

20.

NATIONAL/TRANSNATIONAL/GLOBAL

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Overview

It is now commonplace in media studies to state that media are global. But what does it mean to be global? How do we analyze the role that globalization plays in the production, distribution, and consumption of media around the world? Let's begin with a few media examples that could be considered global in different ways. First, consider a spectacular global sporting event like the Cricket World Cup match held on March 29, 2015 in Melbourne, Australia, which was broadcast live into millions of homes simultaneously via television and the Internet across international boundaries and time zones. Next, take the globalization of the *Idols* format of reality television, inspired by a New Zealand reality show called *Popstars* (TV2, 1999), and first produced as a British reality TV show *Pop Idols* (ITV, 2001–03) that in turn was adapted over several years to create many different national versions such as *American Idol* (FOX, 2002–16), *Canadian Idol* (CTV, 2003–08), and *Indian Idol* (SET, 2004–present) as well as regional versions such as *Latin American Idol* (SET, 2006–09) and *Arab Idol* (MBC, 2011–present). Finally, look at how Psy's "Gangnam Style" music video—inspired by, and a parody of the very trendy Gangnam district in Seoul, South Korea—spread rapidly around the globe in 2012 to become the first viral sensation to get over a billion views on YouTube.

To discuss globalization in these very different examples of different types of media from different parts of the world in the same way would obviously require a vast overgeneralization. If globalization means different things to different people in different places at different times, then how can we analyze these differences that constitute global media? This chapter outlines the different ways in

which globalization has been examined in the fields of international communications and global media studies. It provides an overview of the wide range of scholarship that has critically interrogated concepts such as the "national," "transnational" and "global" in media studies using the following frameworks: (1) nationalism and transnationalism, (2) cultural imperialism and cultural globalization, and (3) the "global village" and deterritorialization. Finally, this chapter introduces the methodological framework of "process geography" for critically evaluating the dynamic relationality of global, national, and local media in specific contexts, and it describes a case study from the author's research on the process geography of globalization by drawing on an essay titled "Regional Cinemas and Globalization in India."¹

Nationalism and Transnationalism

In global media studies, scholars often view media as expressions of national cultures. In an essay titled, "The Fixity of the Nation in International Media Studies," Divya McMillin critically examines the reasons why the nation-state is considered a cohesive unit of analysis.² Drawing on John Breuilly's demarcation of common approaches used by scholars to study nation-states and nationalisms, McMillin outlines four methodological perspectives.³ They are (1) the nationalist approach in which the nation traces its identity back to some originary myths about premodern cultural histories, symbols, and memories; (2) the Marxist approach that critiques nationalism as modern ideology that emerges in relation to the upheavals caused by industrial capitalism in eighteenth-century Europe; (3) the psychological approach wherein the nation is seen as a modern response to an innate psychological

need among humans to organize themselves into large collectives based on proto-nationalist or tribal desires to associate with others who share similar attributes such as skin color, language, or religion; and (4) the communications approach that explains how diverse groups of people can create and sustain a sense of community that transcends their many differences through a process of communication.

A very influential framework in the communications approach for analyzing the relationship between media and nationalism in modern societies is derived from Benedict Anderson's well-known book, *Imagined Communities*.⁴ Anderson defines **imagined communities** as groups of people dispersed across time and space who do not meet each other face to face, but imagine themselves as part of the same community. For example, Anderson shows how a group of very diverse people dispersed across time and space in any given place can read a story in a newspaper or a magazine and feel an imagined sense of connectedness with other readers of the same story. Anderson argues that collective imaginations of nations as communities were facilitated by the rise of what he called **print-capitalism** in Europe and in European colonies in Asia, Africa, and the Americas during the Industrial Revolution. The confluence of printing technologies with the rise of industrial capitalism, Anderson argues, played a crucial role in the mass production and consumption of shared languages and cultural histories among an emergent group of middle-class readers of mass media like newspapers and magazines.

While Anderson's formulation of "imagined communities," has been enormously influential in global media studies, it has been criticized for many shortcomings. In *Provincializing Europe*, Dipesh Chakrabarty faults Anderson for unquestioningly locating the origins of all nationalist imaginations in Europe and for describing the spread of nationalism in the colonial world largely in relation to European discourses of modernity, industrialization, and capitalism. Chakrabarty also criticizes Anderson for celebrating the power of print-capitalism to create a collective sense of national identity and for ignoring the ways in which marginalized groups can resist such collective imaginations or imagine alternative ways of creating communities within and beyond the nation.⁵ Another strand of critique comes from media scholars who argue that Anderson's use of print-capitalism as a historical framework is highly problematic for analyzing the more contemporary discourses of electronic capitalism. In *Modernity at Large*, Arjun Appadurai

reworks Anderson's concept of imagined communities and coins the term "imagined worlds" to describe how in an age of globalization, electronic media like radio, television, and the Internet can easily cross national and international borders and instantaneously reach audiences beyond the nation.⁶ However, in a polemically titled essay, "Television and the Nation: Does this Matter Any More?" Graeme Turner contends that reports of the death of the nation-state in electronic capitalism are greatly exaggerated.⁷ Answering the rhetorical question in the subtitle of his essay with an emphatic "yes," Turner reminds readers that television broadcasting (i.e., reaching a mass audience) has always been central to the operation of the public sphere in modern nation-states. To Michael Curtin's critique that the nation-state may no longer be a "sufficient site"⁸ for analyzing the role of media in global contexts, Turner responds that the nation still remains an unavoidable site.

Turner concedes that the centrality of the nation-state and the dominance of national broadcasting in the public sphere have been challenged by globalization and the rise of narrowcasting technologies like cable and online and digital media that fragment the national audiences into niche segments. But he cautions against hasty announcements of the "end of broadcasting" because he finds that there are certain areas, such as live events, sports, and national celebrations, in which broadcasting remains the most widely available national medium. Also, there are always occasions where nation-states need to address all their citizens collectively. Therefore, Turner opines that there will always be room for national broadcasting systems in most countries. Finally, Turner argues that the everydayness of broadcasting and the ways in which television has become ingrained in the daily rituals of the viewing public's individual and collective lives would suggest that the national model of broadcasting will remain a powerful and viable option in the near future.

Echoing Turner's sentiments, John Sinclair uses the telenovela genre as a case study to support his argument about the persistence of national broadcasting in Latin America.⁹ The national model of broadcasting persists in Latin America, Sinclair suggests, due to the enormous popular appeal of telenovelas that have historically been produced and consumed in very national contexts. Surveying the history of and the current growth strategies for globalization of major Latin American media corporations, Sinclair finds that national broadcasters such as Brazil's TV Globo, Mexico's Televisa, Venezuela's

Venevision, and Argentina's Telefe depend in different ways on the success of the telenovela genre in their respective national markets as they attempt to move beyond broadcasting and into global markets and digital platforms. Therefore, Sinclair concludes, at least from the perspective of media in Latin America, we are not yet in a post-broadcasting era.

Similarly, the question of the nation has also been at the center of the debates about the globalization of cinema around the world. As Stephen Crofts points out, the term **national cinema** has traditionally been used to refer to cinematic cultures and industries that are not Hollywood.¹⁰ Crofts outlines different varieties of national cinemas such as European and Third World entertainment cinemas, Anglophone cinemas beyond Hollywood, state-controlled and state subsidized cinemas, and regional cinemas. As Crofts argues, the "national cinema" framework has been a particularly useful methodological tool in film studies for giving voice to the diverse cinematic traditions that exist and flourish between, betwixt, and beyond the globally dominant Hollywood. However, one of its key limitations is that U.S. cinema is almost never described as a national cinema. As a result, many scholars in global media studies have called for the **de-Westernization** of media studies by embracing more transnational methodologies that are not centered on the U.S. nation-state. This type of scholarship is evidenced by the recent spate of books with titles such as *De-Westernizing Media Studies*, *De-Westernizing Film Studies*, *De-Westernizing Communication Research*, and *Internationalizing Internet Studies: Beyond the Anglophone Paradigm*.¹¹

At the same time, scholars within the traditions of U.S. media studies and American studies have called for a **New Americanism** that moves away from an exclusive focus on the nation-state as a unit of analysis. For example, the influential book series on "New Americanists" from Duke University Press edited by Donald E. Pease Jr. seeks to "displace the preconstituted categories and master narratives of an earlier American studies."¹² Indicative of the "new Americanist" turn in American studies are titles from the series such as *Trans-Americanity* by José David Saldívar, *Hemispheric Imaginings* by Gretchen Murphy, *Virtual Americas* by Paul Giles, *Black Empire* by Michelle Ann Stephens, and *The Futures of American Studies* edited by Robyn Wiegman and Donald E. Pease.¹³ In media studies, the work of scholars like Michele Hilmes in *Network Nations: Transnational History of American Broadcasting*, Timothy Havens in *Black Television Travels: African American Media*

around the Globe, Ramon Lobato in *Shadow Economies of Cinema: Mapping Informal Film Distribution* and Neil Campbell in *The Rhizomatic West: Representing the American West in a Transnational, Global Media Age* are particularly noteworthy of this mode of scholarship.¹⁴ These media scholars have advanced a valuable methodological framework for displacing naturalized categories and master narratives of earlier American media studies and for historicizing the always-already transnational/global trajectories of U.S. media industries and cultures.

Cultural Imperialism and Cultural Globalization

To counter Eurocentric and U.S.-centric master narratives implicit in Western histories of nationalism, many scholars in the fields of international communications and media studies have defined globalization in terms of an unequal set of economic relations between Western "centers" and non-Western "peripheries." For example, influenced by the world systems theory of Immanuel Wallerstein, media scholars like Herbert I. Schiller, Fred Fejes, and Oliver Boyd-Barrett argued that the world had reached a new stage of **cultural imperialism** with the rise of transnational media corporations that spread American media and culture around the globe after World War II.¹⁵ Similarly, Ariel Dorfman and Armand Mattelart,¹⁶ in *How to Read Donald Duck*, provided a scathing critique of the power of Disney comic books to disseminate American cultural values and capitalist ideologies in Latin America by creating a dependency among Latin American audiences for U.S. media products.

Writing in the early 1970s, Dorfman and Mattelart found that Disney—both the man and the company—used comic books, cartoons, and animated films to create a "common sense" view of the modern world in which the primary source of wealth is always the creativity of the Western bourgeoisie, which gives them the advantage to succeed in global capitalism. For example, in their close textual analyses of comic books featuring the international adventures of Donald Duck with Huey, Dewey, and Louie in Latin America, Africa, and Asia, Dorfman and Mattelart argue that Disney represented cultures of the Global South as decrepit ruins of past civilizations. In these comics, the ancient treasures of the civilizational ruins in Asia, Africa, and Latin America are shown to be easily available for exploitation by adventurous and enterprising Western explorers like Donald and his young nephews. Therefore, Dorfman and Mattelart

argue, Disney's adventure narratives produced a radical break between the present-day inhabitants of the Global South and the supposed annihilation of their civilizational ancestors. Thus disconnected from their cultural pasts, the young consumers of Disney comics in the Global South read the adventure stories of Donald Duck and his nephews not as fantasy tales but as instructions for how to live in a world dominated by the excesses of capitalist consumer culture emanating from Hollywood. In spite of providing a seemingly compelling critique of the global power of American media like Disney comics, there are many limitations of the cultural imperialism and dependency theories proposed by Marxist scholars like Schiller, Dorfman, Mattelart, and many others. In response to these limitations, media scholars in the theoretical traditions of cultural globalization have advanced several critiques to reframe the debate over the cultural power of media around the world.

In his well-known books, *Cultural Imperialism and Globalization and Culture*, John Tomlinson defines **cultural globalization** as a methodology for interrogating the leading role that culture plays in making life meaningful in the various dimensions of globalization like politics, economics, technology, and language. He critiques the cultural imperialism theorists for assuming that the economic power of global capitalism can be equated with its cultural effects in diverse local contexts and for arguing without any empirical evidence that those effects are felt uniformly by people around the world. Secondly, Tomlinson finds it curious that cultural imperialism theories that seek to critique Western dominance emerge from a rather Western-centric notion of culture that is based in stereotypical characterizations of non-Western cultures as being pure in their traditional authenticity and unspoiled by any previous contact with other outside cultures. Finally, Tomlinson argues that the cultural imperialism thesis fails to account for the creative power of audiences to resist the domination that can occur in even the most exploitative contexts of imperialism.¹⁷

In a powerful rebuttal of the cultural imperialism thesis, Tamar Liebes and Elihu Katz in their book, *The Export of Meaning: Cross-Cultural Readings of Dallas*, analyze the diverse responses of audiences in Israel (and later in Japan) to argue that cultural differences play an important role in the interpretation of globally distributed American television shows like *Dallas* (CBS, 1978–91).¹⁸ Similarly, Ien Ang in her pioneering study *Watching Dallas* demonstrates how female television viewers in the Netherlands often made

alternative meanings of the dominant cultural codes embedded in the globally distributed American television show *Dallas* and thus asserted their own sense of identity, difference, nationality, and transnationality.¹⁹

In an article published in 2007 titled "Television Fictions Around the World," Ang looks back at, and updates, her early critique of cultural imperialism outlined in *Watching Dallas* to examine how the television melodrama has evolved around the world in the wake of *Dallas*.²⁰ Ang argues that after the massive global success of *Dallas*, the soap opera format was adopted by many national television industries around the world. The result was what Ang calls the glocalization of the TV melodrama genre. A neologism coined by Roland Robertson, **glocalization** has been used in media studies to refer to how media formats travel around the world through a process where the format and the formula are standardized globally, but production of narrative content is always specific to local contexts.²¹

As examples of glocalization, Ang mentions the soap opera *Yearnings* (1990) shown on China's national broadcasting service CCTV, the hybrid genre of Ramadan television serials produced in Egypt (and later in other parts of the Islamic world), and Hindu mythological epics like *Ramayan* (1987–88) and *Mahabharat* (1988–90) telecast by the Indian national network Doordarshan. In each of these cases, Ang finds that the glocalization of TV melodrama was made possible not only by embracing the generic conventions of *Dallas*, but also by adapting the genre to the specific national context by incorporating culturally specific content that would resonate with the cultural sensibilities of the national audiences. Therefore, Ang argues that glocalization of television fictions around the world must be understood in terms of the relationship between the proliferation of global formats (such as *Dallas*), the diversity of local variations (various versions of *Dallas* in different national contexts), and the cultural specificity of content in each context.

To understand the central role of cultural context in the glocalization of TV melodramas, Ang compares the rise of Japanese "trendy" dramas with the rise of the hybrid "dramedy" genre in U.S. prime-time schedules in the 1990s. Situating these transformations in relation to the show *Dallas*, Ang recalls how in *Watching Dallas* she outlined two different ways in which viewers identified with the melodramatic texts of the soap opera genre: (1) affective mode of pleasure—the emotional pleasure of viewers who take melodrama seriously, and (2) ironic pleasure—the pleasure of viewers who

like to poke fun at and thus neutralize the emotional pleasures of melodrama. While viewers in the first category derive pleasure in being swept away by the emotional highs and lows of the narrative, viewers in the second category derive pleasure by claiming distance from the emotional excess by knowingly telling themselves and others, "I love watching it *because* it is so bad."²²

In the United States, soap operas like *Dynasty* (ABC, 1981–89) and TV melodramas that followed *Dallas* tried to replicate this formula for success. Although *Dallas* and *Dynasty* belonged to the same soap opera genre, *Dynasty* tried to differentiate itself from *Dallas* in some important ways. While *Dallas* drew on conventions of melodrama to connect with the affective modes of pleasure of its viewers, *Dynasty* tried to set itself apart by poking fun at melodramatic conventions, and at itself, by using irony, parody, exaggeration, and outlandish excess (and thus presenting itself as a more self-reflexive than *Dallas*). By the 1990s, Ang argues, the affective mode of pleasure in taking melodrama seriously had become "uncool" in American prime-time television, and the ironic pleasure of poking fun at one's own emotional identification with melodramatic excess had become "trendy" and "cool." The result was the rise of a new hybrid genre of "dramedy" that combined elements of drama and comedy. Some of the popular shows in the United States that Ang lists as part of the dramedy trend include *Moonlighting* (ABC, 1985–89), *Melrose Place* (FOX, 1992–99), *Ally McBeal* (FOX, 1997–2002), *Sex and the City* (HBO, 1998–2004), and *Desperate Housewives* (ABC, 2004–12).

During the same period in the 1990s in East Asia, however, Ang finds that viewers were being swept away by a new genre called "trendy" dramas. Unlike the ironic mode of engagement preferred by the producers of U.S. dramedies, the makers of trendy dramas—first in Japan and then in Korea—invoked melodrama's emotional realism to focus on high-quality youth-oriented serials that showcased romantic relations among young professionals in modern, stylish, and gorgeous contemporary urban settings. Ang argues that the popularity of Japanese trendy dramas like *Tokyo Love Story* (Fuji Television, 1991) and Korean dramas like *Winter Sonata* (KBS2, 2002) can be attributed to their ability to attract a new generation of viewers in East Asia by using the emotional realism of melodrama to represent the tensions between modernity and tradition in the everyday lives of urban youth.

By highlighting the two very different trajectories in the evolution of the melodrama genre after

Dallas—ironic dramedies in the United States and trendy dramas in East Asia—Ang demonstrates how cultural context is a crucial factor in media production, circulation, and consumption in different parts of the world. Therefore, Ang concludes, the different trajectories of dramedy in the United States and trendy drama in East Asia provide compelling evidence in favor of theories of hybridity in cultural globalization. For Ang, **hybridity** is best defined as the linkage between the global and the local using terms such as "glocalization."

The long-standing debates between theories of cultural globalization and cultural imperialism about categories such as "global," "local," "national," etc. have been extremely influential in international communications and global media studies for revealing the many diverse trajectories of uneven media flows around the world. Moreover, the cultural globalization and cultural imperialism perspectives have been instrumental in providing much-needed correctives to the overly optimistic picture of globalization painted by technological enthusiasts, who drawing on Marshall McLuhan, see mass media as the harbingers of an idyllic "global village."²³

The Global Village and Deterritorialization

Written in the midst of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union, McLuhan's vision of uniting the world into a **global village** emerged from his utopian faith in the power of new media technologies such as satellites, transoceanic cables, and television networks to cross boundaries and increase international and intercultural communication. McLuhan's concept of the "global village" captivated public imagination and became a popular metaphor for understanding the crucial role media play in the process of globalization. McLuhan attained a celebrity status in North American popular culture, was featured on cover pages of leading magazines like *Newsweek*, and was headlined in influential newspapers like *The New York Times* as the prophet of a new global order.²⁴ But McLuhan was also roundly criticized by leading media scholars of the time, such as Raymond Williams, for being too eager to celebrate the power of technological forms to effect positive social change, and for being completely ahistorical in his analysis of globalization.²⁵ Williams argued that McLuhan's catchy slogans like "the medium is the message" failed to highlight how dominant social authorities can and do always select and control how

new technologies operate in the world. At the same time, Williams argued, McLuhan's other slogans like "the medium is the message"²⁶—which claimed to reveal how media extend the human sensorium—could not account for how media audiences can and do always challenge the power of new media technologies and transform the communicative practices of those technologies in society.

In more recent times, however, the "global village" metaphor has been revived by media scholars and journalists to emphasize the growing power of digital, mobile, and social media technologies to connect places, people, and communities around the world while also circumventing the authority of nation-states and transnational corporations in the information age. Titles such as *McLuhan's Global Village Today: Transatlantic Perspectives, From Rural Village to Global Village: Telecommunications for Development in the Information Age*, and *Digital McLuhan: A Guide to the Information Millennium* are indicative of this (re)turn to McLuhan in global/digital media studies in the twenty-first century.²⁷ For example, in *Digital McLuhan*, Paul Levinson argues that McLuhan's "global village" was not a fundamentally flawed concept as his critics argued, but instead was an idea way ahead of its time. During McLuhan's time, the simultaneity of global communications that electronic media such as satellites and radio and television broadcasting could provide was based largely on one-way transmissions between senders and receivers. Thus, Levinson argues that the electronic villagers in McLuhan's global village were passive consumers who could only eavesdrop on other people's communications and media interactions. Levinson claims that in the digital age, McLuhan's vision of the "global village" has been more fully realized because technologies such as the Internet enable people around the world to interact with each other instantaneously in real time, thus opening up the possibilities for more democratic participation and autonomous communication.²⁸

Although media scholars like Levinson are very optimistic about the power of digital technologies to realize McLuhan's ideals, they cautiously posit their visions for a new "global village" as possibilities in the future, given the enormous inequalities of power relations that still exist in our world today. However, in more popular accounts of the so-called global technological revolution, there is an unbridled enthusiasm for, and an unflinching faith in, the power of new technologies to erase global inequities and to solve age-old problems that earlier generations could

not. Examples of such works include the writings of Thomas Friedman in books such as *The World is Flat* and *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*²⁹ and the corporate-strategy guru Kenichi Ohmae in his books, *The Invisible Continent* and *The Next Global Stage*.³⁰

According to Robert McChesney, "cheerleaders" of globalization like Friedman are fundamentally wrong in proclaiming the dawn of a new "golden age" for the human race where digital technologies, democracy, and capitalism will inevitably undermine and overthrow oppressive regimes around the world.³¹ McChesney argues that the celebratory rhetoric of the "golden age" of globalization is highly misleading because it is ideologically overcoded in favor of transnational corporate interests. In order to critically interrogate the ongoing transformations of the world's media systems, McChesney prefers the term **neoliberalism** instead of the utopian visions of the "global village."

McChesney defines neoliberalism in terms of a set of national and international policies that calls for the primacy of the marketplace in all social affairs with minimal countervailing force from either nation-states or civil society. The ideology of neoliberalism calls for the corporate privatization of areas that are or were historically in the "public" domain—such as media, education, health care, social welfare, or even international warfare. The dominance of neoliberal ideologies in the twenty-first century is aptly indicated by the generalized shift from public broadcasting—which was the dominant form of media worldwide in the twentieth century—to private, commercial media systems in areas such as broadcasting, satellite and cable technologies, wired and wireless telephony, the Internet and digital media. As many media historians have argued, before the 1980s, national media systems around the world were dominated by mostly domestically owned radio, television, and newspaper industries, either as public media systems or as a mix of public/private media systems.³²

However, since the 1980s, and particularly after the end of the Cold War, there has been a growing trend towards transnational ownership of media systems by private corporations. The result, McChesney argues, has been the rise of a "global oligopoly" of transnational media corporations. The defining trait of the global oligopoly is its ability to expand into the farthest reaches of the world without any significant competition or opposition. According to McChesney, the oligopoly functions through a two-tiered global media system. In the first tier are a handful of transnational media corporations mostly based in the United

States, such as Disney, Comcast, Viacom, Sony, NewsCorp, and Time-Warner. The second tier is constituted by regional media powerhouses or national corporations that control niche markets such as Dow Jones, Gannett, and Knight-Ridder in North America; Pearson, Reuters, and Reed Elsevier in Europe; Mexico's Televisa, Brazil's Globo, Argentina's Clarin, and Venezuela's Cisneros Group in Latin America, and so on. All these companies have aggressively embraced strategies for the consolidation of ownership through the vertical and horizontal integration of their media assets and infrastructures.

While many of the tier-two companies are also seeking markets in areas traditionally dominated by the tier-one corporations, McChesney finds that there is hardly any competition in the global media system because the tier-one corporations often collaborate or have joint-ventures with the tier-two companies. Moreover, both tier-one and tier-two corporations have extensive ties to global investment banks, and they all depend on the same transnational advertising companies and sponsors for their revenues. McChesney argues that the central role of advertising as the driving force in contemporary global media reveals why convergence cannot be defined solely in technological terms, but must be understood in terms of the converging commercial interests of global, regional, national media corporations that are all seeking greater synergy through economies of "scale." Therefore, McChesney argues that the ideologies of neoliberalism bear a striking similarity to—and have a complex relationship with—earlier forms of cultural imperialism.

McChesney's theorization of neoliberalism as a new form of Western imperialism has been critiqued by media scholars like Michael Keane and Michael Curtin in a manner reminiscent of the critique of the cultural imperialism thesis by scholars of cultural globalization like Tomlinson and Ang discussed earlier in this chapter. In a much-cited essay titled "Once Were Peripheral," Keane critiques the theory of neoliberal global media systems advanced by McChesney for being too "American-centric."³³ Keane's main objection is that these American-centric critiques of neoliberalism see emerging media capitals in peripheral—or once-peripheral—regions such as East Asia merely as cheap "off-shore" locations for Western media industries centered predominantly in the United States. Keane, however, finds that the binary division of the world in terms of "core" and "peripheries" or the "West" and the "rest" is now inadequate and outdated. Instead, he calls for the recognition of the role of regional

media capitals in globalization from the perspective of media producers and consumers in these once-peripheral locations.

The reason for the shift toward regional media capitals, Keane claims, is that a new model of globalization has emerged as a result of four key changes in our world from the mid-1970s to the late 1990s. The first is the increased role of intellectual capital in the service sector and the informational economy as a result of the trend toward digitization in production processes and the computerized networking of communication and information exchange in industrial practices and social relations. The second change that Keane refers to is the rapid growth of international collaborations and co-productions between the traditionally dominant media centers in North America and Western Europe and "once peripheral" locations such as East Asia. As an example, Keane describes how international collaborations in Hong Kong, which functions as a nexus between dominant media capitals of the East and the West, helped enhance the media capacity in the East Asian region and helped the growth of once-peripheral media industries in South Korea and Taiwan.

The third key change, Keane argues, is the growing interdependence between nations in the global informational economy. The digitization and deterritorialization of production practices along with the growing mobility of capital and labor practices have enabled—or even required—nations to cooperate with each other to sustain and profit from the global networks of communication and information exchange. These global networks are, of course, not equally available or accessible to all nations, and the exchange of information and capital around the world is hardly egalitarian or democratic. However, the growing interdependence between nations has meant that the efficient control of global networks through coordinated policies of risk management (such as international trade agreements or intellectual property laws) have become the essential prerequisites for national organizations and transnational corporations to ensure stability of profits in the twenty-first century.

The fourth and final change that Keane outlines in his analysis of media capacity in East Asia is the emergence of new players in the global economy. Keane outlines five categories through which the new centers of financial and creative activity in East Asia are increasing their media capacity: (1) deterritorialization of a world factory model (where the multiplier effect of low-cost outsourcing in local companies provides the potential for the creation of high-value

creative industries); (2) mimetic isomorphism (where local companies are able to illegally clone global TV formats and film formulas with great success in the short term, but get entangled in legal problems with the international intellectual property regime in the long term); (3) cultural technology transfer (where local companies enter into legal agreements on international co-productions with globally renowned franchises through the sharing of intellectual property); (4) niche breakthroughs (where distribution of local productions through multiple channels on multiple platforms transform niche films like *Hero* (2004) or *House of Flying Daggers* (2004) into global hits); and (5) creative industry clusters (where the creation of hi-tech film cities or information parks enable local players in smaller towns and cities to compete with regional and global players). Keane draws on Curtin's concept of **media capitals** to argue that the above-mentioned changes in the global economy have contributed to the growth of new centers of financial and creative activities in cities like Hong Kong, Cairo, and Mumbai. According to Curtin, media capitals are places where things come together in dual senses of the word "capital" both as a geographic center of activity and as a concentration of resources, reputation, and talent.³⁴ Arguing that a media capital is a nexus or a switching point, Curtin demonstrates how the media production and consumption practices in cities like Chicago, LA/Hollywood, and Hong Kong occur at intersections of complex, global economic, social, and cultural flows.

The complex dynamics of globalization that media scholars like Keane and Curtin map out in their analyses of media capitals and flows have been most famously theorized by Appadurai as disjuncture and difference in the global cultural economy.³⁵ For Appadurai, globalization does not refer to the linear transmission of communication from a powerful (Western or American) sender to a relatively powerless (non-Western) receiver in international affairs, but to a complex, overlapping, and non-isomorphic set of deterritorialized cultural flows. To describe this emerging order of **deterritorialization**, Appadurai maps five dimensions of cultural flows consisting of **ethnoscapes**, **mediascapes**, **technoscapes**, **financescapes**, and **ideoscapes**. According to Appadurai, **ethnoscapes** refer to the movement of people as workers, tourists, students, immigrants, refugees, and others. **Technoscapes** refer to technologies that move at high speeds across traditionally impervious boundaries. **Financescapes** refer to rapid movements of capital on a global scale. **Mediascapes**

refer to both the global media that enable electronic transmission of information and to the variety of images that are available to audiences as resources for cultural imagination. **ideoscapes** are also "concatenations of images" but are defined more explicitly as political. Appadurai uses the suffix "-scape" to describe how the world can appear rather stable like a landscape when seen from a particular perspective in spite of disjuncture and difference within and across the various flows of globalization.

Since the publication of Appadurai's groundbreaking text in the 1990s, much has been written about how media production and consumption have become more decentered in a deterritorialized cultural economy, and how audiences are experiencing global cultures as "imagined worlds" built around a dynamic set of disjunctive but overlapping global -scapes. For instance, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri have characterized the current state of deterritorialization in our world in terms of the concept of **Empire**.³⁶ For Hardt and Negri, Empire differs from earlier forms of imperialism where imperial (European) powers exerted their sovereign authority over far-flung colonies through a centralized command structure. In the Empire of the twenty-first century, Hardt and Negri argue, imperial power is no longer centralized in a sovereign (European) authority, but is instead exerted through more diffused global networks of nation-states, transnational corporations, informational networks, supranational institutions, nongovernmental organizations, and a multitude of informal, collective interests. Therefore, Hardt and Negri advocate a move beyond binary categories such as the West and the rest, the global and the local, the center and the periphery, and call for a rhizomatic approach to engage more productively with the deterritorialized and deterritorializing power of Empire.

The **rhizome** of globalization that Hardt and Negri draw on, is a concept developed by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari in their pathbreaking book, *A Thousand Plateaus*.³⁷ The rhizome, for Deleuze and Guattari, refers to a type of root system that grows horizontally from the middle and thus has no organizing center or a fixed point of origination. Hardt and Negri argue the contemporary moment of globalization is rhizomatic in that there are no longer centralized sovereign powers like nation-states. The modern form of sovereignty, they argue, has become more diffused in the decentered network structure of media technologies like the Internet, the deterritorialized corporate organization of transnational media

industries, and the transversal connections among supranational agencies, such as the European Union or the World Trade Organization.

Highlighting the tension between the opposing frameworks of deterritorialization and territorialization in the discipline of film studies, Will Higbee and Song Hwee Lim, argue that the use of "transnational" to signify the rhizomatic spaces of globalization may not be an entirely unproblematic strategy, compared to earlier frameworks that may have problematically worked within the territorial confines of categories such as the "national."³⁸ For them, the term "transnational" still privileges the space of the nation-state (or at least the need/desire to overcome the nation-state framework) and thus marginalizes the rich diversity of cultural and geographic descriptors that could be used to describe the spaces of globalization. Examples of such alternative descriptors include geographical categories like regions, localities, and borders, and cultural processes like migration, exile, and hybridity. Higbee and Lim provide three alternative descriptors that have been used in film studies to overcome the national/transnational binary in globalization:

- (1) national borders as limits for transnationalism;
- (2) diasporic, exilic, and postcolonial cultures; and
- (3) regional formations.

National cinema, Higbee and Lim argue, remains a useful framework if the national is defined not as the origin of but as a limit for transnationalism. In other words, transnationalism although global, is not a limitless phenomenon because national governments can use cultural regulations, laws, and policies to limit the transnational flows of cinema. Higbee and Lim argue that the major drawback of this approach is that a focus on the nation's limiting powers could potentially obscure the political, economic, and ideological imbalances that national governments can create and manipulate across and within borders, and it could ignore the politics of difference in issues of migration and diaspora that are central to transnational flows in the contemporary world. The second perspective in transnational cinemas that Higbee and Lim outline is the study of diasporic, exilic, and postcolonial cultures that critique the Eurocentric biases of the theoretical constructs of nationalism and transnationalism by analyzing representations of cultural identity as fluid, dynamic, and hybrid. For Higbee and Lim, a potential limitation of this approach is that the diasporic, exilic, or postcolonial perspectives are often marginal to the hegemonic culture and thus may have fairly limited influence on the mainstream. Although the lack of access to mainstream culture

is not deemed inherently problematic in any way, Higbee and Lim wonder if this lack works against the stated political goals of marginal cinemas to intervene in and alter hegemonic ideologies. The third perspective on transnationalism that Higbee and Lim describe requires a shift from the transnational to "regions" that share a common cultural heritage and/or geo-political boundaries. Higbee and Lim argue that examples of such "regions" are Chinese cinema and Nordic cinema. However, Higbee and Lim suggest that the term "transnational" may be inadequate to define these regional cinemas, and they prefer "supranational Chinese" cinema and "regional Nordic" cinema.

Case Study: The Process Geography of Regional Cinemas in India

In my article, "Regional Cinemas and Globalization in India,"³⁹ I engage in an extensive debate with Crofts' discussion of "national cinema/s" and Higbee and Lim's analysis of terms such as "national," "transnational," "supranational," and "regional." While I do not entirely disagree with Higbee and Lim's analysis, I argue that there is a fundamental problem with their understanding of "regions" around the world purely in terms of "traits" such as common cultural heritage and shared geographic boundaries. In doing so, I argue, they propagate what Appadurai has identified as the dominant paradigm in the study of areas and regions that takes "a particular configuration of apparent stabilities for permanent associations between space, territory and cultural organization."⁴⁰ For instance, I explain that when histories of Indian cinema are written in terms of the perceived stability of traits such as dominant languages, traditions, values, and physical borders within the nation-state, regional cinemas are relegated to sub-national status, even though such "regions" have always been supra-, trans-, and pan-national as well.

As a student of Indian cinema, I have always found neat categorizations like global, national, local, and regional to be inadequate for analysis because Indian film industries and cultures have been hybrid right from the beginning. However, the history of Indian cinema has been dominated by a nationalist desire among filmmakers, fans, and scholars alike to create coherent narratives that can neatly coincide with the hegemonic ideologies of the modern nation-state. For example, in nationalist narratives of Indian cinema, the term "Bollywood" is increasingly being used as a buzzword to describe all aspects of commercialized Indian popular culture in diverse arenas

such as film, television, music, and fashion. While Bollywood as buzzword serves as a convenient branding category for the mass production, distribution, and consumption of commercialized popular culture in India and in the Indian diaspora, it ignores a range of non-commercial and parallel media industries in Hindi, such as documentary filmmaking and experimental art. At the same time, the term Bollywood does not adequately capture the diversity of media industries and cultures that thrive in a variety of regional languages in India. Therefore, in my research on regional cinemas in India, I have always tried to find sites that do not fit easily into one or another convenient category, and, thus, provide insights into the very complex, multidimensional histories and geographies of Indian cinema.

To foreground the multidimensional sites of “regional” cinemas as simultaneously national, global, transnational, local, and regional, I turn to Appadurai’s argument about shifting our research methodologies away from “trait geographies” to “process geographies.” As Appadurai defines them, **process geographies** enable us to map “significant areas of human organization as precipitates of various kinds of action, interaction and motion—trade, travel, pilgrimage, warfare, proselytization, colonization, exile and the like.”⁴¹ Appadurai writes,

Regions are best viewed as initial contexts for themes that generate variable geographies, rather than as fixed geographies marked by pre-given themes. These themes are equally “real”, equally coherent, but are results of our interests and not their causes. The trouble with much of the paradigm of area studies as it now exists is that it has tended to mistake a particular configuration of apparent stabilities for permanent associations between space, territory and cultural organization. These apparent stabilities are themselves largely artifacts of: the specific trait-based idea of “culture” areas; a recent Western cartography of large civilizational land-masses associated with different relationships to “Europe” (itself a complex historical and cultural emergent); and a Cold-War based geography of fear and competition in which the study of world languages and regions in the United States was legislatively configured for security purposes into a reified map of geographical regions.⁴²

Drawing on Appadurai’s call to shift our research methodologies away from trait-based geographies to

process geographies, I examine the national, transnational, global, local, and regional flows of media in film cities, such as Ramoji Film City (RFC) in Hyderabad and Innovative Film City (IFC) in Bengaluru in South India. Film cities like RFC and IFC provide filmmakers from anywhere in the world the opportunity to make an entire film from pre-production to post-production in a one-stop studio that provides multiple outdoor locales and diverse indoor settings. In addition to being state-of-the-art media production centers, RFC and IFC are major tourist attractions, which provide visitors access to a variety of picturesque gardens, entertainment parks, and tours of production studios.

I argue that film cities—many of which are located in “regional” film production centers in India—are the most visible manifestations of a process geography that is redefining the “regional” cinemas of India by showcasing their simultaneously global, national, local, transnational, and “sub-national” status in Indian cinema. I foreground the hybrid mediascapes produced at RFC and IFC to underscore the creative ways in which film cities in India are mapping a new process geography of cultural production and consumption. I argue that film cities like RFC and IFC are very good case studies for understanding the changing realities of the global entertainment industry, where connections between older trait geographies of place are being re-imagined in terms of newer process geographies of mediation, mobility, travel, and tourism.

Conclusion

This chapter describes the different ways in which globalization has been examined in the fields of international communications, film studies, and global media studies. In doing so, it provides a broad overview of some of the major theoretical frameworks and methodological considerations for the study of media in terms of concepts like nationalism, transnationalism, and globalization. It explores why the concept of the “nation” has been, and in some ways continues to be, the predominant category for understanding media in international contexts. It also discusses how media scholars from different theoretical perspectives have used concepts like transnationalism, cultural imperialism, cultural globalization, and deterritorialization to critique the unquestioning acceptance of the nation as the *de facto* unit of analysis in media studies. Finally, this chapter uses the case study of regional cinemas in India to highlight the dynamic relationality of global, national, and local media in

specific contexts through a methodological perspective defined as "process geography."

As media industries and cultures around the world are increasingly becoming more interconnected, the traditional methods of demarcating media into neat categories like global, national, local, and regional are becoming less viable in media studies. Therefore, this chapter concludes that it is now essential for scholars in media studies to discard old trait-based categories that divide the world into neat but empirically suspect compartments, and move toward more dynamic frameworks that focus on the process geographies of globalization as a multidimensional phenomenon.

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