic duties without having to be overburdened with public affairs knowledge. To this can now be added a further argument: people check into the democratic process merely by consuming media entertainment.

However, this would be to distort the intended thrust of this essay. The consumption of media entertainment should not be viewed in isolation from other forms of media consumption. Fiction is not the same as reality. Without being properly briefed by news media about what is really happening in society, citizens are disenfranchised. Thus, the Bourne films may assert the principle that the security forces should be accountable. But only good journalism can reveal whether this precept is actually being implemented – and strive to ensure that it is.

Citizens properly briefed about public affairs are more effective than those who are not. This is corroborated by Carpini and Keeter's classic study (1996) which showed that informed Americans were more likely than less informed citizens to participate in politics, to have attitudes aligned to their interests, and to vote for political representatives consistent with their attitudes.

By contrast, being misinformed and uninformed disempowers. It was perhaps understandable that the majority of Americans believed in 2003 that the Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq had weapons of mass destruction and close links to Muslim terrorists since this was what they were told by their government, and by leading news media, on the eve of the invasion of Iraq in 2003. But when no weapons of mass destruction were found in Iraq after the invasion, an immediate backlash was to be expected. Similarly, when no smoking gun was found revealing that the secular Hussein regime was implausibly in league with Muslim terrorists, a popular reaction was due. Yet, in 2006, three years after the occupation of Iraq, 50 per cent of Americans still thought that the Iraq government had weapons of mass destruction, and 64 per cent believed that Saddam Hussein had close links with al-Qaeda (Castells 2009: 167, Table 3.1).

This is not an isolated case. In 2009, 41 per cent of Americans believed that Obamacare, if introduced, would establish government 'death panels' (Thrush 2009). When Obamacare was introduced in 2010, and did not establish death panels, scales should have fallen from eyes. Yet as late 2016, 29 per cent thought that Obamacare had established such panels, and a further 31 per cent were not sure (Young 2016).

What makes American democracy especially prone to manipulation? Successive surveys show that Americans, on average, know less about public affairs than citizens of European countries (Aalberg and and Curran 2012; Curran et al. 2009; Dimock and Popkin 1997). This is partly because the minority disconnected from news consumption and the world of politics is larger in the US than in European countries (Aalberg and Curran 2012). It is also because market-driven American TV reports less hard and international news than public service TV in Europe, and gives news less prominence to news bulletins in their schedules (Curran et al. 2009). How much people know is affected by the content of the media they consume. This is confirmed by a subsequent study of countries in four continents,

which shows that public service TV systems support a higher level of knowledge about public affairs compared to commercial ones (Soroka et al. 2013).

In short, recognition of the importance of entertainment – and of the way in which it can inform a debate about social relations, values, identities and understandings – should not become a reason for thinking that it dispenses with the need to be adequately informed by news media. Democracies fed on a diet of entertainment at the expense of news consumption are blind in one eye.

Bibliography

Aalberg, T. and J. Curran (2012), *How Media Inform Democracy*, New York: Routledge.

Baumgartner, J. and J. Morris (2006), 'The Daily Show Effect: Candidate Evaluations, Efficacy, and American Youth', *American Politics Research,* 89 (4): 427–43.

Blackman, L. (2005), '"Inventing the Psychological": Lifestyle Magazines and the Fiction of Selfhood', in J. Curran and D. Morley (eds), *Media and Cultural Theory*, London: Routledge.

Brewer, P. and E. Marquardt (2007), 'Mock News and Democracy: Analyzing The Daily Show', *Atlantic Journal of Communication*, 15 (4): 249–67.

Carpini, M. X. D. and S. Keeter (1996), *What Americans Know about Politics and Why It Matters*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Castells, M. (2009), *Communication Power*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Curran, J. (2010) 'Entertaining Democracy', in J. Curran (ed.), *Media and Society*, 5th edn, London: Bloomsbury.

Curran, J. (2011), *Media and Democracy*, Abingdon: Routledge.

Curran, J., I. Gaber and J. Petley (2019), *Culture Wars*, 2nd edn, Abingdon: Routledge.

Curran, J., S. Iyengar, A. Lund and I. Salovaara-Moring (2009), 'Media Reporting, Public Knowledge and Democracy: A Comparative Study', *European Journal of Communication*, 24 (1): 5–26.

Dimock, M. and S. Popkin (1997), 'Political Knowledge in Comparative Perspective', in S. Iyengar and S. Reeves (eds), *Do the Media Govern*?, Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Durkay, l. (2014), '"Homeland" is the Most Bigoted Show on Television', *Washington Post*, 2 October.

Fawcett Society (2016), *Equality: Timeline of Women's Rights 1866–2016*. [Online. Accessed 3 January 2018.] Available at: https://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/equality-its-about-time-timeline-of-womens-rights-1866-2016

Ferguson, M. (1983), *Forever Feminine*, London: Heinemann Educational Books.

Frank, T. (2004), *What's the Matter with Kansas?*, New York: Henry Holt.

Gelder, K. (2005), *Subcultures Reader*, 2nd edn, London: Routledge.

Gross, L. (1998), 'Minorities, Majorities and the Media', in T. Liebes and J. Curran (eds), *Media, Ritual and Identity*, London: Routledge.

Hebdige, D. (1981), 'Skinheads and the Search for White Working Class Identity', *New Socialist*, 1 (1).

Holbert, R. L., O. Pillion, D. A. Tschida, G. G. Armfield, K. Kinder, K. L. Cherry and A. R. Daulton (2003), '*The West Wing* as Endorsement of the U.S. Presidency: Expanding the Bounds of Priming in Political Communication', *Journal of Communication*, 53 (3): 427–43.

Inglehart, R., C. Haerpfer, A. Moreno, C. Welzel, K. Kizilova, J. Diez-Medrano, M. Lagos, P. Norris, E. Ponarin and P. Puranen, eds (2014), *World Values Survey: Round Six*. [Online. Accessed 25 July 2018.] Available at: www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSDocumentationWV6.jsp

Kim, Y. (2010), 'Female Individualization?: Transnational Mobility and Media Consumption of Asian Women', *Media, Culture & Society*, (32): 25–43.

Judt, T. (2009), *Reappraisals*, London: Vintage.

Kaplan, E. A. (1990), *Women and Film*, London: Routledge.

Kellner, D. (1995) *Media Culture*, London, Routledge.

Krijnen, T. and S. Van Bauwel (2015), *Gender and Media*, Abingdon: Routledge.

Lotz, A. (2006), *Redesigning Women*, Urbana and Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press.

McCarthy, A. (2007), 'Reality Television: A Neo-Liberal Theatre of Suffering', *Social Text*, 25 (4): 17–41.

McGuigan, J. (2005), 'The Cultural Public Sphere', *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 8 (4): 427–43.

McRobbie, A. (2005), *The Uses of Cultural Studies*, London: SAGE Publications.

McRobbie, A. (2008), *The Aftermath of Feminism*, London: SAGE Publications.

Morgan, K. (2001), *Britain since 1945*, 2nd edn, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Mutz, D. (2018) 'Status Threat, Not Economic Hardship, Explains the 2016 Presidential Vote', *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, forthcoming. [Online. Accessed 22 July 2018.] Available at: http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2018/04/18/1718155115

Ouellette, L. (2003), 'Take Responsibility for Yourself: Judge Judy and the Neo-liberal Citizen', in S. Murray and L. Ouellette (eds), *Reality TV*, New York: New York University Press.

Olchawski, J. (2016), *Sex Equality: State of the Nation 2016*, London: Fawcett Society.

Overholser, G. and K. Jamieson (2005), *The Press: Institutions of American Democracy*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

Park, A., C. Bryson, E. Clery, J. Curtice and M. Phillips (2013), 'Key Findings', in A. Park et al. (eds), *British Social Attitudes: the 30th Report*, London: NatCen Social Research.

Parry-Giles, T. and S. Parry-Giles (2006), *The Prime-Time Presidency*, Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Pew Research Center (2009), 'Public Remains Divided over Use of Torture', 23 April. [Online. Accessed 14 October 2009.] Available at: http://people-press.org/report/510

Scott, J. and E. Clery (2013), 'Gender Roles: An Incomplete Revolution?', in A. Park et al. (eds), *British Social Attitudes: the 30th Report,* London: NatCen Social Research.

Schudson, M. (1998), *The Good Citizen*, New York: Simon & Schuster.

Slocum, J., ed. (2006), *Hollywood and War*, New York: Routledge.

Soroka, S., B. Andrew, T. Aalberg, S. Iyengar, J. Curran, S. Coen, K. Hayashi, P. Jones, G. Mazzoleni, J. W. Rhee, D. Rowe and R. Tiffen (2013), 'Auntie Knows Best? Public Broadcasting and Public Affairs Knowledge', *British Journal of Political Science*, 43 (4): 719–39.

Street, J. (1997), *Politics and Popular Culture*, Cambridge: Polity.

Swales, K. and E. Taylor (2017), 'Moral Issues: Sex, Gender Identity and Euthanasia' in E. Clery, J. Curtice and R. Harding (eds), *British Social Attitudes 34,* 88, London: National Centre for Social Research. [Online. Accessed 3 January 2018.] Available at: http://www.bsa.natcen.ac.uk/latest-report/british-social-attitudes-34/moral-issues.aspx

Tenenboim-Weinblatt, K. (2009), '"Where is Jack Bauer When You Need Him?"' The Uses of Television Drama in Mediated Political Discourse', *Political Communication*, 26 (4): 367–87.

Thrush, G. (2009), 'Poll: 41 Percent Believe in Death Panels', *Politico*, 14 September, 2009. [Online. Accessed 2 August 2018.] Available at: https://www.politico.com/blogs/on-congress/2009/09/poll-41-percent-believe-in-death-panels-021365

Thumim, J. (1992), *Celluloid Sisters*, New York: St. Martin's Press.

Valentin, J. (2005), *Hollywood, Pentagon and Washington*, London: Anthem Press.

Van Zoonen, E. (2004), *Entertaining the Citizen*, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Weaver, M. and S. Ackerman (2017), 'Trump Claims Torture Works but Experts Warn of "Potentially Existential" Costs', *Guardian Online*, 20 January 2017. [Online. Accessed 25 July, 2018.] Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/jan/26/donald-trump-torture-absolutely-works-says-us-president-in-first-television-interview

Williams, B. and M. Delli Carpini (2011), *After Broadcast News*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wu, C. (2017), *Entertainment and Politics in Contemporary China*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Young, J. (2016), 'Politicians Lie Because It Works: Death Panels Edition', *Huff Post*, 18 April 2016. [Online. Accessed 2 August 2018.] Available at: https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/death-panels-obamacare_us_571503d1e4b0060ccda3c0a9

Zaller, J. (2003), 'A New Standard of News Quality: Burglar Alarms for the Monitorial Citizen', *Political Communication* (20): 109–130.

Chapter 16

THE POLITICAL IMPACT OF MEDIA

Stephen Cushion

Interpreting the political impact of the media is essential to understanding how societies function. After all, the media supply the informational fuel that most citizens rely on to become informed about politics and public affairs. To put it more bluntly, the media have a major impact on the health of democratic citizenship.

Above all, it is the news media that is the main information source for most people (Ofcom 2017). Over recent decades the media have diversified, with more people relying on online and social media for their news as well as broadcast and print media outlets. As a consequence, understanding the political impact of media has become far more complicated, with an ever-growing range of information sources shaping people's knowledge of politics across multiple platforms. And yet, when scholars examine the political impact of media they often narrowly focus on isolating singular effects rather than interpreting their broader, more systemic role and influence. As McCombs (2014: 20) colourfully puts it: 'We swim in a vast sea of news and information, a gestalt of communication channels where the whole is far greater than the sum of its parts. However, in the examination of mass media effects over the years, there has been a tendency to emphasize individual media rather more than the media collectively.'

As a consequence of this approach, media effects are often viewed crudely, with a focus on individuals being influenced by particular media, such as juvenile youths being brain-washed by video games or rap music encouraging misogynistic or criminal behaviour. And yet, there is a large body of media and communication scholarship that has long dismissed simplistic correlations between media consumption and audience responses, highlighting not just that media effects can be measured in many direct and indirect ways, but that wider social, cultural, political and economic factors shape human behaviour and help explain people's engagement with and understanding of different media texts (Potter 2013; Preiss et al. 2007). Increasingly sophisticated studies have been developed to isolate effects between individuals and media exposure, identifying micro factors that illustrate how and where human behaviour has changed (Rössler 2017).

However, this chapter considers the political impact of the media from a macro rather than micro perspective, going beyond individual-level effect studies. It does

so by first introducing the concept of mediatization, which has become a widely used term to characterize the systemic impact the media has in shaping different facets of society. Exploring how scholars have theorized mediatization, it considers how this concept can interpret the political impact of the media. In doing so, the chapter enters into debates about the mediatization of politics, considering how the media influence the behaviour and actions of politicians and political parties. It questions conventional mediatization theory, challenging the analytical framework used to interpret media and political logics. Contemporary case studies, including analyzing UK and US election campaigning and reporting, as well as an influential political movement, are drawn upon to illustrate the impact of media and the need to re-theorize mediatized politics.

The chapter then turns to exploring the relationship between media systems and their political impact. Media systems help characterize different types of news organizations within a nation, such as state, public service or market-led broadcasters. Over recent years, a growing body of research has identified that the type of media system can influence people's knowledge and understanding of politics and public affairs. In doing so, the concept of political information environment is introduced to help interpret the supply of news available for citizens to be informed and engaged by media within their nation-state. The chapter draws on comparative research that shows public service media tend to better enhance people's understanding of the world than wholesale market-driven media. Above all, this is because public service media generally produce more informative news likely to be scheduled at peak time. Market-driven media tend to be subject to less regulatory oversight and, notably in US broadcast media, do not have to produce news that might be viewed as impartial, objective or balanced. As a consequence, recent years have witnessed a growing influence of partisan media in the US, with new content and social media platforms exacerbating public concerns about disinformation and so-called 'fake news'.

But it is not just the media environment that has been changing over recent years. The term 'post-truth' has gained greater currency, representing a shift in political culture from the use of objective facts to 'truth' being constructed by emotions and opinions. This final part of this chapter considers the impact of post-truth politics for journalists, and the ability for media to accurately inform citizens about politics and public affairs. It draws on the 2016 US presidential election and EU referendum campaigns to explore the challenges facing journalists when dealing with dubious claims made by politicians and political parties. By way of conclusion, the chapter argues that journalism must find more effective ways of holding politicians to account and pursue an agenda that better reflects the democratic needs of citizens.

From mediation to mediatization: understanding the influence of media in politics

Although there are opportunities for citizens to interact and participate in politics, for most people politics remains a *mediated* experience. Put another way, most citizens do not directly meet and engage with elected representatives; they

encounter them in mediated contexts, largely dependent on how media construct political information and imagery. Yet mediation has become viewed as an increasingly passive term, offering limited analytical value, since it does not fully reflect the wider influence the media have in different facets of society, including the world of politics (Lundby 2009). The concept of *mediatization* has instead been used to convey the more systemic and transformative role the media play in everyday life (Hjarvard 2008). Where once social spaces where reserved for lived experiences, today the media penetrate institutions and cultures, making and shaping how they are understood and practiced. But how can mediatization be interpreted and measured? After all, the process of mediatizing may be a long-term, historical shift that is not always tangible or observable. Moreover, the strength of media may vary from country to country, owing to a wide range of possible of influences and factors.

To understand the role and impact of the media in society, mediatization scholars can be grouped into two camps, adopting an 'institutionalist' or 'social constructivist' approach. The latter perspective considers the role of media broadly from the use of smartphones and tablets to television viewing and online consumption. The pervasiveness of media collectively is viewed as having a systemic impact on people's everyday life and experiences (Hepp 2013). The media, in this sense, operate autonomously, shaping different facets of society, such as the world of politics, religion and advertising (Hjarvard 2013). The social constructivist approach to mediatization is multi-layered, with competing ways of conceptualizing and empirically investigating the role the media play in society (Couldry and Hepp 2013). The institutionalist perspective, by contrast, interprets influence according to a logic that characterizes how 'the media' operate. Within the fields of journalism studies and political communication, scholars have theorized singular or multiple logics that shape the mediatization of politics (Lundby 2009; Esser and Strömbäck 2014). There have even been competing news or journalistic logics that help organize the editorial selection and construction of political news (Cushion 2015). While acknowledging it is difficult to conceive of one overarching media logic, Couldry (2012: 144) has argued that the mediatization of politics 'is arguably the clearest example of a sector where something like a "media logic" is at work: in the day-to-day operations of policy generation, policy implementation and public deliberation'. Indeed, studies adopting an institutional approach to mediatization of politics have grown, theorizing and empirically experimenting with ways of measuring media impact. The mediatization of politics has been defined as a '*long-term process through which the importance of the media and their spill-over effects on political processes, institutions, organizations and actors have increased*' (Strömbäck and Esser 2014: 6; *their emphasis*).

Perhaps the most influential and coherent analytical framework is Strömbäck's (2008) article, which examined the mediatization of politics in Western democracies post 1945 in four phases. The first condition is met if the media are the dominant source of information within a democracy, which in almost all cases they are today. Securing the independence of media from political institutions is the second phase, which allows autonomous editorial decision-making and the development

of a media logic. The third phase is reporting news according to the logic of the media, while a fourth phase is impacting the motivations, decisions and actions of political actors or parties. It is these latter two phases that are central to the mediatization of politics because they determine whether a media or political logic is being followed. Scholars have empirically evidenced a political logic by considering how long politicians appear in soundbites, whether policy is discussed and whether Parliamentary speeches or reports are reported or scrutinized. Measures of media logic, by contrast, highlight journalists acting independently of politicians, such as influencing the behaviour of political actors, talking over politicians and interpreting political events and issues. In either longitudinal or cross-sectional studies, scholars have sought to establish whether a mediatization of politics is evident cross-nationally.

So what has mediatization research revealed about the political impact of the media? Djerf-Pierre et al.'s (2014: 322) analysis of mediatization research since the late 1990s concluded that 'there is currently ample evidence for mediatization as a pervasive and transformative force in politics'. A comparative study of Danish and German television news coverage of election between 1990 and 2009, for example, found horse-race reporting, personalization, visualization and negativity had increased over time, while the length of soundbites had reduced (Zeh and Hopmann 2013). A media logic, in other words, had superseded a political logic in election reporting, although the changes were largely in the 1990s rather than the 2000s. A clearer case of mediatization was evident in Seethaler's and Melischek's (2014) analysis of press releases issued by Austrian political parties in 1970, 1983, 1990 and 2008 during election campaigns. They found newspapers and television news bulletins relied less on them over time. In turn, political parties adopted new, more aggressive campaigning tactics that appealed to the logic of media outlets. Similarly, a study of Canadian newspaper coverage of party leaderships between 1975 and 2012 established that reporting had become more opinionated, personalized and visually driven, with a greater emphasis on the strategic game of politics rather than policy deliberation among candidates (Sampert et al. 2014). The rise of opinion-based journalism was also evident in a study of UK television news bulletins between 1991 and 2014, which revealed a slow but steady shift from edited to live news reporting (Cushion 2015). While this was, in part, explained by technological developments, it was argued that live reporting represented a mediatization of politics because it largely compromised of political editors and correspondents increasingly interpreting coverage and delivering judgements about political events and issues (cf. Cushion et al. 2014). Or, put another way, a journalistic logic of political reporting had over time reduced the agenda setting impact of political parties and politicians.

But while there is evidence to support the proposition of enhanced media power over recent years, accounting for editorial changes or the behaviour of politicians is not always straightforward. So, for example, a content analysis study in the run up to the 2015 UK general election found television news bulletins had focused less on policy and more on the process of politics compared to previous campaigns (Cushion et al. 2016). At face value, the research reinforced conventional

mediatization theory that a media logic had won over a political logic. However, further interviews with the main broadcasters revealed that editors were deeply frustrated by the political parties evading policy discussion by, for example, cancelling daily press conferences and sticking largely to carefully choreographed and controlled campaign walks with limited journalistic interrogation. By limiting access to journalists and ordinary members of the public, the main political parties were attempting to avoid campaign gaffes such as when the then UK Prime Minster, Gordon Brown, called a voter a bigot in the run-up to the 2010 general election without realizing his microphone was still on. In other words, a new political logic was shaping UK election campaigning, prompted partly by a leading politician's exchange with a citizen (Cushion and Thomas 2018).

Casero-Ripollés et al.'s (2017) study of Podemos campaigning in Spain also revealed that far from the media determining the logic of a new political party, it was voters' collective response to political elites that drove a new approach to electioneering. They stated their conclusions 'problematize the notion of strong effects inherent to mediatization theory, and highlight the interdependent nature between political actors and mainstream media' (Casero-Ripollés et al. 2017: 391). Podemos' electoral success, in their view, was down to new digital media that facilitated a bottom-up citizen movement in reaction to mainstream political and media logics. In doing so, a populist brand of politics was born, which subverted conventional media logic because journalists became interested in and engaged with a new and exciting political party. In their words, 'The case of Podemos demonstrates that mediatization could occur in a disaffected way to promote two-way street dynamics, for example, from politics to the media, in which the former influences the latter' (Casero-Ripollés et al. 2017: 390).

Another recent example of a populist politician subverting media logic for politician gain was Donald Trump during the 2016 US presidential election campaign (cf. Aalberg et al. 2017). Above all, Trump mastered the art of what Esser (2013) has labelled 'self-mediatization' by deliberating playing to the rules of media logic in order to help set the agenda. This was evident in Trump's negative and attack-minded campaigning, name calling opponents and developing clear if simplistic soundbites that resonated with many voters. Trump, for example, promised 'To Make America Great Again' and to 'Drain the Swamp' of Washington politicians. Appealing to well-established news values, Trump attracted far more media attention than other candidates, giving him a platform where he was also able to limit journalistic scrutiny or challenge. So, for example, Trump would not participate in regular press conferences, but instead gave selective interviews (often over the phone rather than face to face) to partisan supporting channels such as Fox News. But perhaps most effectively, he relied on his social media platforms, in particular Twitter, to set the agenda, which many media outlets duly obliged. This was revealed in an interview Trump gave in 2017:

> I've got 46 million people right now including Facebook, Twitter and ya know, Instagram, so I'd rather just let that build up and just keep it @realDonaldTrump, it's working – and the tweeting, I thought I'd do less of it, but I'm covered so

dishonestly by the press – so dishonestly – that I can put out Twitter – and it's not 140, it's now 280 – I can go bing bing bing . . . and they put it on and as soon as I tweet it out – this Morning on television, Fox – 'Donald Trump, we have breaking news'.

<div align="right">cited in Griffin 2017</div>

Trump, in short, effectively used the media's logic to self-promote his own brand of politics, skating over complex policy issues and focusing on process, negativity or conflict.

From this perspective, Trump challenged an underlying premise of mediatization theory that suggests a political logic equates with promoting policy above the strategy or game of campaigning. Strömbäck and Dimitrova (2011: 36), for example, theorized that 'If politicians were allowed to decide, they would mainly talk about and focus on the issues'. While historically politicians have always sought to evade difficult questions, Trump's cynical and superficial approach to electioneering arguably reached the pinnacle of the mediatization process by governing by a media rather than political logic.

This display of mediatization in US politics cannot be explained by just analyzing Donald Trump's campaigning in isolation. His success was also driven by the US' highly commercialized media environment. To put it another way, the political impact of the media can be connected to the US' hyper-commercialized media system that largely treats audiences as consumers rather than citizens. This was revealed by CBS Chief Executive and CEO, Leslie Moonves, who during the election campaign admitted that 'It may not be good for America [Trump's candidacy), but it's damn good for CBS' (cited in Weprin 2016). He added: 'It's a terrible thing to say. But, bring it on, Donald. Keep going' (cited in Weprin 2016). In other words, while Trump may have been bad news for American democracy, he was good news for CBS shareholders as advertising revenue dramatically increased.

In order to understand this market-logic, we need to move beyond debates about the mediatization of politics to consider how media systems help shape the political information environments of democratic countries. As Witschge (2014: 344) has observed, in 'empirical research into the mediatization of politics, there seems less attention for the audience', with a focus instead 'on the interplay between media and political actors'. In other words, there is often an assumption that mediatization will lead to effects without supporting evidence. Moreover, the effects of mediatizatizon tend to be implicitly viewed as negative because citizens are seen as being less informed due to more negative and sensationalist news reporting, with a greater focus on the game or strategy aspects of politics, rather than substantive policy issues (Cushion 2015). While there may be good reasons to support this general proposition, it fails to account for the complexity in which media audiences engage with and interpret political coverage. So, for example, although conflict framing – where politicians or parties are reported as being in dispute with one another – is often viewed as turning the public off politics, Schuck et al.'s (2017) study of EU election coverage discovered that being exposed to conflict reporting in some countries mobilized people to vote. Similarly, while

media are often criticized for their horse-race reporting during election campaigns, it has been found to increase attention and engagement with politics (Cushion and Thomas 2018). Put more simply, media audiences are not easily duped, or respond uniformly to the same messages, meaning it cannot be collectively assumed that the mediatization of politics will negatively affect audiences or diminish the health of democracy.

However, a growing body of scholarship has examined the relationship between public knowledge and media systems in order to assess the systemic influence of political information environment cross-nationally. In doing so, the political impact of the media can be understood by which media system most effectively raises people's understanding of politics and public affairs.

Why media systems matter: understanding the relationship between political information environments and public knowledge

Media institutions and organizations are not natural constructions; media systems represent the outcome of policy preferences made largely by national governments. Broadly speaking, media systems can be classified as either state, commercial or public service media. Sophisticated models have been developed that characterize media systems across advanced and developing countries (Hallin and Mancini 2004; 2012).

However, within national contexts hybrid media systems have developed, leading to distinct regulatory and institutional structures. So, for example, while the UK has been grouped with the US as a liberal media system (Hallin and Mancini 2004), it has an overarching public service media ecology, which influences the programming and editorial character of some market-driven media. Since the 1960s, the UK has developed commercial public service broadcasters, which have licence agreements that require them to produce some local, national or international news, and schedule news programming at peak-time hours. Market-driven media, by contrast, face far less regulatory intervention, while state media can often remain editorially aligned with the government of the day's agenda, compromising the independence and impartiality of journalism. Put more simply, media systems matter to the supply of political information within a particular country. And, as this section will explore, the quality of news can have a major impact on public knowledge about politics and public affairs.

In developing the concept of political information environment, Esser et al. (2012) examined the TV schedules of thirteen European countries over a thirty-year period (1977–2007), empirically charting the type of news programming supplied by media systems in different countries. Overall, they discovered public service media was more likely to supply news in briefs, newscasts, interview or discussion type programming than market-driven media. In other words, citizens had a greater chance of being exposed to news about politics and public affairs in public service-regulated media. The study was limited by examining the quantity of news rather than quality of it, since it relied on a large-scale schedule analysis.

Media and Society

Over recent decades, however, a growing body of literature has examined the political impact of media systems by connecting the quality of news with people's understanding and knowledge about politics and public affairs. Of course, quality news is not easy to determine let alone measure. But scholars have sought to develop comparative measures that assess how informative news is between media systems. Above all, the informational quality of news can be assessed according to its democratic value (Cushion 2012a). So, for example, 'hard' news is viewed as helping to inform people about social, economic and political issues likely to enhance a citizen's knowledge, while 'soft' news, such as crime, celebrity or human interest stories, is regarded as providing limited information about civic affairs. A comprehensive review of academic studies comparing public and commercial news established that the former system of media is far more likely to report harder news than the latter (Cushion 2012a). Thus, it was argued, public service media produced news of high democratic value for citizens, justifying public spending and the tighter regulation they face. This can be illustrated by a Reinemann et al.'s (2016) study of 160 outlets across sixteen countries, which empirically showed public service media reported a greater proportion of quality news than commercial television networks, and broadsheet newspapers and websites. During election times, the informative quality of news produced by public service media has been brought into sharper focus. Not only do they generally produce more news than market-driven media in low-key elections, they focus more on issues and policy debates than the game or strategy of the campaign (Cushion and Thomas 2018). In the UK, for example, studies examining television news coverage of five election campaigns found while general elections were widely covered by all broadcasters, during local and European campaigns it was the BBC that consistently devoted airtime to them (see Table 16.1).

But Table 16.1 also shows differences in the amount of coverage between commercial public service broadcasters, which relate to their regulatory obligations. So, for example, Channel 5, the broadcaster with the least public service responsibilities in news provision, supplied the least amount of coverage during the local and European election campaigns. Nevertheless, the very presence of the

Table 16.1 Proportion of time spent on reporting different types of elections in UK television news (by percentage time, with N in brackets)[a]

	BBC	**ITV**	**CH4**	**CH5**	**Total**
2009 EU/local election	6.2% (21)	5.4% (20)	3.2% (13)	1.2% (5)	4.0% (59)
2013 local election	4.7% (15)	1.3% (4)	3.6% (11)	1.0% (4)	3.0% (34)
2014 EU/local election	13.2% (39)	10.0% (31)	15.2% (52)	5.5% (17)	12.2% (139)
2015 general election	49.8%(210)	43.5% (167)	49.9% (174)	52.4% (153)	47.1% (843)
2017 general election	42.4%(168)	42.0% (177)	51.2% (190)	43.0% (139)	45.7% (840)

[a]This is data from different studies carried out by the author.

BBC, a popular and well-resourced public service broadcaster, has had an influence of the wider quality of journalism in the UK. Sky News, for instance, is a market-driven broadcaster with no public service obligations. The controlling shareholder of Sky, Rupert Murdoch, has long been on record of advocating Sky News should adopt a more partisan, Fox News-style approach, while operating within the UK's regulation about impartiality. But perhaps due to the UK's long-held professional commitment to impartiality, the editorial team at Sky News has resisted this pressure and maintained standards of fair and balanced reporting (Cushion and Lewis 2009). Put more broadly, the political impact of the UK's regulatory culture has meant broadcast journalism is not as opinionated or biased as some media systems in other advanced Western democracies.

While the US and UK have been interpreted as having liberal media systems (Hallin and Mancini 2004), the former has an overwhelmingly market-driven culture of news, with limited public service broadcasting provision and light-touch regulation. Unlike the UK, the US broadcast system embraced an advertising-reliant model of funding. Although US broadcast media had some safeguards for achieving balanced journalism through the Fairness Doctrine (Cushion 2012b), in the 1980s this was rescinded and helped trigger the emergence of first opinionated talk radio then more partisan dedicated television news channels. In other words, the US' laissez-faire approach to media policy making has had a profound impact on the political output of broadcast news as well as new content and social media platforms. Born into an increasingly partisan media environment, many online news US sites appear almost to have abandoned any notion of objective journalism and pursued highly partisan commentary, such as Breitbart News. While there are both right- and left-wing partisan online and social media, it is more conservative outlets that appear to be having greater impact. So, for example, in the run-up to the 2016 US presidential election, Benkler et al. (2017) examined 1.25 million online stories on social media between 1 April 2015 and 8 November 2016 and discovered that right-wing online news sites – notably Breitbart – influenced how other media reported the campaign. Put another way, Breitbart played an intermedia agenda-setting role, pushing issues onto the mainstream media agenda. According to Benkler et al. (2017), the 'right-wing media was . . . able to bring the focus on immigration, Clinton emails, and scandals more generally to the broader media environment. A sentence-level analysis of stories throughout the media environment suggests that Donald Trump's substantive agenda – heavily focused on immigration and direct attacks on Hillary Clinton – came to dominate public discussions'. Viewed in this light, the US' increasingly right-wing information environment is having a political impact on public debates at critical moments, such as during the most recent presidential election campaign.

There is an increasing body of scholarship exploring the relationship between media systems and public knowledge. Broadly speaking, it asks which media system most effectively raises people's knowledge about politics and public affairs? Needless to say, in an increasingly hybrid media environment, isolating the influence of one source over another is methodologically complex, since people's knowledge may be a product of many other factors. Indeed, the ability for the

media to influence public opinion should not be overblown. As Curran et al. (2009: 22) observed: 'As a determinant of knowledge about public life, how the media are organized is less important than the widespread cultural processes in a society that stimulate interest in public affairs.' Social factors, such as level of education and relative wealth, play an important role in the public's acquisition of knowledge. Interest in or attention paid to political news is also a significant predicator of engagement with and understanding of politics. As Strömbäck and Shehata (2010: 292) have put it: 'Being politically interested is one of the most important norms from a democratic perspective, as it is a crucial antecedent for, among other things, political knowledge and political participation.'

Despite the multiplicity of factors shaping public knowledge, scholars have controlled for many of these variables and discovered the systemic influence of media systems in many countries. Broadly speaking, a growing body of scholarship has identified that countries with a strong public service media system have greater knowledge and understanding of public affairs than those that rely largely on market-driven media systems. So, for example, Curran et al.'s (2009) analysis of the US, UK, Norway and Finland found that the latter two countries had more informative news coverage and higher knowledge about politics and civic affairs, which they accounted for by the dominance of public service media in both countries. They also established that the least informed nation – the US – had the more market-driven media system, which contributed to poor understanding of political issues. Iyengar et al.'s (2009) study of public knowledge in Switzerland and the US also identified 'dark areas of ignorance among' Americans compared to the Swiss. This, they argued, was a symptom of the lack of news coverage about international affairs in the US.

But enhancing knowledge in the US it not only about supplying more information because its increasingly partisan news environment is undermining the accuracy and credibility of coverage. This has led to an audience behaviour known as 'partisan selective exposure', which characterizes how people turn to news they trust and ideologically agree with (Stroud 2011). In doing so, they create 'filter bubbles' and 'echo chambers', which are terms that convey how people inculcate themselves with information that reflects their own ideological perspectives. This is not a phenomena unique to the US, though. In the UK during the EU referendum campaign, for example, there was evidence of Twitter users closely following their Leave or Remain supporters rather than seeking a balanced array of opinions and information. But, unlike the US, the UK has an overarching public service media system that results in people being exposed to more impartial and accurate political information than the US' hyper-commercialized media system (Cushion et al. 2012, 2017).

The political impact of the US' market-driven media system can also be measured by people's support for democratic ideals. Giodel et al. (2017) developed a survey of the television viewing habits of people living in the US, Germany, Sweden and the Netherlands in order to explore political attitudes and democratic preferences. In the US, they concluded that 'television news is not associated with democratic attitudes but is associated with support for authoritarian alternatives (a strong political leader or military rule)' (Giodel et al. 2017: 851). In European

countries, where public service media is widely available, the impact of television viewing was translated 'into a greater appreciation for democratic governance as reflected in the importance individuals attach to living in a democracy, the value they place on a democratic political system, and the rejection of authoritarian alternatives' (Giodel et al. 2017: 850–51). Even after taking into account the different the political systems, economic contexts and other types of media consumption in each country, television viewing was still correlated with people's democratic ideals.

Overall, it is clear that the dominant media systems of nations can impact not just on the nature of political coverage, but on people's knowledge about public affairs. This was well summed up by Sokora et al. (2013: 738) in their study of media content and consumption in Western six nations. They concluded, 'governments' decisions about funding for public broadcasters seem in many cases to be very much like decisions about just how well informed their citizens will be'. Put simply, public service media offer the most effective way of raising people's understanding of the world.

However, public service media have also been criticized for being too close to State power, with the impact of reinforcing rather than challenging the government of the day. While well respected public service broadcasters may reject being characterized as the State's mouthpiece, there is evidence to show organizations such as the BBC do heavily rely on the government of the day in everyday political reporting (Cushion et al. 2017). Clearly, this may not represent the type of direct influence a state can exert on broadcasters. But there are more subtle, indirect influences that may lead to public service broadcasters drawing heavily on institutional sources to report the world of politics. As Sokora et al.'s (2013) study established, the more independent public broadcasters were from the government of the day, the more likely they were to raise people's knowledge about public affairs.

In an age of post-truth politics, where government spin and propaganda have become more sophisticated, 'fake news' and disinformation have become a focus point for understanding the political impact of the media. The final part of this chapter puts these concerns into context and considers how journalism can be rethought in ways that better enhance people's understanding and knowledge about politics and public affairs.

Rethinking journalism in the age of post-truth politics

When in 2016 Oxford Dictionaries labelled 'post-truth' as their 'Word of the Year' – defining it as 'relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief ' – they acknowledged it was, in part, due to how the UK EU referendum and US presidential campaigns had been conducted. While dishonesty has long been an assumed character trait of politicians, over recent years many have more blatantly manipulated the 'truth' or disregarded the 'facts' for self-interested motives. The use of terms such as post-truth or post-factual represent this shift, prompting new debates about how objectivity, impartiality and balance should be

applied by journalists today. After all, *how the media report politics in a post-truth age matters profoundly to the impact of an informed and engaged citizenry*. How far, for example, should reporters call out the lies of politicians or impartially report different sides to a dispute?

The rise of Donald Trump from a celebrity businessman to the president of the United States represents a new and challenging proposition for political journalism. He is on record telling many false statements, such as claiming he opposed the war in Iraq (despite clear evidence to the contrary), while – when in government – his press secretary suggested more people came to Trump's presidential inauguration than to Barack Obama's (when visual images clearly showed fewer attendees). During the run-up to the presidential election campaign, PolitiFact examined the statements of the major candidates (from 1 January 2015 to 30 January 2016) and assessed them according to whether they represented 'half-truths, mostly false, false or pants on fire' declarations. As Table 16.2 shows, Trump – by far – made the most false statements. In the first 347 days as president, fact-checking at the *Washington Post* suggested that Trump made 1,950 false or misleading claims (Kessler et al. 2018). In the mainstream media, it has become normalized that Trump does not tell the truth in speeches, press conferences and interviews.

However, during the 2016 presidential election campaign journalists struggled with how to deal with the behaviour of two rival candidates, Trump and Clinton. Beyond partisan media, there was an attempt to impartially report both candidates' perspectives, a kind of 'he-said, she-said' approach that has long been the norm of US journalism. This was so firmly rooted in the DNA of journalists, Jay Rosen (2016) memorably argued that 'Asymmetry between the major parties fries the circuits of the mainstream press'. In doing so, the political impact of coverage resulted a false balance between the behaviour of candidates. So, for example, journalists balanced issues involving Clinton – notably the FBI investigation into her use of email when Secretary of State – with more shocking personal indiscretions, such as a video footage showing Trump admitting to sexually harassing women. Patterson's (2016) systematic study of reporting in mainstream news media confirmed the degree of coverage granted towards both candidates:

Table 16.2 The veracity of public statements by the main Democrat and Republican primary candidates between 1 January 2015 and 30 January 2016.

	True	Mostly true	Half true	Mostly false	False	Pants on fire
Hillary Clinton	12	45	16	12	14	–
Bernie Sanders	11	42	18	21	8	–
Jeb Bush	16	25	27	24	5	2
Marco Rubio	8	23	23	25	17	4
Ted Cruz	7	20	5	34	24	5
Donald Trump	1	4	16	19	41	18

Source: Adapted from PolitiFact 2016.[b]

[b] This table was constructed from data collected on the PolitiFact website.

> Clinton's controversies got more attention than Trump's (19 percent versus 15 percent) and were more focused. Trump wallowed in a cascade of separate controversies. Clinton's badgering had a laser-like focus. She was alleged to be scandal-prone. Clinton's alleged scandals accounted for 16 percent of her coverage – four times the amount of press attention paid to Trump's treatment of women and sixteen times the amount of news coverage given to Clinton's most heavily covered policy position.

By balancing allegations levelled at both candidates without considering the merits of each case, the mainstream media arguably helped legitimize the credibility of Trump as a Presidential candidate and overlooked the obvious deficit and falsehoods in speeches or policy preferences.

While journalists and politicians have always been suspicious of each other's motives, this era of post-truth politics represents a new and highly challenging environment in which to report the 'truth'. The *Washington Post* Media Editor, for example, declared after the very first press presidential briefing in the Trump era that 'White House press briefings are "access journalism" in which official statements – achieved by closeness to the source – are taken at face value and breathlessly reported as news. And that is over. Dead' (Sullivan 2017). Put more simply, journalists had simply given up taking the government at their word.

During the 2016 referendum campaign in the UK about leaving or remaining in the EU, similar debates about politicians misleading voters and journalists constructing false balance emerged. The Vote Leave campaign's claim that the UK government sends £350m to the EU each week – which could be spent on the NHS instead – was perhaps the mostly widely recognized example. Despite many independent bodies, such as the UK Statistics Authority, pointing out this was not factually accurate, this message continued to prominently feature during the campaign without always being challenged by journalists. A study of UK evening bulletins during the campaign, for example, identified that just one in five statistical claims were challenged by a journalist or independent sources (Cushion and Lewis 2017). Instead, reporters often left it to rival Leave and Remain campaigners to argue between themselves without acting as a referee in helping to assess the veracity of competing claims. In effect, viewers were often left with a statistical tit-for-tat exchange between rival politicians, making it difficult to comprehend the accuracy or credibility of the case for or against leaving the EU.

The political impact of the media not challenging misleading political statements is hard to measure, but the director of the Vote Leave Campaign revealed that the dubious £350m claim had a significant influence. He asked: 'Would we have won without £350m/NHS? All our research and the close result strongly suggests no.'[1] This acknowledgement was reinforced by an Ipsos-MORI survey (2016), which established just before the referendum vote that almost half of people believed that

---

1. https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/immigration-now-top-issue-voters-eu-referendum

£350m *was* sent to Brussels every week. Some journalists accepted more fact-checking and robust questioning could have been supplied during the campaign. BBC presenter, Justin Webb, for example, admitted, 'One of the clearest messages during the referendum campaign was that audiences were hungry for real knowledge. People wanted to go beyond claim and counter-claim so that they could work out what was true' (cited in Plunkett 2016). He went on to suggest that the way the BBC and other broadcasters interpreted impartiality needed rethinking given the challenges associated with reporting politics in the post-truth age. Similarly, days before Trump's inauguration, the White House Press Corps wrote an open letter that concluded by stating 'You [Trump] have forced us to rethink the most fundamental questions about who we are and what we are here for' (cited in Pope 2017).

At a time when emotions and opinions appear to be superseding facts in public debate, the post-truth era represents a period when the media need to reconsider the political impact of long-standing practices and conventions. So, for example, perhaps the so-called death of access journalism at the White House press briefings represents a moment to celebrate, since it loosens the intimacy between government and reporters, and forces the media to develop a more independent agenda. There has been a shift towards more combative reporting of politics, a tacit acknowledgement that more adversarial journalism is needed. A BBC Trust review of statistics, for example, recommended that the public service broadcaster should 'help audiences make sense of the statistical evidence in an impartial way. That involves being willing, more than at present, to weigh, interpret and explain the statistical evidence and, when appropriate, challenge and correct when it is misused'. Overall, it was concluded, the BBC 'needs to get better and braver in interpreting and explaining rival statistics and guiding the audience' (BBC Trust 2016: 11).

Over recent decades, there has been a wider shift towards greater journalistic interpretation of politics and public affairs. Hopmann and Strömbäck (2010: 956) have labelled this the 'rise of the punditocracy', with politicians rejected in favour of media commentators. However, close analysis of this type of coverage suggests that often journalists focus on relatively narrow range of issues which centre on party political concerns rather the public anxieties and policy preferences (Cushion 2015). Further still, journalists do not always have either the knowledge or expertise to challenge and meaningfully interrogate politicians about specific policy proposals or statistical claims. And many broadcasters do face intense scrutiny about how they deal with politicians and political parties because of strict impartiality requirements or a professional commitment to upholding the objectivity norm. But at a time when objective facts are under pressure, a more independent and evidence-based approach to reporting could act as a robust counterpoint to the relativism of political speeches and campaigning. Many studies of past election campaigns, for example, show limited opportunities for independent experts to comment upon political stories or hold parties accountable about their policy positions (Cushion and Thomas 2018). From think tanks, academics to industry, science, medicine and other professional sources, their ability to inform public debate is often at the expense of hearing party political perspectives. During the EU referendum, for example, an overwhelming majority of economists thought voting leave would significantly harm the economy but that

consensus among experts was rarely interpreted by journalists. Needless to say, not all experts will share the same degree of support on issues. But journalists could interpret *within this consensus* more often, unpacking the evidence and explaining the parameters of debates between experts to audiences. While generally most democracies trust science and other knowledge-based professions, in the partisan culture of the US there remain challenges in people accepting or simply rejecting the evidence or facts (Flynn et al. 2017). In other words, ideological convictions of voters can often trump scientific testimony. And, as already acknowledged, there is a growing phenomenon in the US known as partisan selective exposure, where news audiences are turning to information sources that ideologically reflect their political views (Stroud 2011). However, there is evidence to suggest a commitment to supplying accurate information can overcome partisan hostility to it (Redlawsk et al. 2010) as well as ensuring falsehoods are not perpetuated and reinforced by journalists (Nyhan and Reifler 2009).

To further enhance trust and engagement in political reporting, the public could have a greater role to play in setting the media agenda. After all, from Britain exiting the EU to Donald Trump's presidential victory, after recent US and UK election campaigns it has been widely claimed that much of the news media did not accurately reflect the public mood or anticipate the outcomes. The mainstream media, put simply, have been collectively charged with alienating voters and misrepresenting people's concerns and anxieties (Cushion 2018). While this chapter has suggested that the presence of public service media can help engender greater democratic knowledge and engagement with politics than wholly market-driven media systems, the age of post-truth politics presents challenges for all journalists. As discussed, the era of mediatized politics has brought slick, media savvy politicians that have re-written the rules of some of the logics long governing their behaviour and interaction with journalists.

But in (re)considering the impact of the media on politics, the democratic needs of citizens should remain central to how journalism is rethought (Blumler and Cushion 2014). This does not mean abandoning old-fashioned conventions about reporting objectively or impartially. It means rising to the challenge of establishing the 'facts', holding politicians accountable, and focussing on how to best enhance people's knowledge and understanding of politics and public affairs. Journalists, above all, need to more creatively find ways of connecting with people's democratic needs. Moving away from party political power and developing a more independent news agenda represents an important step in rethinking how journalists can rise to the challenge of reporting politics in the post-truth age.

References

Aalberg, T., F. Esser, C. Reinemann, J. Strömbäck and C. H. de Vreese, eds (2017), *Populist Political Communication in Europe*, Abingdon: Routledge.

BBC Trust (2016), *BBC Trust Impartiality Review: Making Sense of Statistics*, London: BBC Trust.

Benkler, Y., R. Faris, H. Roberts and E. Zuckerman (2017), 'Study: Breitbart-led right-wing media ecosystem altered broader media agenda', *Columbia Journalism Review*, http://www.cjr.org/analysis/breitbart-media-trump-harvard-study.php [Accessed 8 November 2018]

Blumler, J. G. and S. Cushion (2014), 'Normative Perspectives on Journalism Studies: Stock-taking and Future Directions', *Journalism*, 15 (3): 259–72.

Casero-Ripollés, A., M. Sintes-Olivella and P. Franch (2017), 'The Populist Political Communication Style in Action: Podemos's Issues and Functions on Twitter During the 2016 Spanish General Election', *American Behavioral Scientist*, 61 (9): 986–1001.

Couldry, N. (2012), *Media, Society, World: Social Theory and Digital Media Practice*, Cambridge: Polity.

Couldry, N. and A. Hepp (2013), 'Editorial: Conceptualizing Mediatization: Contexts, Traditions, Arguments', *Communication Theory*, 23 (3): 191–202.

Curran, J., S. Iyengar, A. B. Lund and I. Salovaara-Moring (2009), 'Media Reporting, Public Knowledge and Democracy: A Comparative Study', *European Journal of Communication*, 24 (1): 5–26.

Cushion, S. (2012a), *The Democratic Value of News: Why Public Service Media Matter*, Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Cushion, S. (2012b), *Television Journalism*, London: SAGE Publications.

Cushion, S. (2015), *News and Politics: The Rise of Live and Interpretive Television News*, London: Routledge.

Cushion, S. (2018), 'Using Public Opinion to Serve Journalistic Narratives: Rethinking Vox Pops and Live Two-way Reporting in Five UK Election Campaigns (2009–2017)', *European Journal of Communication*, *Ifirst*

Cushion, S. and J. Lewis (2009), 'Towards a "Foxification" of 24 Hour News Channels in Britain? An Analysis of Market Driven and Publicly Funded News Coverage', *Journalism*, 10 (2): 131–53.

Cushion, S. and J. Lewis (2017), 'Impartiality, Statistical Tit-for-tats and the Construction of Balance: UK Television News Reporting of the 2016 EU Referendum', *European Journal of Communication*, 32 (3): 208–23.

Cushion, S. and R. Thomas (2018), *Reporting Elections: Rethinking the Logic of Campaign Coverage*, Oxford: Polity.

Cushion, S., J. Lewis and N. Gordon (2012), 'The Impact of Interventionist Regulation in Reshaping News Agendas: A Comparative Analysis of Public and Commercially Funded Television Journalism', *Journalism*, 13 (7): 831–49.

Cushion, S., T. Aalberg and T. Thomas (2014), 'Towards a Rolling News Logic in Fixed Time Bulletins? A Comparative Analysis of Journalistic Interventions in the US, UK and Norway', *European Journal of Communication*, 29 (1): 100–09.

Cushion, S., J. Lewis and R. Callaghan (2016), 'Data Journalism, Impartiality and Statistical Claims: Towards More Independent Scrutiny in News Reporting', *Journalism Practice*, 11 (10): 1198–1215.

Cushion, S., R. Thomas, A. Kilby, M. Morani and R. Sambrook (2016), 'Interpreting the Media Logic behind Editorial Decisions: Television News Coverage of the 2015 U.K. General Election Campaign', *International Journal of Press/Politics*, 21 (4): 472–89.

Cushion, S., J. Lewis and A. Kilby (2017), 'Why Context, Relevance and Repetition Matter in News Reporting: Interpreting the United Kingdom's Political Information Environment', *Journalism, Ifirst*

Djerf-Pierre, M., M. Ekström, N. Håkansson and B. Johansson (2014), 'The Mediatization of Political Accountability: Politics, the News Media Logic and Industrial Crises in the 1980s and 2000s', *Journalism Studies*, 15 (3): 321–38.

Esser, F. (2013), 'Mediatization as a Challenge', in H. Kriesi, D. Bochsler, J. Matthes, S. Lavenex, M. Bühlmann and F. Esse (eds), *Democracy in the Age of Globalization and Mediatization*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Esser, F., C. H. de Vreese, J. Strömbäck, P. van Aelst, T. Aalberg, J. L. Stanyer, G. Lengauer, R. Berganza, G. Legnante, S. Papathanassopoulos, S. Salgado, T. Sheafer and C. Reinemann (2012), 'Political Information Opportunities in Europe: A Longitudinal and Comparative Study of Thirteen Television Systems', *International Journal of Press/ Politics*, 17 (3): 247–74.

Esser, F. and J. Strömbäck, eds (2014), *Mediatization of Politics: Understanding the Transformation of Western Democracies*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Flynn D. J., B. Nyhan and J. Reifler (2017), 'The Nature and Origins of Misperceptions: Understanding False and Unsupported Beliefs About Politics', *Political Psychology*, 38 (s1): 127–50.

Giodel, K., M. Ehrl and K. Gaddie (2017), 'Watching the News and Support for Democracy: Why Media Systems Matter', *Social Science Quarterly*, 98 (3): 836–55.

Griffin, A. (2017), 'Donald Trump will keep using his own Twitter as US President because he can "go bing bing bing"', *Independent*, http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/gadgets-and-tech/news/donald-trump-keep-using-own-twitter-tweets-us-president-inauguration-us-president-go-bing-white-a7529281.html

Hallin, D. and P. Mancini (2004), *Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hallin, D. and P. Mancini, eds (2012), *Comparing Media Systems beyond the Western World*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hepp, A. (2013), *Cultures of Mediatization*, Cambridge: Polity.

Hjarvard, S. (2008), 'The Mediatization of Society: A Theory of the Media as Agents of Social and Cultural Change', *Nordicom Review*, 29 (2): 105–34.

Hjarvard, S. (2013), *The Mediatization of Culture and Society*, London: Routledge.

Hopmann, D. and J. Strömbäck (2010), '"The Rise of the Media Punditocracy?": Journalists and Media Pundits in Danish Election News 1994–2007', *Media, Culture & Society*, 32 (6): 943–60.

Ipsos-Mori (2016), 'Immigration is now the top issue for voters in the EU referendum', *Ipsos-Mori*, https://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/researcharchive/3746/Immigration-is-now-the-top-issue-for-voters-in-the-EU-referendum.aspx

Iyengar, S., and K. S. Hahn, S. Kyu, H. Bonfadelli and M. Mirko (2009), '"Dark Areas of Ignorance" Revisited: Comparing International Affairs Knowledge in Switzerland and the United States', *Communication Research*, 36 (3): 341–58.

Kessler, G., M. Kelly and N. Lewis (2018), 'President Trump has made 1,950 false or misleading claims over 347 days', *Washington Post*, 2 January, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/fact-checker/wp/2018/01/02/president-trump-has-made-1949-false-or-misleading-claims-over-347-days/?utm_term=.5bd575d6dc31 [Accessed 8 November 2018]

Lundby, K. (2009), *Mediatization: Concept, Changes and Consequences*, New York: Peter Lang.

McCombs, M. (2014), *Setting the Agenda: Mass Media and Public Opinion*, 2nd edn, Cambridge: Polity.

Nyhan, B. and J. Reifler (2009), *The Effects of Semantics and Social Desirability in Correcting the Obama Muslim Myth*, Working paper, Dartmouth University.

Ofcom (2017), News consumption in the UK: 2016, https://www.ofcom.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0016/103570/news-consumption-uk-2016.pdf [Accessed 8 November 2018]

Patterson, T. (2016), 'News coverage of the 2016 General Election: how the press failed the voters. Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy'. [Online.] Available at: https://shorensteincenter.org/news-coverage-2016-general-Election/ [Accessed 8 November 2018]

Plunkett, J. (2016), 'Media should rethink coverage in wake of Brexit vote, says Justin Webb', *Guardian*, 5 July, https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2016/jul/05/media-should-rethink-coverage-in-wake-of-brexit-vote-says-justin-webb [Accessed 8 November 2018]

Politifact (2016), 'Statements we say are pants on fire! Politifact'. [Online.] Available at: http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/rulings/pants-fire/ [Accessed 8 November 2018]

Pope, K. (2017), 'An open letter to Trump from the US press corps', *Columbia Journalism Review*, http://www.cjr.org/covering_trump/trump_white_house_press_corps.php [Accessed 8 November 2018]

Potter, J. W. (2013), *Media Effects*, London: SAGE Publications.

Preiss, R. W., B. M. Gayle, N. Burrell, M. Allen, J. Bryant (2007), *Mass Media Effects Research: Advances through Meta-analysis*, Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Redlawsk, D., A. Civettini and K. Emmerson (2010), 'The Affective Tipping Point: Do Motivated Reasoners Ever "Get It"?', *Political Psychology*, 31 (4): 563–93.

Reinemann, C., J. Stanyer and S. Scherr (2016), 'Hard and Soft News', in C. De Vreese, F. Esser and D. N. Hopmann (eds), *Comparing Political Journalism*, London: Routledge.

Rosen, J. (2016), 'Asymmetry between the major parties fries the circuits of the mainstream press', *Pressthink*, http://pressthink.org/2016/09/asymmetry-between-the-major-parties-fries-the-circuits-of-the-mainstream-press/

Rössler, P. (2017), *The International Encyclopedia of Media Effects*, 4 volume set, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Sampert, S., L. Trimble, A. Wagner and B. Gerrits (2014), 'Jumping the Shark: Mediatization of Canadian Party Leadership Contests, 1975–2012', *Journalism Practice*, 8 (3): 279–94.

Schuck, A. R. T., R. Vliegenthart and C. H. De Vreese (2017), 'Who's Afraid of Conflict? The Mobilizing Effect of Conflict Framing in Campaign News', *Journal of British Science*, 46 (1): 177–94.

Seethaler, J. and G. Melischek (2014), 'Phases of Mediatization: Empirical Evidence from Austrian Election Campaigns Since 1970', *Journalism Practice*, 8 (3): 258–78.

Sokora, S., B. Andrew, T. Aalberg, S. Iyengar and J. Curran (2013), 'Auntie Knows Best? Public Broadcasters and Current Affairs Knowledge', *British Journal of Political Science*, 43 (4): 719–39.

Strömbäck, J. (2008), 'Four Phases of Mediatization: An Analysis of the Mediatization of Politics', *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 13 (3): 228–46.

Strömbäck, J. and D. Dimitrova (2011), 'Mediatization and Media Interventionism: A Comparative Analysis of Sweden and the United States', *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 16 (1): 30–49.

Strömbäck, J. and F. Esser (2014), 'Mediatization of Politics: Towards a Theoretical Framework', in F. Esser and J. Strömbäck (eds), *Mediatization of Politics: Understanding the Transformation of Western Democracies*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Strömbäck, J. and A. Shehata (2010), 'Media Malaise or a Virtuous Circle? Exploring the Causal Relationships between News Media Exposure, Political News Attention and Political Interest', *European Journal of Political Research*, 49 (5): 575–97.

Stroud, N. (2011), *Niche News: The Politics of Choice*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sullivan, M. (2017), 'The traditional way of reporting on a president is dead. And Trump's press secretary killed it', *The Washington Post*, 22 January, https://www.washingtonpost.

com/lifestyle/style/the-traditional-way-of-reporting-on-a-president-is-dead-and-trumps-press-secretary-killed-it/2017/01/22/75403a00-e0bf-11e6-a453-19ec4b3d09ba_story.html?utm_term=.9b40273f650a

Witschge, T. (2014), 'Passive Accomplice or Active Disruptor?', *Journalism Practice*, 8 (3): 342–56.

Weprin, A. (2016), 'CBS CEO Les Moonves clarifies Donald Trump "good for CBS" comment', *Politico*, http://www.politico.com/blogs/on-media/2016/10/cbs-ceo-les-moonves-clarifies-donald-trump-good-for-cbs-comment-229996

Zeh, R. and D. Hopmann (2013), 'Indicating Mediatisation? Two Decades of Election Campaign Television Coverage', *European Journal of Communication*, 28 (3): 225–40.

Chapter 17

Media, Emotions and Affect

Kaarina Nikunen

Interest in emotions and affect in social sciences and media studies has grown substantially during the past ten years. Researchers have pointed out the need to explore media not only in terms of discourse and signs but also on the level of emotions and sensations. The growing interest has both an empirical and a theoretical basis. The emergence of digital technologies including interactive virtual media, VR, sensors and smart touch devices has generated great interest in bodily experiences of media. Media seem to surround us more completely and corporeally than before. This corporeality has also opened up a new interest in emotions and affect, because they are so closely connected to bodily experiences.

New horizons for research have emerged: technologies of measuring and analyzing sentiments and engagements with media, as well as critical explorations of how media industries make use of these emotional, affective and bodily engagements. At the same time the dominance of the earlier 'discursive turn' (see Carter 2013) in the social sciences and humanities has given way to an 'affective turn' (Clough and Halley 2007; Gregg and Seigworth 2010): understanding society not only through discourses but in terms of experience and emotions. There is a growing concern for example with how emotions drive us to take part in political debates and activism, and with how emotions enhance or hinder social bonds or shape our moral judgements in a mediatized society. The range of research is wide, drawing on multiple disciplines and including varying definitions of emotions and affect. There has been a long tradition of understanding psychological responses to media content; this is now accompanied by interrogations of how media shape emotions and how emotions are managed by media workers.

The chapter provides an overview of different approaches to emotions in media studies. It focuses on research that seeks to understand how examining media and emotions may inform us about society and how emotions are connected with larger social, political and cultural developments. It proceeds in four parts. The first part discusses the very different understandings and definitions of emotion and affect at work in 'cognitive' approaches and, by contrast, those offered by 'the affective turn' in cultural studies. Unlike some major perspectives, I argue that we need to understand emotion and affect as both biological *and* cultural.

In the case studies that follow, I discuss four types of research that illustrate how we can study emotions and affect from different perspectives. However, making a distinction between cognitive and culturalist approaches is not the focus of these studies. The case studies move from culturalist, discursive approaches towards more complex understandings of emotions that recognize that emotions are managed, but that they are significant parts of how we live our lives. What unites these cases is their interest in the ways in which emotions are crafted and shaped by the media and social forces.

They explore emotions in context of social processes and in this way we can see that they sketch out different 'affective practices' (Wetherell 2012). We can also see from the case studies that emotions and affect are harnessed for commercial purposes by the media, often with problematic consequences, although this is not necessarily addressed explicitly. I begin by discussing textual and visual analysis that explores the emotional address of narratives and media representations, with examples from news images of distant suffering and from reality television. Second, I discuss research that examines the role of emotions in media work. This research explores how emotions are managed in different ways, for example in creative work. Third, I discuss research on emotion in social media, including 'data-driven' approaches such as sentiment analysis, and their limitations. Finally I introduce more theoretically driven work on affective capitalism that makes more explicit arguments about commodification of emotions and affect. I argue that we need more empirically grounded, contextual work to understand the multiple ways in which emotions and affect work within and through media.

Defining emotion and affect: cognitive and culturalist approaches

What are emotions? There is no clear definition of emotions, or even any consensus on how they should be defined. Instead there are different and contradictory views of emotions depending on whether one does research in behavioural sciences, cultural studies, neuroscience or social sciences – although understandings of emotions are not coherent even within each of these different fields. Neuroscientific approaches to emotions tend to emphasize emotions as clearly defined, innate and universal. This approach usually considers there to be six primary or basic emotions: fear, anger, disgust, sadness, happiness and surprise (Ekman 1992). To include more 'socially formed' emotions, the concept of secondary emotions (or social emotions) was introduced, to include emotions such as envy and pride that are more tuned by experience (Haidt 2003; Moll et al. 2005). Neuroscientist Antonio Damasio (1994) links emotions strongly to the body, arguing that emotions travel through the brain and the body (the body loop) and often operate automatically. A problem with less sophisticated neuroscientific accounts is their tendency to understand emotions as somehow programmed in our body. However, Damasio recognizes variation in the intensity of emotional patterns and the ways in which personal experience modifies these patterns (Damasio 1994: 129–30). Neuroscientists have come to such understandings partly because they study

emotions in closed laboratory settings, separated from social contexts. These methods, as argued by Hochschild (1983) and Wetherell (2012), have shaped understandings of emotions as fixed and separate from social interaction. However, theories of universal primary emotions have been questioned from within neuroscience, which has begun to emphasize the need to integrate biological and social approaches to emotions (see Wetherell 2012: 39–50).

Cognitive research seeks to find out how emotions impact human behaviour, and particularly areas of cognition (i.e., conscious mental processes): perception, learning and memory. The relation between cognition and emotions is complex. While cognitive research has previously leaned on the distinction between cognition and emotions, recent research shows that cognition and emotion are often intertwined (Turner and Stets 2005: 21). Emotions may enhance memory and learning, but they may also hinder and distract (Dolcos et al. 2004). For example research has showed that emotionally arousing information, including emotionally charged stories, film clips and images are more easily retained (Duncan and Barrett 2007). This line of research makes clear that emotional capacities are important for cognitive activities. Studies have also explored how emotions can be regulated and controlled consciously, and how they may change over time (Ochsner and Gross 2005; Pessoa 2009).

The media effects research tradition has explored cognitive responses to media using quantitative approaches. This area of research strives to find out how emotions enhance judgement and comprehension of media texts; how emotions influence engagement with media and choice of media; what kind of emotions are aroused and what their outcomes might be. Such methods have been used in research on news media effects or different persuasive health campaigns (Nabi and Prestin 2016; Nabi 2003).

By contrast, cognitive theories of emotions emerging from more humanities-based perspectives highlight the relevance of emotions to human interactions, self-realization and the possibility of engaging the world in meaningful ways. In her writing on emotions and public life, for example, Martha Nussbaum argued that emotions always contain intelligence, and 'awareness of value or importance' (Nussbaum 2001: 1). She proposed that emotions are always *about* something and this 'aboutness' embodies a way of seeing the world. In her approach art and literature particularly elicit emotional responses that enrich human life and well-being (2001: 248). In similar ways Hesmondhalgh considers the relevance of emotions for understanding the human experience of music and the ways it may contribute to human flourishing (Hesmondhalgh 2013: 17–20).

The so called affective turn (Clough and Halley 2007; Gregg and Seigworth 2010) in cultural studies places greater emphasis than such humanities–cognitivist approaches by seeking to understand sensuous, bodily engagements with culture. However, it includes very varied definitions and understandings of affect. While Sara Ahmed, for example, uses affect and emotions interchangeably and sees both as connected with the meaning-making process, Nigel Thrift (2008) and Brian Massumi (2002) among others, discuss affect as emergent, becoming and unattainable – and ultimately separate from meaning, consciousness and

representation (see Wetherell 2012: 60–61, 74–75). This approach, often influenced by the French philosopher Deleuze, echoes the neuroscientific view of affect as automatic, reactive responses, treating it as quite separate from emotion.

Margaret Wetherell, in her book *Affect and Emotion*, argues for a more integrated understanding of affect, emotions and meaning-making process, in a way that is also supported by recent neuroscience research (Wetherell 2012: 47–50). Following her approach, we can think of immediate affective reactions as part of a larger emotional pool that include emotions of sadness, joy or hope. Such responses are shaped by conscious experience, not separate from them. If we consider affect as completely separate from meaning making processes, it becomes unavailable for analysis and potentially loses connection with the social world.

As Wetherell points out 'people swim in cultural and discursive milieus like fish in water – we are full of cultural and discursive practices' (2012: 65). Her aim is to find ways to make research on emotions and affect accessible for social analysis. Therefore she approaches affect as *practice* and examines the ways in which affective practices 'sediment in social formations' (Wetherell 2012: 103). Social research has for example shown that particular affective styles become connected to social class and the boundaries of class are marked by emotions of fear, disgust or shame (Wetherell 2012: 110; Skeggs 2005). In a similar way affective practices mark racial and gendered boundaries (Ahmed 2004). Researching affective practice then may sketch out these boundaries and the affective canon of particular social groups or communities. Collective dimensions of affective meaning-making are illustrated in different ironic, hateful, fearful or compassionate responses in public debates or events. Examples of these can be found on social media where people share images of suffering or summon support for demonstrations with particular affective styles.

A famous concept developed by Raymond Williams (1961; 1968/1987), *structure of feeling*, can also been seen as a kindred notion to that of affective practice, to describe broad social categories or historical periods (Wetherell 2012: 14). The complex concept of structure of feeling refers to experiential dimensions of a particular historical time period that is impossible to attain but that is made available and articulated through art and culture, such as the historical novel, which operates as a mediation of a specific historical conjuncture. Lauren Berlant also draws on Williams in her discussion of the notion of genre as the locus of affective situations that 'exemplify political and subjective formations local to particular space and time' (Berlant 2011: 66).

While Sara Ahmed (2004; 2000) is not particularly interested in making distinctions between affect and emotions, her approach attached emotions to cultural and social situations – to encounters. Ahmed has theorized the 'cultural politics' of emotions in the context of race, racism and multiculturalism by examining the discourses that arise from social and political conflicts. She relies on understandings of emotions as culturally constructed following the approach of anthropologists such as Catherine Lutz and Lila Abu-Lughod (1990), Geoffrey White (1993) and Michelle Rosaldo (1984). However Ahmed emphasizes emotions, not entirely as outside or inside our bodies, but in terms of how they construct the

boundaries that define 'inside' and 'outside'. Ahmed has focused on rather dark emotions: fear, hate, anger and disgust. Even when exploring love, she analyzes it as parallel to hate, enabling similar consequences of marginalization and hierarchies.

Drawing on Marx, Ahmed argues that emotions work as a form of capital: affect collects value through its circulation. The affective economy operates to align signs, figures, objects and ideas, and, through these alignments and their circulation, the signs and figures gain affective value (Ahmed 2004: 45) which can then be used by more powerful groups. Here Ahmed introduces the concept of stickiness, that refers to connections and layers between signs, objects and bodies (2004: 90). Stickiness is something that is activated when a sign is saturated by multiple meanings with different emotional registers. Ahmed's approach has been used to explore the circulation of racist imagery and hate speech online, as well as in cultural analysis of images that evoke disgust or desire, and the emotional structures of media 'body genres' (Dyer 1985), including reality TV and porn (Paasonen 2011; Kyrölä 2014).

To sum up, we can say that there is no agreement on how to define emotions and affect, rather these definitions vary according to discipline and approach. However, there is increasing agreement on the intertwined nature of biology and culture in emotional processes, on the idea that there are intricate connections between emotions and reason, and that emotions and affect are themselves strongly linked. The point that emotions are not separate from meaning-making processes, and outside of our social worlds, helps us understand the complexity of emotional processes. As Martha Nussbaum has argued in her discussion of the cognitive structure of compassion (2001: 326–56), to feel compassion does not mean that there is no space for reason and evaluation. If we treat emotions as automated reactions and impulses, we give up the possibility of social research on emotions and at the same time lose important aspect of media experiences.

We may then agree that emotions are not only biological, but are also influenced by cultural norms, practices and social structures (see Lünenborg and Maier 2017). The challenge though is how to study emotions and media. How can we make sense of the complex connections between media, emotions and affect? In what follows I introduce three different approaches or areas of research: textual analysis of images of suffering; ethnographic research of media work; and virtual and data driven research of social media and their limitations. These case studies show how, in different ways, emotions and affect are experienced, managed and harnessed in the context of media, in particular contexts but also on a broader view to the ways in which dominant political ideology or economic structure may amplify particular affective practice.

Emotions in media images: affective suffering

In her book *Regarding the Pain of Others*, Susan Sontag (2003) discusses how media images of war and suffering move people, and how because of this, they matter. Through images we are able to gain information about atrocities and war

crimes (Zelizer 2010: 6). One of the most famous images of war is from Vietnam in 1972, where ten-year-old Phan Thi Kim Phuc is running naked on the road with five other children as American soldiers walk in the background. We can see from the picture that she is in pain and learn afterwards that her body has been severely burned by napalm. The image has come to symbolize anti-war sentiment as it captures the cruelty of war in terms of its impact on the lives of the most innocent of victims: children. During the refugee crisis in Europe during 2015, the image of Alan Kurdi, a two-year-old refugee boy, who drowned on the coast of Turkey, in a similar way became to symbolize the crisis: it shocked the public by showing the cruelty of European refugee policy and the dangers of European borders.

Sontag discusses how sometimes sensationalist images of suffering are needed to wake us up and to make people understand that atrocities happen and they need to be stopped. Often however, media images of suffering cross the line of decency and respect for victims: commercial interests may be prioritized over ethical considerations. Both of the images mentioned above have had considerable impact on public sentiment towards war or crisis, but the one of Alan Kurdi has been especially criticized for sensationalism and an unethical approach to tragedy. The concern has been with privacy and respect for the grieving family. Who decides whose lives or death can be exposed to the scrutiny of millions of strangers?

These questions of suffering and sensationalism are central in research on humanitarianism (work on philanthropy, charity and humanitarian organizations) and media. This strand of research is preoccupied with management of emotions asking how humanitarian campaigns and news media address their audiences and elicit sentiments of pity or compassion. It explores emotions as a moral force: how emotions are evoked in images of suffering; how guilt is mobilized to produce compassion and donations through images of suffering, such as starving children; and how emotions may engender political action (Chouliaraki 2013; Seu 2010; Vestergaard 2008; Höijer 2004; Tester 2001; Boltanski 1999). Investigations often include close readings and textual analysis of news images, television narratives, films and humanitarian campaigns. In other words, emotions are read off from representations and understood as deeply social, connected with meaning-making processes, and susceptible to change. The focus is on what kind of emotional registers media images address and evoke in Western audiences. How are emotions embedded in news coverage of war and disasters? What kinds of emotional response and moral engagement do they invoke?

Lilie Chouliaraki (2013) for example has analyzed how humanitarian appeals have changed over time from negative appeals towards reflexive playfulness. She argues that negative appeals, such as images from the famine in Biafra in the end of 1960s, address grand emotions and focus on 'bare' authentic suffering. These images, typically depicting close-ups of starving children, evoke guilt and shame through shock effects, and propose complicity of Western audiences, as part of the Western legacy (Chouliaraki 2013: 60). While bare images of suffering, through shock effect, may have been effective in humanitarian appeals at first, they also evoked criticism for emphasizing power hierarchies between sufferers and

benefactors and fetishizing suffering with sensationalist, intimate pictures of body. At the same time the emphasis on despair was seen to cause apathy, indifference and compassion fatigue (Chouliaraki 2013: 60–61; Moeller 1999).

To counter these negative images of apathy, campaigns that emphasized a sense of hope, agency and empowerment entered the humanitarian field. These positive images would typically include smiling children, and feminist campaigns promoting girl power (Chouliaraki 2013: 57; Koffman et al. 2017; Orgad and Nikunen 2015). They tended to personalize sufferers by providing life narratives and creating a sense of similarity between the sufferers and the Western audience. The emotional address suggested horizons of hope and action, rather than pity. Chouliaraki (2013: 61–64) critiques these images for their emphasis on the power of benefactors and gratefulness of the sufferers. Their emotional structure does not challenge existing power relations after all.

The post-humanitarianism ethos, as formulated by Chouliaraki (2013) in her book *The Ironic Spectator*, describes the recent shift in humanitarian images away from grand emotions towards playfulness and reflexivity. Instead of evoking guilt or simple narrative of empowerment, post-humanitarian images are reflexive and focus on the Western self. These images are made for audiences who are media savvy and operate on social media. The emotional structure of post-humanitarian images is connected to ironic knowingness. Digital media have provided new technologies of sharing, re-shaping and circulating information that have paved way for new forms of engagement. Relationships to media seem to have become increasingly complex and reflexive (Baym 1998; Bailey 2002; Carpentier et al. 2013). The possibilities for audiences themselves to shape and manipulate images, for example by creating memes and vlogs, expand understanding of the process of media production as well as sensitivity to multiple interpretations (Bailey 2002; Jenkins 2003). Audiences are able to question and scrutinize the origins, authenticity and the emotional address of 'humanitarian' images more than before. This also means that campaign images with strong emotional appeal may appear too simplistic and manipulative. As a result, humanitarian campaigns are increasingly addressing audiences with playful irony. While striving to address reflexive audiences, post-humanitarian campaigns are also influenced by commercial corporate logic. Most importantly, however, the focus is 'us' in the West, and in the self-expression of Western audiences. The reflexive playfulness sidelines the victims and root causes of suffering and proposes the Western self in the centre of preoccupation (Chouliaraki 2013: 173).

It can be argued that such reflexive playfulness is emphasized in the individualized, networked structure of social media, which propels the self to the centre of acts of sharing and caring. An example of this would be the way social media profiles are used to show support for various causes. Recent examples include recolouring profile pictures to support victims of the 2015 terror attacks in Paris. These forms of technologized solidarity focus on the transformation of the self via the performance of good citizenship. Such feel-good activism on social media expresses solidarity, but risks forefronting self-expression rather than focusing on questions about justice, global inequality, and the root causes of

suffering (Chouliaraki 2013: 17–20; Orgad and Nikunen 2015). This is an example of affective practice being shaped by social formations and digital technologies to amplify particular individualized feel-good activism. Another area of exploration of emotional registers and moral agency is reality TV, described by Anna McCarthy (2007) as a 'neoliberal theatre of suffering'. Reality TV production includes variety of shows that explore problems connected with intimacy, relationships, self-confidence, economic difficulties and the body. John Corner (2004) aptly points out how emotions, experiences and the desire to be inside of experiences have become emphasized in television genres in the 2000s. In their seminal work on reality TV as a technology of affect, Beverly Skeggs and Helen Wood (2008; Wood et al. 2009) explore the management of intimate relationships through visualization of women's domestic work (on reality shows such as *Wife Swap*). By sensationalizing intimate relationships, reality television capitalizes on intimacy, and disseminates normalizing and problematically gendered versions of care and relationships.

The rise of 'charity TV', or 'ethical entertainment' (Ong 2015; Hawkins 2001) provide examples of these new forms of education or pedagogy where experts teach 'ordinary' people to improve themselves: how to help, care and solve problems (Nikunen 2016; Ouellette and Murray 2009; Redden 2007; Hirdman 2016). The feeling of reality is produced via extensive use of actuality footage, and on-location shooting (Raphael 2009) and extreme and staged situations that provoke conflict and strong emotions. Emotions operate as a certain kind of guarantee of the real in reality TV. The constructed situations of the reality format, where people are put in new, extreme or uncomfortable situations, create the main stage for emotions (Kilburn 2003). Narrative structures involving conflict and intimacy are used to bring emotions to the surface, in front of the camera for us all to witness.

A study I carried out (Nikunen 2016) focused on the emotional structure of a reality TV show that sought to capture how it feels to be a refugee. The Australian series *Go Back to Where You Came From* included six Australian participants who followed the journey undertaken by refugees – for example, staying in refugee camps and travelling by boat. One of the participants of *Go Back* (Season 1), Raquel, an openly racist young Australian, is pushed to encounter her feelings on a refugee camp in Kakuma. This confrontation forms the core of the narrative. The emotions she experiences, when confronting the reality of life in an African refugee camp, become visualized in reactions of fear and disgust when she withdraws from the company of others, refuses to eat food or go to the toilet, and eventually breaks down in front of camera. These situations, where emotions become voiced and visualized through tears, screams or laughter, operate as signs of authenticity, the 'money shot' of reality TV (Grindstaff 2002). In *Go Back*, as in most reality shows, these moments of tearful breakdowns are followed by moments of transformation, when participants experience a change of heart. Correspondingly Raquel transforms and becomes more accepting towards refugees after her breakdown. This is the classic narrative structure of reality TV where emotions operate simultaneously as signs of authenticity and as a moral compass: emotions we see and learn from. However, my analysis also found that while reality TV strove to

show 'authentic' emotions, it could hardly escape the obviousness of its narrative structure.

The above studies exploring the emotional address of media images and television shows, lean heavily on textual analysis of media texts and images. But what are the emotional contexts for the making of such images? What is the role of emotions in media production cultures? Next I move on behind the scenes, to discuss how research strives to understand the of role of emotions in television entertainment and journalistic work where the representations are made.

Media work and emotional labour

Emotions are an essential part of media work. It involves both excitement, fun, exhilaration as well as tension, stress, grief, horror and even trauma. It is also highly individualized. The concept of emotional labour, coined by Arlie Hochschild (1983) in her famous study of flight attendants, refers to ritualized display or suppression of emotions, the need to manage emotions to maintain hoped-for atmosphere in the workplace or in relations to customers – such as the smiles of flight attendants. The study drew attention to the ways in which emotional labour produces risk of alienation and stress as workers have to suppress their emotions and do substantial emotion management.

In journalistic work, emotional labour is often strongly present in the work of foreign correspondents and exceptional and unexpected events, such as wars and disasters or in the work of journalists who cover delicate social issues (abuse, poverty) (Richards and Rees 2011; Santos 2009; Hopper and Huxford 2015). Research on media work and emotions has found that the management of emotions is an increasingly important part of work in a sector that has become highly competitive, precarious and uncertain.

These researches point out the inherent contradiction of journalistic practice and values: emotionality appears central to journalistic story-telling, and to the mission of journalism to cover emotionally engaging events (disaster, death, loss, love) that also serve the commercial interests of media companies. However, at the same time, the professional understanding and outspoken values of journalism take a distance from emotions (Richards and Rees 2011; Pantti 2010; Wahl-Jorgensen 2013).

Research on media work and emotions often rely on interviews. This poses a challenge concerning how to treat emotions in such data: they are more about discourses of emotions than direct access to emotions. Interviews tend to reveal a lot about professional ideals and values rather than actual practices. As such they tell about values and meanings attached to emotions whereas ethnographic research with participant observation on workplace may better capture practices of managing emotions. Laura Grindstaff's (2002) ethnography on confessional talk shows discusses how producers work with the emotions of their guests, trying to extract emotional responses, tears or anger, on camera (money shot, as discussed earlier in context of reality TV). Grindstaff's study shows how central the

management of others' emotions are in talk shows. Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2011), in their ethnographic research on a British talent show, provided insight into the complexity of emotional labour, building on Grindstaff's study. Junior workers need to manage the performance of contestants, and their experience of it. The ability to influence someone's life, a transformation from anonymity to fame, adds to the pressure and as in the case of journalists, this was often dealt with by adopting a certain distance (Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2011: 171), although such emotional detachment was easier for some than others. The study points out the burden of emotional labour in a context where workers have little autonomy and have to work and coach others' emotions. While such work includes moments of fun and pleasure, creative work in media industries tends to be precarious, short-term, uncertain and competitive. These elements of work are likely to increase the demands of emotional labour by creating greater pressure and anxiety. As the spheres of personal and professional become increasingly intertwined in the digital era, the demands of emotional labour are amplified.

Love and hate on social media

Cynicism, irony and lulz. These words describe the sensibility of many social media on sites, such as 4chan, Tumblr and Reddit (Nagle 2017). If there is one place where emotions seem to be especially abundant and foregrounded, it is social media. In recent years social media have become an increasingly important site of research as a space where people gather to discuss topical issues, to form new political alliances and movements, to create their own media, to express their emotions and sentiments, to love, laugh and grieve, to harass others and to pick fights. No wonder that analysis of social media appears to have opened new avenues for exploration of media emotions. While previously researchers conducted focus group research or interviews on audiences, now social media appears to provide direct access to people's emotions and affective dynamics.

We can identify different approaches to social media and emotions: research on participation on social media platforms, discussion forums and networking sites examine how people express emotions and form collective emotions on social media environment; research on social media also examines how human interaction, expression of emotions may change in mediated context and how technologies and commercialized contexts shape and regulate emotions.

Studies examine collective formations of emotions (affective practices) on different levels: how emotions drive online discussions and attach people to particular debates, platforms and groups; how emotions are expressed, performed and purposefully provoked by verbal and visual means (Milner 2013). They can explore emotional intensities of debate: how quickly or slowly messages are responded to, and how extensive the debate becomes (Paasonen 2015a; Papacharissi 2014). Some research discusses emotion and affect on social media as contagious and viral, thus emphasizing their biological dimension (Lünenborg and Maier 2017).

An important aspect of studying emotions on social media is paying attention to the technological affordances that regulate emotions. In a similar way as in the case of humanitarian appeals, emotions are evoked and crafted with the specific media context. Social media platforms have their norms, rules and regulations that shape expressions and mood of discussions. For example, on Facebook the introduction of the 'like' button created an uplifting feel. As pointed out by José van Dijck (2013), however, the introduction of the like button was grounded in the commercial goal of gaining information on users advertisers. More accurate information is now gathered with the introduction of a range of emoticons to express anger, love, sadness, surprise, laughter and like – the new basic emotions of Facebook. This suggests that our expressions of emotion on social media are always part of the technological design of the platforms and forums.

Different social media groups and forums have their own sensibilities that are formulated in interaction between these designs, rules, regulations and user practices. For example, many closed health groups and groups for the bereaved have a supportive sensibility where members may know quite a lot about each other (Cooks et al. 2002; Jakoby and Reiser 2014), whereas political discussion groups may include hostile and aggressive debates (Nagle 2017; Nikunen 2015; Pöyhtäri et al. 2013). Some argue that commercial social media, by adopting only vague policies of moderation, enable and even enhance hostility and racism (Matamoros-Fernandez 2017).

Other researchers have explored affective practices (Wetherell 2012) in immigration debates on social media. In an earlier article, I argued that irony is the guiding sensibility (affective practice) of anti-immigrant online discussions, manifested as detachment and chilly humour, and as a linguistic style that makes particularly ironic use of vocabulary, reflecting a more general attitude in politics that distances itself from traditional media appearances and institutions (Nikunen 2015). My study highlighted the particular sensibility of political discourse when enhanced and amplified by the social media environment and its affordances. The affective practices of ironic detachment, trolling and lulz connected with social media subcultures, draw on transgression and reflexive playfulness (as discussed above in context of post-humanitarianism), but have 'spilled over' and become part of the affective practice of political groups that foster hate speech (Nagle 2017). These studies point out how emotions and affective practices are connected to social and political changes and may be influential on national and global politics.

These approaches explore emotions with mixture of methods from virtual ethnographies, textual analysis, observation and interviews. The development of media technologies and new smart devices, have also invited material approaches (McLuhan 1964) to communication and the senses. Such studies explore media as extensions of human bodies and the ways in which emotions are designed through technology. Such questions are connected with *mediatization*, a concept that draws attention to the ways in which media and everyday life are increasingly entangled (Couldry and Hepp 2017; see also Cushion and Powell in this volume). Changes in communication technologies and personalized devices are changing our

everyday life environments. With the advent of new touch-screen devices and VR technologies, the materialities and modalities of technology seem to be more intensively part of our sensitive and emotional interaction. The haptic, or sensitive, media approach examines the technological affordances that shape emotions/ experience (Malinowska and Miller 2017; Parisi et al. 2017; Lupton 2016).

Much of haptic media studies is interested in the new modalities that arise through media such as introduction of touch screen or the virtual kissing application (Parisi et al. 2017; Malinowska and Miller 2017). For example research on Skype explores how people express emotions, love, affection, longing and create new forms of being together intimately through screens (King-O'Riain 2014; Malinowska and Miller 2017). Studies look at the ways digital applications can shape 'love habits' (Cantó-Milà et al. 2014) and produce new forms of intimacy in everyday life but also frustration and sense of technological dependency and increased longing (King-O'Riain 2014; Cantó-Milà et al. 2014). Some researchers focus on the emotional reactions to media devices themselves: moral panic, rage, suspicion and pleasure caused by technologies that we use and often feel dependent on (Paasonen 2015b). Increasingly research is also exploring to what extend media themselves have become affective. Are media devices emotionally capable and responsive? Have we entered the era of sensitive media?

Data-driven sentiment

Social media may offer space for expressing emotions however at the same time they gather data on people's everyday lives, their interests and activities. Social media data has led to visions of getting access to the inner thoughts and feelings of people with unprecedented speed and scale. The promise of such data analysis is described by Mark Andrejevic (2013: 45) as 'the ability to capture human response and activity in ways that influence everything from policing and health care practices to the creation of goods and services'. The aim is to translate human emotion to hard data that can be used to capture 'public mood' and predict human behaviour and future events. A range of 'big data' approaches from topic modelling to corpus and network analysis are used to track moods and emotions on social media. New software is developed in order to better recognize emotions. While the previously introduced research has pointed out how emotions are crafted and shaped by media for commercial purposes, sentiment analysis itself can be seen as a part of this development. Indeed many media scholars are critical towards sentiment analysis because of its crudeness but also because it has been developed for marketing purposes rather than for enhancing common good.

Sentiment analysis is one of the tools that try to capture how people feel about certain topics, themes or products. Used predominantly in marketing and branding, however, it is increasingly used in academic research, in research done by media organizations, public institutions and NGOs. In short, sentiment analysis seeks to identify positive and negative sentiments from social media data through machine analysis. Sentiments are understood to be 'attitudes based on feeling' (Kennedy

2012: 438) through which we might be able to capture, and predict people's moods and reactions. A problem is that measuring emotions from online texts is far from simple. Machine analysis is not very good in interpreting nuances such as humour, irony and colloquialisms. The analysis is crude and sometimes absurd (Kennedy 2012: 441). Even categorizing texts into positive and negative sentiments is challenging – though new tools for machine analysis are being constantly developed. Dualist categorization of sentiments into positive and negative misses the complexity of emotions as well as the context of social media, where users may not express what they feel but *perform* feelings in various ways (Marwick and boyd 2010). Sentiment analysis leans on vast amounts of data and the idea is that quantity makes up for holes, misinterpretations and inaccuracies. The concerns voiced in media research point not only to the crudeness of sentiment analysis as a method but various ethical problems in data gathering and storage. Sentiment analysis is not explicit: people are rarely aware that their discussions are being monitored. These data driven technologies are also considered to be part of the practices that lead to a contemporary culture of surveillance and discrimination (Turow et al. 2015).

Data-driven technologies may give us general directions or tones, but they are often unable to understand complex nuances of discussions and uses of irony. These research technologies are driven particularly by commercial interests and therefore scholars remain sceptical about their capacity to understand emotions and point more to the problems of growing inequalities of data driven methods (Gangadharan 2012; Noble 2017).

Affective capitalism

The ways in which technology, markets and emotions have become intertwined in the digital era have introduced more theoretically driven work on media and emotions, such as work on 'affective capitalism'. Affective capitalism refers to a process, where capital has extended into new spaces, 'creating new markets by harnessing affect and intervening in intimate, domestic relationships' (Skeggs 2010: 30). The concept of affective capitalism points to blurred borderlines between public and private, increased time-flexibility and entrepreneurialism (Hearn 2010; Skeggs 2010; see also Karppi et al. 2016). This happens increasingly through media engagements (such as social media and mobile technologies), as our everyday lives are surrounded by media.

Discussions of individualization and neoliberalism point out how emotions are increasingly part of marketized systems of surveillance. Research on media technologies point out the emergence of an *atmosphere* of surveillance (Ellis et al. 2013; Andrejevic 2013) where citizens have become aware of the many ways in which media technologies track and gather information on users and monitor their everyday lives. Malinowska and Miller remind us how development of the emotional, sensitive technologies are connected with US military and publicly-funded scholarly research and with 'a model of emotional registers preferred by their makers, most of all the capacity for surveillance of conduct' (Malinowska and Miller 2017: 663).

These ideas propose that emotions appear more central than ever to society, politics and economics and they are made use of by new media technologies more effectively than before. Data analysts in technology companies may collect vast amount of data on emotions and feelings but this data is not necessarily used for public good. New data movements are arising that try to challenge the power of commercial companies, to democratize data – including data on our emotions.

These are important critical views concerning the ways in which emotions are part of contemporary markets and technologies. In all the case studies discussed, we can see how emotions serve commercial interests of the media, however, in different intensity and extent. Each approach provide understanding of how emotions, and affective practice, work in particular context. They show how emotions are experienced, managed, mobilized and geared in the context of media and how particular emotions carry particular kinds of moral force. In addition, these affective practices are significantly shaped by technologies and economies of media. Traditionally emotions have played an important role in adding commercial, attention value to representations. In recent years, emotions have become valuable as a form of data that can be collected through social media use and use of various media devices. View to the connections between media, emotions and society on a broader level, capture how dominant ideologies, economic or political structures may enhance, amplify or favour particular emotional structures.

While the notion of affective capitalism opens an important view to exploring media and emotions, it may also provide a somewhat grim view of emotions, affect and media. We need to remember that even if emotions are increasingly harnessed for markets and hateful messages flourish on discussion formus, there is still more to explore: media evoke sociability, understanding and enjoyment in life. Media can evoke a sense of solidarity and a desire to help. Listening to music and watching films can produce moments of delight and happiness, and remind us of sentiments of love and desire that give pleasure to life. To understand the complexity of emotions and media, we need contextual understanding of diverse repertoires of affective practices. This is why there is a need for multiple and multi-method approaches to media and emotions, from textual, virtual analysis to ethnography, to capture the complexity, multiplicity and contradictions of emotional engagements and affective practices around media and the ways in which they are connected with and shaped by social forces.

References

Ahmed, S. (2000), *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality*, London and New York: Routledge.

Ahmed, S. (2004), *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Andrejevic, M. (2013), *Infoglut: How Too Much Information is Changing the Way We Think and Know*, London and New York: Routledge.

Bailey, S. (2002), 'Virtuality and the Television Audience: The Case of Futurama', *The Communication Review*, 5 (3): 239–57.

Baym, N. (1998), 'The Emergence of On-line Community', in S. Jones (ed.), *Cyber-society 2.0: Revisiting Computer Mediated Communication and Community*, 35–68, London: SAGE Publications.

Berlant, L. (2011), *Cruel Optimism*, Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press.

Boltanski, L. (1999), *Distant Suffering: Morality, Media and Politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cantó-Milà, N., F. Nunëz and S. Seebach (2014), 'Send Me a Message and I'll Call You Back: The Late Modern Webbing of Everyday Love Life', in T. Bensky and E. Fisher (eds), *Internet and Emotions*, 144–60, London and New York: Routledge.

Carpentier, N., K. Schroder and L. Hallett (2013), A*udience Transformations: Shifting Audience Positions in Late Modernity*, London and New York: Routledge.

Carter, P. (2013), 'Poststructuralist Theory and Sociolinguistics: Mapping the Linguistic Turn in Social Theory', *Language and Linguistics Compass*, 7 (11): 580–96.

Chouliaraki, L. (2013), *The Ironic Spectator: Solidarity in the Age of Post-humanitarianism*, Cambridge: Polity.

Clough, P. and J. Halley, eds (2007), *The Affective Turn: Theorizing the Social*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Cooks, L., M. Castaneda and E. Scharrer (2002), '"There's 'O' Place Like Home": Searching for Community on Oprah.com', in M. Consalvo and S. Paasonen (eds), *Women & Everyday Uses of the Internet*, New York: Peter Lang.

Corner, J. (2004), 'Performing the Real: Documentary Diversions', in S. Murray and L. Ouellette (eds), *Reality TV: Remaking Television Culture*, 44–64, New York: New York University Press.

Couldry, N. and A. Hepp (2017), *The Mediated Construction of Reality*, Cambridge: Polity.

Damasio, A. (1994), *Descartes Error: Emotion, Reason and the Human Brain*, New York: Putnam.

Dolcos F., K. S. LaBar and R. Cabeza (2004), 'Interaction Between the Amygdala and the Medial Temporal Lobe Memory System Predicts Better Memory for Emotional Events', *Neuron*, 42: 855–63.

Duncan, S. and L.F. Barrett (2007), 'Affect is a Form of Cognition: A Neurobiological Analysis', *Cognition and Emotion*, 21(6): 1184–1211.

Dyer, R. (1985), 'Gay Male Porn: Coming to Terms', *Jump Cut: A Review of Contemporary Media*, 30 (March): 27–29.

Ekman, P. (1992), 'All Emotions are Basic', in P. Ekman and R. Davidson (eds), *The Nature of Emotions: Fundamental Questions*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Ellis, D., I. Tucker and D. Harper (2013), 'The Affective Atmospheres of Surveillance', *Theory & Psychology*, 23 (6): 716–.

Gangadharan, S. (2012), 'Digital Inclusion and Data Profiling', *First Monday*, 17 (5).

Gregg, M. and G. Seigworth, eds (2010), *The Affect Theory Reader*, Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press.

Grindstaff, L. (2002), *The Money Shot: Trash, Class, and the Making of Television Talk Shows*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Haidt, J. (2003), 'The Moral Emotions', in R. J. Davidson, K. R. Scherer and H. H. Goldsmith (eds) *Handbook of Affective Sciences*, 852–870, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hawkins, G. (2001), 'The Ethics of Television', *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 4 (4): 412–26.

Hearn, A. (2010), 'Structuring Feeling: Web 2.0, Online Ranking and Rating, and the Digital "Reputation" Economy', *Ephemera: Theory & Politics in Organisation*, 10 (3/4).

Hesmondhalgh, D. (2013), *Why Music Matters*, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Hesmondhalgh, D. and S. Baker (2011), *Creative Labor: Media Work in Three Cultural Industries*, London and New York: Routledge.

Hirdman, A. (2016), 'The Passion of Mediated Shame: Affective Reactivity and Classed Otherness in Reality TV', *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 19 (3): 283–96.

Hochschild, A. (1983), *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Höijer, B. (2004), 'Discourse of Global Compassion: The Audience and Media Reporting of Human Suffering', *Media, Culture & Society*, 26 (4): 513–31.

Hopper, K.M. and J. Huxford (2015), 'Gathering Emotion: Examining Newspaper Journalists' Engagement in Emotional Labor', *Journal of Media Practice*, 16 (1): 25–41.

Jakoby, N. and S. Reiser (2014), 'Grief 2.0: Exploring Virtual Cemeteries', in T. Bensky and E. Fisher (eds), *Internet and Emotions*, 65–78, London and New York: Routledge.

Jenkins, H. (2003), 'Quentin Tarantino's Star Wars? Digital Cinema, Media Convergence and Participatory Culture', in D. Thorburn and H. Jenkins (eds), *Rethinking Media Change*, Cambridge: The MIT Press.

Karppi, T., L. Kähkönen, M. Mannevuo, M. Pajala and T. Sihvonen (2016), 'Affective Capitalism: Investments and Investigations', *ephemera*, 16 (4): 1–13.

Kennedy, H. (2012), 'Perspectives on Sentiment Analysis', *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 56 (4): 435–50.

Kilburn, R. W. (2003), *Staging the Real: Factual TV Programming in the Age of Big Brother*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.

King-O'Riain, R. (2014), 'Transconnective Space, Emotions, and Skype: The Transnational Emotional Practices of Mixed International Couples in the Republic of Ireland', in T. Bensky and E. Fisher (eds), *Internet and Emotions*, 131–43, London and New York: Routledge.

Koffman, O., S. Orgad and R. Gill (2017), 'Girl Power and "Selfie humanitarianism"', *Continuum*, 29 (2): 157–68.

Kyrölä, K. (2014), *The Weight of Images: Affect, Body Image and Fat in the Media*, Farnham: Ashgate.

Lünenborg, M. and T. Maier (2017), 'The Turn to Affect and Emotion in Media Studies', *Media and Communication*, 6 (3): 1–4.

Lupton, D. (2016), *The Quantified Self: A Sociology of Self-tracking*, Cambridge: Polity.

Lutz, C. and L. Abu-Lughod, eds (1990), *Language and the Politics of Emotion: Studies in Emotion and Social Interaction*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Malinowska, A. and T. Miller (2017), 'Sensitive Media', *Open Cultural Studies*, 2017 (1): 660–65.

Marwick, A. and d. boyd (2010), '"I tweet honestly, I tweet passionately: Twitter Users, Context Collapse, and the Imagined Audience', *New Media & Society*, 13 (1): 114–33.

Massumi, B. (2002), *Parables of the Virtual: Movements, Affect, Sensation*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Matamoros-Fernandez, A. (2017), 'Platformed Racism: The Mediation and Circulation of an Australian Race-based Controversy on Twitter, Facebook and YouTube', *Information, Communication & Society*, 20 (6): 930–46.

McCarthy, A. (2007), 'Reality Television: A Neoliberal Theater of Suffering', *Social Text*, 25: 17–42.

McLuhan, M. (1964/1999), *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Milner, R. M. (2013), 'Hacking the Social: Internet Memes, Identity Antagonism, and the Logic of the Lulz', *The Fibreculture Journal*, 22/2013.

Moeller, S. (1999), *Compassion Fatigue: How the Media Sell Disease, Famine, War and Death*, New York: Routledge.

Moll, J., R. Zahn, R. de Oliveira-Souza, F. Krueger and J. Grafman (2005), 'The Neural Basis of Human Moral Cognition', *Nature Reviews Neuroscience*, 6: 799–809.

Nabi, R. (2003), 'The Framing Effects of Emotion: Can Discrete Emotions Influence Information Recall and Policy Preference?', *Communication Research*, 30: 224–47.

Nabi, R. and A. Prestin (2016), 'Unrealistic Hope and Unnecessary Fear: Exploring How Sensationalistic News Stories Influence Health Behavior Motivation', *Health Communication*, 31 (9): 1115–26.

Nagle, A. (2017), *Kill All Normies: Online Culture Wars from 4chan and Tumblr to Trump and the Alt-right*, Alresford: Zero Books.

Nikunen, K. (2015), 'Politics of Irony as Emerging Sensibility of Anti-Immigrant Debate', in R. Andreassen and K. Vitus (eds), *Affectivity and Race: Studies from Nordic Contexts*, Farnham: Ashgate.

Nikunen, K. (2016), 'Media, Passion and Humanitarian Reality Television', *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 19 (3): 265–82.

Noble, S. (2017), *Algorithms of Oppression: How Search Engines Reinforce Racism*, New York: New York University Press.

Nussbaum, M. (2001), *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ochsner, K. and J. Gross (2005), 'The Cognitive Control of Emotion', *Trends in Cognitive Science*, 9: 242–49.

Ong, J. (2015), *The Poverty of Television: The Mediation of Suffering in Class-Divided Philippines*, Cambridge: Anthem Press.

Orgad, S. and K. Nikunen (2015), 'The Humanitarian Makeover', *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, 12 (3): 229–51.

Ouellette, L. and S. Murray, eds (2009), *Reality TV: Remaking of Television Culture*, New York: New York University Press.

Paasonen, S. (2011), *Carnal Resonance: Affect and Online Pornography*, Cambridge: The MIT Press.

Paasonen, S. (2015a), 'A Midsummer's Bonfire: Affective Intensities of Online Debate', in S. Paasonen, B. Hills and M. Petit (eds), *Networked Affect*, 27–42, Cambridge: The MIT Press.

Paasonen, S. (2015b), 'As Networks Fail: Affect, Technology, and the Notion of the User', *Television & New Media*, 16 (8): 701–16.

Pantti, M. (2010), 'The Value of Emotion: An Examination of Television Journalists' Notions on Emotionality', *European Journal of Communication*, 25 (2): 168–81.

Papacharissi, Z. (2014), *Affective Publics: Sentiment, Technology, Politics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Parisi, D., M. Paterson and J. Archer (2017), 'Haptic Media Studies', *New Media & Society*, 19 (10): 1513–22.

Pessoa, L. (2009), 'Cognition and Emotion', *Scholarpedia*, 4 (1): 4567.

Pöyhtäri, R., P. Haara and P. Raittila (2013), *Vihapuhe sanavapautta kaventamassa [Hate Speech Limiting the Freedom of Speech]*, TUP: Tampere.

Raphael, C. (2009), 'The Political Economic Origins of Reali-TV', in L. Ouellette and S. Murray (eds), *Reality TV: Remaking of Television Culture*, 123–40, New York: New York University Press.

Redden, G. (2007), 'Makeover Morality and Consumer Culture', in D. Heller (ed.), *Makeover Television: Realities Remodelled*, 150–64, London: I.B. Tauris.

Richards, B. and G. Rees (2011), 'The Management of Emotion in British Journalism', *Media, Culture & Society*, 33 (6): 851–67.

Rosaldo, M. (1984), 'Towards an Anthropology of Self and Feeling', in R. Shweder and R. A. Levine (eds), *Culture Theory: Essays on Mind, Self and Emotion*, 137–57, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Santos, J. (2009), *Daring to Feel: Violence, the News Media and their Emotions*, Plymouth: Lexington Books.

Seu, I.B. (2010), 'Doing Denial: Audiences' Reactions to Human Rights Appeals', *Discourse and Society*, 21 (4).

Skeggs, B. (2005), 'Exchange, Value and Affect: Bourdieu and "the Self"', *The Sociological Review*, 52 (2): 75–95.

Skeggs, B. (2010), 'The Value of Relationships: Affective Scenes and Emotional Performances', *Feminist Legal Studies*, 18: 29–51.

Skeggs B. and H. Wood (2008), 'The Labour of Transformation and Circuits of Value "Around" Reality Television', *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies*, 22 (4): 559–72.

Sontag, S. (2003), *Regarding the Pain of Others*, New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

Tester, K. (2001), *Compassion, Morality and Media*, Buckingham: Open University.

Thrift, N. (2008), *Non-representational Theory: Space, Politics and Affect*, London and New York: Routledge.

Turner, J. and J. Stets (2005), *Sociology of Emotions*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Turow, J., L. McGuigan and E. Maris (2015), 'Making Data Mining a Natural Part of Life: Physical Retailing, Customer Surveillance and the 21st Century Social Imaginary', *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 18 (4–5): 464–78.

Wahl-Jorgensen, K. (2013), 'The Strategic Ritual of Emotionality: A Case Study of Pulitzer Prize-winning Articles', *Journalism*, 14 (1): 129–45.

van Dijck, J. (2013), *The Culture of Connectivity: A Critical History of Social Media*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Vestergaard, A. (2008), 'Humanitarian Branding in the Media', *Journal of Language and Politics*, 7 (3): 471–93.

Wetherell, M. (2012), *Affect and Emotion: A New Social Scientific Understanding*, London: SAGE Publications.

White, G. (1993), 'Emotions Inside Out: The Anthropology of Affect', in M. Lewis and J. Haviland-Jones (eds), *Handbook of Emotions*, 29–39, New York: The Guilford Press.

Williams, R. (1961), *The Long Revolution*, London: Chatto & Windus.

Williams, R. (1968/1987), *Drama from Ibsen to Brecht*, rev. ed. London: The Hogarth Press.

Wood, H., B. Skeggs and N. Thumim (2009), '"It's just sad": Affect, Judgement, and Emotional Labour', in S. Gillis and J. Hollows (eds), *Reality Television Viewing: Feminism, Domesticity and Popular Culture*, New York: Taylor and Francis.

Zelizer, B. (2010), *About to Die: How News Images Move the Public*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

CONTRIBUTORS

C. W. Anderson, Professor of Media and Communication, University of Leeds.

Mike Berry, Lecturer, School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies, Cardiff University.

Manuel Castells, Wallis Annenberg Professor of Communication Technology and Society, Annenberg School of Communication, University of Southern California.

Paula Chakravartty, Associate Professor, Department of Media, Culture and Communication and the Gallatin School, New York University.

James Curran, Professor of Communications, Goldsmiths, University of London.

Michael Curtin, Duncan and Suzanne Mellichamp Professor of Film and Media Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara.

Stephen Cushion, Reader at School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies, Cardiff University.

Susan J. Douglas, Catherine Kellogg Professor and Arthur F. Thurnau Professor of Communication Studies, University of Michigan.

Daniel C. Hallin, Professor of Communication, University of California, San Diego.

David Hesmondhalgh, Professor of Media, Music and Culture, University of Leeds.

Marwan M. Kraidy, Professor of Communication and the Anthony Shadid Chair in Global Media, Politics and Culture, Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania.

Paolo Mancini, Professor of the Sociology of Communications, University of Perugia.

Sriram Mohan, PhD candidate, Department of Communication Studies, University of Michigan-Ann Arbor.

Susan Murray, Associate Professor of Media, Culture and Communication, New York University.

Kaarina Nikunen, Professor of Media and Communication Research, University of Tampere.

Alison Powell, Assistant Professor, Department of Media and Communications, London School of Economics and Political Science.

Aswin Punathambekar, Associate Professor of Media Studies, University of Michigan-Ann Arbor.

Jack Linchuan Qiu, Professor, School of Journalism and Communication, Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Michael Schudson, Professor of Journalism, Graduate School of Journalism, Columbia University.

INDEX

[Index to Come]