Globalization and Media: Creating the Global Village by Jack Lule

Globalization is a vague, opaque, and difficult word. Indeed, many people have trouble defining globalization. The word seems to mean many things – a global economy, international trade, growing prosperity in China and India, international travel and communication, immigration, migration, more foreign films and foods, McDonald's in Paris, Starbucks in Africa, mosques in New York, an increase in 'global' problems such as climate change and terrorism. The word can mean everything and nothing.

Many scholars study globalization by pairing it with another concept, such as globalization and identity, globalization and human rights, globalization and culture, or globalization and terrorism. Such studies are extremely important. However, the pairing of globalization and media offers special insights. In fact, this chapter will suggest that globalization could not occur without media, that globalization and media act in concert and cohort, and that the two have partnered throughout the whole of human history. From cave paintings to papyrus to printing presses to television to Facebook, media have made globalization possible.

This argument will not suggest that the media have always been positive and progressive in their influence. But if we look at the span of globalization across time in the areas of economics, politics, and culture, we can see media as essential in every phase. Could global trade have evolved without a flow of information on markets, prices, commodities, and more? Could empires have stretched across the world without communication throughout their borders? Could religion, music, poetry, film, fiction, cuisine, and fashion develop as they have without the intermingling of media and cultures? Globalization and media have proceeded together through time.

The chapter will unfold progressively. It will first offer definitions of globalization and media. Much of the confusion around these terms stems from differences in language and meaning. The chapter will then briefly trace the development of media from humanity's first days and show how globalization and media have proceeded together through time in the construction of the modern world. We will then take up the work of scholars and theorists who point out a most important fact of our time: Globalization and media have created the conditions through which many people can now imagine themselves as part of one world. It is this global imaginary that brings to fruition what Marshal McLuhan called the 'global village' (McLuhan, 1962: 16; 1964: 80). The chapter then will look at life in the emerging global village and break down the vague abstraction of 'globalization' into three primary ways in which people interact globally: economics, politics, and culture. It is mostly within these three areas that globalization plays out in each epoch, every day; and we will see that the media are vital to all three.

Globalization and Media: Etymologies

Globalization, it must be acknowledged, is a distasteful word. In the Queen's English, the word gets softened to globalization, but it is still chilly and distant. The French offer us la mondialisation. The Chinese say quan qiu hua. In Kiswahili, it's utandawazi. No language, it seems, is comfortable with the word. The word also has murky origins. Merriam-Webster's dictionary dates 'globalize' to 1944. Theodore Levitt, a former professor at the Harvard Business School, is widely credited with popularizing the term, which he used in a 1983 Harvard Business Review article, 'The Globalization of Markets'. Despite its deficiencies and cloudy past, however, the word has exploded in prominence and usage. A Google search now brings up 42.4 million results.

Globalization has etymological subtleties. The word resides in a specialized linguistic family: -ization words, nouns formed by a combination of -ize verbs and -ation. -Ization, an etymology dictionary says, is 'a suffix that creates nouns indicating the process or outcome of doing something'. That is, -ization words are inconclusive. They can be process or outcome. If we speak of 'the organization of the farmers', we might be speaking of the ongoing organizing of farmers – a process. Or we might be speaking of an already established farmers' organization – an outcome, such as a farmers' cooperative. -Ization words can have it both ways.

The focus on -ization is not idiosyncratic. Scholars have considered the crucial ambiguity of globalization as an -ization. Indeed, Peter J. Taylor says, 'There is an obvious first lesson to draw from this language trap: it is necessary to separate out the two meanings of the -izations in any critical analysis' (Taylor, 2000: 50). He

astutely points out a second lesson: ‘Any critical analysis cannot dismiss an ization by exposing the weakness of just one of its two meanings’ (2000: 51).

His lesson is especially important in discussions of globalization. Writers too often will dismiss globalization and say it does not exist. They will suggest as evidence some global ideal, such as high percentages of global trade or global travel or global phone calls. They will find, unsurprisingly, lower percentages and conclude that by many measures, the world is not yet globalized. And they will be right. However, they will have proved only that globalization is not an accomplished outcome – but they will not have addressed the second meaning of the word – whether the world is undergoing the process of globalization. Taylor says, ‘Unsurprisingly, such a “straw man’ exercise can easily prove that we do not live in a globalized world, but tells us little about the very real globalization tendencies we are experiencing’ (2000: 51).

When people argue about globalization, they may be arguing about two different things – a completed outcome or an ongoing process – an argument caused by -ization. This chapter is built on the premise that globalization is not an outcome but a process – indeed a host of processes, including economic, political, and cultural – that may be as old as humankind and is ongoing today.

History(ies) of Globalization

A final piece is necessary for understanding the word. When did globalization begin? Some scholars feel that globalization is a decidedly modern phenomenon. It began a few decades ago, they say, in the late 1900s, when advances in media and transportation technology truly globalized the world. The cultural anthropologist Arjun Appadurai feels there was a ‘rupture’ within social life in the late twentieth century. He says that advances in media, such as television, computers, and cell phones, combined with changes in migration patterns, such as people more easily flowing back and forth around the world. Those two ‘diacritics’ – media and migration – fundamentally changed human life, Appadurai says, and gave rise to this entity now called globalization (Appadurai, 1996: 1–11).

However, many other scholars say globalization began a few hundred years ago. They pair globalization with the rise of modernity in the Enlightenment or with the age of European exploration. Columbus' arrival in America is often used as a marker for globalization. Still, others feel that globalization has been going on since the beginning of humanity when the first Homo sapiens departed from other Homo sapiens in an African village and set out in search of food or water or adventure. Those first travelers of the world put globalization into motion. Yale's Nayan Chanda embraces this view. He says globalization ‘is a process that has worked silently for millennia without having been given a name’ and that, as a trend, globalization ‘has been with us since the beginning of history’. He argues that a multitude of threads ‘connect us to faraway places from an ancient time’ (Chanda, 2007: x–xi).

No right answer exists, of course, as to when globalization began. Writers – and readers –simply must make clear what they believe and why. This chapter embraces the concept that there is a fundamental human impulse toward globalization, that there is an innate desire in people to wonder, to wander, to explore, to set out, to seek a better life, or perhaps just to find a different life. Though we can agree with Appadurai that globalization has accelerated and intensified in our time, globalization has been a part of humanity from its first steps.

Media

In contrast to globalization, media do not seem hard to identify or define. The word is plural for medium – a means of conveying something, such as a channel of communication. The plural form – media – only came into general circulation, however, in the 1920s. Like globalization, the word ‘media’ came into popular usage because a word was needed to talk about a new social issue. In the 1920s, people were talking about their fears over the harmful influence of comic books, radio, and film. They were worried about young people reading violent comics, voters hearing propaganda over the radio, couples disappearing into dark movie theaters. They grouped these phenomena together with debates over ‘the mass media’. Though the word is relatively modern, humans have used media of communication from their first days on earth, and, we will argue, those media have been essential to globalization.

Globalization: A Definition

We are maintaining that historical, political, cultural, and economic forces, now called globalization, have worked in concert with media from the dawn of time to our present day, and that globalization and media – two words that only came into usage in the twentieth century – capture practices that have roots deep in the history of humanity. Humans have always been globalizing, though they have not used that word. And humans have always been communicating with media, though they have not used that word.

We can now arrive at a definition: globalization is defined as a set of multiple, uneven, and sometimes overlapping historical processes, including economics, politics, and culture, that have combined with the evolution of media technology to create the conditions under which the globe itself can now be understood as 'an imagined community'.

Some of the definition's important parts: globalization is not one process but multiple processes – economics, politics, and culture. And these processes are not new. They have deep historical roots. And they overlap and influence one another through time. Two other aspects of the definition deserve to be fully explained. This chapter makes the claim that developments in media technology are crucial to globalization. Many scholars do not give such prominence to media. They might make passing reference to media, but we are arguing that media were, and are, essential to globalization. The following section will further make that case. And, lastly, we are suggesting that the globe itself can be understood as an 'imagined community'. That is a concept within a long, thoughtful tradition, a tradition that can further enrich understanding of globalization and media.

Evolution of Media and Globalization

Scholars have found it logical and helpful to organize the historical study of media by time periods or stages. Each period is characterized by its dominant medium. For example, the Canadian theorist Harold Innis (1950), Marshall McLuhan's teacher, writing in the 1940s and 1950s, divided media into three periods: oral, print, and electronic. James Lull (2000), writing at the close of the twentieth century, added digitally to those three. Terhi Rantanen (2005) places script before the printing press and breaks down the electronic period into wired and wireless, for six periods.

For our purposes, five-time periods usefully capture the study of globalization and media: oral, script, print, electronic, and digital. We will look at the different time periods and point out how the media of each time period contributed to the globalization of our world. This accounting isolates and highlights the essential role of media in globalization over time and firmly establishes the centrality of media for studies of globalization. However, it is important to stress that globalization and media do not proceed along an inevitable, inexorable path of progress. Media – and globalization as well – have developed sporadically, erratically, in fits and starts, driven by human needs, desires, and actions, resulting in great benefits and sometimes greater harm. Charting history is not necessarily charting progress. The history of media and globalization is the history of humanity itself.

Oral Communication

Speech is often the most overlooked medium in histories of globalization. Yet the oral medium – human speech – is the oldest and most enduring of all media. Over hundreds of thousands of years, despite numerous changes undergone by humans and their societies, the very first and last humans will share at least one thing – the ability to speak. Speech has been with us for at least 200,000 years, the script for less than 7,000 years, print for less than 600 years, and digital technology for less than 50 years.

When speech developed into language, Homo sapiens had developed a medium that would set them apart from every other species and allow them to cover and conquer the world. How did the medium of language aid globalization? Language allowed humans to cooperate. During a hunt, the ability to coordinate was a considerable advantage. And there were other advantages. Sharing information about land, water, climate, and weather aided humans' ability to travel and adapt to different environments. Sharing information about tools and weapons led to the spread of technology. Humans eventually moved to every corner of the world, encountering new environments and experiences at each turn. The language was their most important tool (Ostler, 2005).

Language helped humans move, but it also helped them settle down. Language stored and transmitted important agricultural information across time as one generation passed on its knowledge to the next, leading to the creation of villages and towns. The language also led to markets, the trade of goods and services, and eventually into cross-continental trade routes. Organized, permanent, trading centers grew, giving rise to cities. And perhaps around 4000 BCE, humans' first civilization was created at Sumer in the Middle East. Sometimes called the 'cradle of civilization', Sumer is thought to be the birthplace of the wheel, plow, irrigation, and writing – all created by language.

Script

Some histories of media technology skip this stage or give it brief mention as a transition between oral cultures and cultures of the printing press. But the era was crucial for globalization and media. The language was essential but imperfect. Distance causes trouble for oral communication. It takes elaborate systems to communicate with language over great expanses. Time also causes difficulties. Language relies on human memory, which is limited in capacity and not always perfect. Script – the very first writing – allowed humans to communicate and share knowledge and ideas over much larger spaces and across much longer times.

Writing has its own evolution and developed from cave paintings, petroglyphs, and hieroglyphs. Early writing systems began to appear after 3000 BCE, with symbols carved into clay tablets to keep account of trade. These 'cuneiform' marks later developed into symbols that represented the syllables of languages and eventually led to the creation of alphabets, the scripted letters that represent the smallest sounds of a language. These alphabets, learned now in pre-schools around the world, were central to the evolution of humankind and its civilizations.

But script needed to be written on something. Writing surfaces even have their own evolution. The writing was done at first as carvings into the wood, clay, bronze, bones, stone, and even tortoise shells. Ancient Egypt created one of the most popular writing surfaces from a plant found along the Nile River – papyrus (from which the English word paper eventually derived). With script on sheets of papyrus and parchment, humans had a medium that catapulted globalization. Script allowed for the written and permanent codification of economic, cultural, religious, and political practice. These codes could then be spread out over large distances and handed down through time. The great civilizations, from Egypt and Greece to Rome and China, were made possible through the script (Powell, 2009). If globalization is considered the economic, cultural, and political integration of the world, then surely script – the written word – must be considered an essential medium.

The Printing Press

It started the 'information revolution' and transformed markets, businesses, nations, schools, churches, governments, armies, and more. All histories of media and globalization acknowledge the consequential role of the printing press. Many begin with the printing press. It's easy to see why.

Prior to the printing press, the production and copying of written documents were slow, cumbersome, and expensive. The papyrus, parchment, and paper that spread civilizations were the province of a select, powerful few. Reading and writing, too, were practices of the ruling and religious elite. The rich and powerful controlled information. With the advent of the printing press, first made with movable wooden blocks in China and then with movable metal type by Johannes Gutenberg in Germany, reading material suddenly was cheaply made and easily circulated. Millions of books, pamphlets, and flyers were produced, reproduced, and circulated. Literacy followed, and the literacy of common people was to revolutionize every aspect of life. The explosive flow of economic, cultural, and political ideas around the world connected and changed people and cultures in ways never before possible.

Protestant Reformation, the scientific revolution, and more. Two overarching consequences, however, can be suggested from her work. First, the printing press changed the very nature of knowledge. It preserved knowledge, which had been more malleable in oral cultures. It also standardized knowledge, which had become more variable as it spread orally across regions and lands. Script and papyrus had begun the process of preservation and standardization, but not nearly to the extent allowed by printing presses.

A second consequence: print encouraged the challenge of political and religious authority because of its ability to circulate competing views. Eisenstein notes that 'fear of disapproval, a sense of isolation, the force of local community sanctions, the habit of respectful submission to traditional authority – all might be weakened' (1979: 148). For centuries in Europe, the monks and priests of the Catholic Church were among the few with the education, time, and resources for reading and writing books. The Church thus had a kind of monopoly over knowledge. Church officials could decide what the illiterate public should know. The printing press, however, encouraged the literacy of the public and the growth of schools. Too, the rise of inexpensive, easily obtained magazines and daily newspapers brought news from around the world to people. People increasingly learned of lands and cultures far from where they could travel. They learned about the world. Truly, the printing press helped foster globalization – and knowledge of globalization.

Electronic Media

Beginning in the nineteenth century, a host of new media would revolutionize the ongoing processes of globalization. Scholars have come to call these 'electronic media' because they require electromagnetic energy – electricity – to use. The telegraph, telephone, radio, film, and television are the usual media collected under electronic media. The vast reach of these electronic media continues to open up new vistas in the economic, political, and cultural processes of globalization.

In our modern world, the Telegraph is not thought of as a revolutionary medium. But in its time, the telegraph was a sensation with significant consequences. Samuel F. B. Morse began work on a machine in the 1830s that eventually could send coded messages – dots and dashes – over electrical lines. The effects were enormous. Almost immediately, rail travel was more efficient and safe since information about arrivals or delays could be passed down the line ahead of the trains. Corporations and businesses were able to exchange information about markets and prices. Newspapers could report information instantaneously. By 1866, a transatlantic cable was laid between the United States and Europe, and the telegraph became a truly global medium (Carey, 1992: 157).

The ability to transmit speech over distance was the next communication breakthrough. Though not always considered a mass medium, the telephone surely contributed to connecting the world. Alexander Graham Bell is credited with inventing the telephone in 1876. It quickly became a globally adopted medium. By 1927, the first transatlantic call was made via radio. The creation of the cell phone in 1973 was especially crucial in the context of globalization and media. Relatively cheap to produce and buy, and easy to learn and transport, cell phones have quickly become the world's dominant communication device and penetrated even the world's most remote regions and villages.

Radio developed alongside the telegraph and telephone in the late 1890s. The technology was first conceived as a 'wireless telegraph'. By the early 1900s, speech indeed was being transmitted without wires. By the 1920s, broadcast stations were 'on the air', transmitting music and news. Radio quickly became a global medium, reaching distant regions without the construction of wires or roads. For much of the twentieth century, radio was the only mass medium available in many remote villages. Radio was crucially involved with the upheavals of globalization during this time, from radio broadcasts that riveted audiences during World War II, to the propaganda services that did battle worldwide during the Cold War, to the so-called 'death radio' that helped drive the genocide of Tutsi in Rwanda (Frere, 2009). The ability of radio to broadcast over the Internet has only expanded its global reach.

Along with the telegraph, telephone, and radio, film arose as another potent medium. Silent motion pictures were shown as early as the 1870s. But as a mass medium, the film developed in the 1890s. The Great Train Robbery, made in 1903, is often credited as the first narrative film, ten minutes long with 14 scenes. The film soon developed into an artistic medium of great cultural expression. By the 1920s, directors such as D. W. Griffith, Sergei Eisenstein, F. W. Murnau, and Fritz Lang were using film to capture powerful narratives that resonated within and across cultures. The worldwide success of films such as Avatar and Titanic offers resounding examples of the confluence of globalization and media. Though Hollywood and Bollywood get much attention, the cultivation of film industries in nations around the globe continues to this day.

For many people, television is considered the most powerful and pervasive mass medium yet created. Though television programming existed back in the 1920s, the years after World War II saw the explosion in the production and penetration of television into homes around the world. According to the US Census Bureau's Statistical Abstract, for example, before 1950, fewer than 10 percent of US homes had televisions. In five years, the number grew to 64.5 percent. By 1960, 87.1 percent of US homes had television. Worldwide growth was rapid too. By the end of the 1960s, half the countries in the world had television stations.

Television brought together the visual and aural power of film with the accessibility of radio: people sat in their living rooms and kitchens and viewed pictures and stories from across the globe. The world was brought into the home. The amount, range, and intensity of communication with other lands and cultures occurred in ways simply not possible before. For some scholars, the introduction of television was a defining moment in globalization. Marshall McLuhan proclaimed the world a 'global village', largely because of television.

Digital Media

Digital media are most often electronic media that rely on digital codes – the long arcane combinations of 0s and 1s that represent information. Many of our earlier media, such as phones and televisions, can now be considered digital. Indeed, digital may even be blurring the lines among media. If you can watch television, take photographs, show movies, and send e-mail on your smartphone or tablet, what does that mean for our neat categorization of media into television, film, or phone? The computer, though, is the usual representation of digital media. The computer comes as the latest and, some would argue, most significant medium to influence globalization.

In the realm of economics, computers allow instantaneous, global trading 24 hours a day. Anyone with a computer has access to economic information that just a few years ago was in the hands of a wealthy few. Too, computers have revolutionized work in every industry and trade. They streamline tasks, open up new areas and methods of research, and allow any company or industry access to a global marketplace. Some of the largest companies in the world, such as Microsoft, Apple, Google, Facebook, and more, arose in the digital era and

In a masterful, 750-page treatise, historian Elizabeth Eisenstein (1979) surveyed the many profound influences of the printing press. Her findings range from the Enlightenment, they have been instrumental in globalization.
In the realm of politics, computers allow citizens access to information from around the world, even information that governments would like to conceal. Blogs, social media, Twitter, text messaging, and more allow citizens to communicate among themselves. And computers have transformed cultural life. Access to information around the globe allows people to adopt and adapt new practices in music, sports, education, religion, fashion, cuisine, the arts, and other areas of culture. People talk with friends, relations, and even strangers around the world through Skype, Google Chat, and other programs. Digital media have revolutionized daily life.

No Globalization without Media

The purpose of this section has been to track the development of communication media over time and show how those media were essential to the ongoing processes of globalization. Our starting point was that the human impulse to globalize and the human need to communicate over distance have proceeded together through history, each driving and influencing the other. Even in a condensed summary, the partnership of globalization and media is clear. Each of the eras – oral, script, print, electronic, and digital – saw marked influences of media on globalization. It is difficult to imagine globalization occurring without the media that are so crucial to human life.

Global Imaginary and Global Village

As we have seen, one of the most important consequences of communication media for globalization has been: through media, the people of the world came to know of the world. That is, people have needed to be able to truly imagine the world – and imagine themselves acting in the world – for globalization to proceed.
In this perspective, the media have not only physically linked the globe with cables, broadband, and wireless networks, but have also linked the globe with stories, images, myths, and metaphors. The media are helping to

bring about a fundamentally new imaginary, what scholar Manfred Steger (2008) has called a rising global imaginary – the globe itself as the imagined community. In the past, only a few, privileged people thought of themselves as 'cosmopolitan' – citizens of the world. Cosmopolitanism is now a feature of modern life. People imagine themselves as part of the world.

Political scientist Benedict Anderson (1991) added much to the understanding of the global imaginary. Anderson's primary focus was the origin of nations and nationalism. He wondered how a group of people, though spread across vast expanses of land, came to conceive of themselves as a 'nation'. Anderson's answer: the imagination. He said that nations are the result of 'imagined communities', a concept now used regularly throughout the humanities and social sciences. People will never meet face to face with all or even most of the other members of their nation, Anderson said, but they can imagine themselves as one; 'in the minds of each life the image of their communion' (1991: 6).

As Arjun Appadurai has argued, the imagination is not a trifling fantasy but a 'social fact' and a 'staging ground for action' (Appadurai, 1996: 7). The Irish people, starving from a potato famine in the 1800s, imagined a better life in America, and millions emigrated. The Egyptian people, suffering under a dictatorship, imagined a better life for themselves, filled Tahrir Square in Cairo, overthrew a dictator, and realized their imagination.

The global imaginary surely seems like a modern notion. But in the 1960s, media scholar Marshall McLuhan anticipated this phenomenon with his argument that media has connected the world in ways that create a 'global village'. The global village, McLuhan felt, would bring about a utopia. Drawn closely together by media, people would be like neighbors, living in 'a Pentecostal condition of universal understanding and unity' (1964: 80). From its introduction, though, the metaphor of the global village has been a source of controversy. Perhaps McLuhan's fiercest critic was the historian of technology and science Lewis Mumford (1970). Years before McLuhan, with strikingly similar language, Mumford too found utopian hope in media technology. He too hoped for a villagelike world of community and grace. However, Mumford watched with dismay as media technology was used instead for capitalism, militarism, profit, and power. His dreams became nightmares. Mumford's later work savaged the possibility of the global village and railed against its implications. Mumford became one of McLuhan's most ferocious critics.

Ultimately, however, globalization and media are producing a macabre marriage of the visions of Mumford and McLuhan. As McLuhan predicted, media and globalization have connected the world and its people from end to end so that we can indeed imagine the world as a village. However, the connection, closeness, and interdependence of the global village have brought no collective harmony or peace. Instead, globalization and media are combining to create the dark, dystopian world that Mumford dreaded. They do so in three key areas: economic, political and cultural.

Media and Economic Globalization

The media have been essential to the growth of economic globalization in our world. Indeed, the media have made economic globalization possible by creating the conditions for global capitalism and by promoting the conceptual foundation of the world's market economy. Economic globalization, from this perspective, is not just dollars and cents, but story and myth – narratives that make natural the buying and selling of products across borders and boundaries and mythic celebrations of products and consumption.

The media foster the conditions for global capitalism. They fill our days with invitations and exhortations for consumption, from ceaseless commercials on radio and television to product placement in films, to digital billboards, to pop-up ads, to broadsheets in bathroom stalls. The media pack these channels with exhortations of consumers, products, and markets. Advertisements cover magazine stories that fawn over CEOs, minute-by-minute reporting of the stock market, films that revel over spectacular consumption and high-end products, endless newspaper ratings of top products and services – all these and more make capitalism seem not only natural but necessary to modern life.

The role of the media in this process cannot be overstated. As media scholar Robert McChesney reminds us, 'Economic and cultural globalization arguably would be impossible without a global commercial media system

to promote global markets and to encourage consumer values' (McChesney, 2001). McChesney and co-author Edward Herman (Herman and McChesney, 1997) call global media 'the new missionaries of global capitalism'.

Oligopoly

Of perhaps equal importance, the media are themselves now huge transnational global corporations that embody globalization even as they celebrate globalization. Modern media are the epitome of economic globalization. Around the world, one small, local, and regional media companies – not only newspapers, magazines, and radio stations, but television and cable channels, book publishers, music producers, movie studios, Internet sites, and more –are being bought up by a handful of huge global conglomerates and corporations, who themselves were once small and local. It has all happened incredibly fast, primarily in the last 25 years. The result goes by various names – media oligopoly, consolidation, concentration, and convergence. By some estimates, six companies – in particular, Disney, Time Warner, News Corporation, Viacom, Vivendi, and Bertelsmann – own or control close to 75 percent of the world's media (McChesney, 2010).

McChesney has extensively studied the global media oligopoly. He argues that a host of political decisions, including deregulation, support for market expansion, government intervention, and more, have paved the way for conglomerates to expand worldwide. He has developed a nuanced view of the implications of economic globalization and media. He contends that the media oligopoly is not interested in the ideology of the global village or the evangelizing of cultural values. The oligopoly is interested in one thing: profit. 'The global media system', McChesney says, 'is better understood, then, as one that advances corporate and commercial interests and values, and denigrates or ignores that which cannot be incorporated into its mission' (2010: 204). The logical consequence of such a commercial media system, he says, is to promote personal consumption as opposed to political participation or social and economic change.

In her study of the European Union, Katharine Sarikakis (2008) found a similar dynamic. She says, 'the normative framework, necessary for the legitimization of policies that transformed the media across Europe, redefined the public in its relation to the media, as consumers of media services and accumulators of cultural goods, rather than as members of an informed and active citizenry' (2008: 96). Similarly, critical theorists, such as Adorno and Horkheimer (2002), argued long ago that a 'culture industry', which produced mindless entertainment, had great social, political, and economic importance. Such entertainment, they said, can distract audiences from critical thinking, sapping time and energy from the social and political action.

No News Today

Transnational conglomerates, in this view, are much less interested than local media outlets in providing news and information necessary for citizens. People are encouraged to think of products, not politics. They are consumers, not citizens. The conglomerates have little incentive to invest in local talk shows, news channels, documentaries, or other social and political content. The global oligopoly of media thus helps create a passive apolitical populace that rises from the couch primarily for consumption.

The oligopoly's single-minded interest in profits results in mass content rather than local content. This includes numerous reruns of US shows; global sporting events, such as the Olympics or the World Cup; and celebrity entertainment programs, such as Oprah. Another important aspect of media and economic globalization then is the disastrous influence on news and what used to be called 'public affairs reporting'. Rather than producing homegrown programming on public affairs and issues, local media outlets carry the mass-produced content of their conglomerate owners. News and political content can upset and divide the populace, drive away viewers, and displease authorities. The impact is that, around the world, news has become softer, lighter, and less challenging, with space and time given over to weather, sports, celebrities, sensation, recipes, and other less weighty fares. One scholar calls the result the 'mass production of ignorance' (Philo, 2004). Daya Kishan Thussu decries the 'poverty of news' and says that the 'issues concerning the world's poor are being increasingly marginalized as a softer lifestyle variety of reporting appears to dominate global television news agendas' (2004: 47).

The results have been especially devastating for international news reporting. Foreign news bureaus are expensive. Training international journalists is expensive. International travel is expensive. Around the world, media that once had extensive foreign correspondence have disbanded staffs and shuttered bureaus. A

Harvard University study of US network news found that in the 1970s, 45 percent of the coverage was devoted to international news. In 1995, the total was 13.5 percent (Enda, 2011). The BBC has seen hundreds of positions cut worldwide. News media in China, India, and Japan have relatively few correspondents outside their homeland. International news coverage is down around the world. The irony is grim. In a time that has seen the advent of 24-hour news television, the creation of the Internet, the expansion of cell phones to every village in the world, and the capacity for instantaneous reporting from every corner of the globe, we now have less international news than ever.

Shahira Fahmy (2010) studied foreign affairs reporting after 9/11. Fahmy suggested that we might expect that the watershed events surrounding the terrorist bombing of the World Trade Center, and the subsequent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, would combine with the explosion of new media to produce a wealth of coverage. The title of Fahmy's essay: 'How Could So Much Produce So Little?'

Media and Political Globalization

An essential process of globalization is political. Globalization has transformed world politics in profound ways. It led to the formation and then the overthrow of kingdoms and empires. It led to the creation of the nation-state. And now some argue that the nation-state is being weakened as people and borders become ever more fluid in our globalized world. Some argue that transnational political actors, from NGOs (non-governmental organizations) like Greenpeace to corporations to the United Nations, now rise to prominence in our age of globalization. When we add the media to the admixture of globalization and politics, we touch upon some key features of modern life.

Of utmost importance, though media corporations are themselves, powerful political actors, individual journalists are subject to brutal and intense intimidation as more actors contend for power. There has never been a more dangerous time to work in media.

The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) estimates that on average close to 100 journalists and media workers are killed in the line of duty each year. They die in war zones. They die from car bombs. They die covering earthquakes, floods, and hurricanes. They die in drug raids. Many though are specifically targeted, hunted down, and murdered because of their work.

More troubling, the journalists die without justice. The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) estimates that fewer than 15 per cent of the murders of journalists is solved or prosecuted. It is the ultimate form of censorship. The voice of the journalist is for ever silenced. The intimidating message chills newsrooms far and wide. And no one pays a price. Mexico, Russia, and the Philippines top the list of places where journalists are slaughtered with impunity. Each nation displays the new array of forces now threatening journalists in the global village. In Mexico, drug cartels brazenly target journalists who dare to report on their trafficking and their murderous wars against the police and rival cartels. In Russia, journalists who report on the separatist movement in Chechnya have been tracked down and killed by loyalists of the Russian military as well as the Chechens. Journalists who seek to uncover extensive fraud in Russian government and business are also targeted. In the Philippines, journalists who report on political corruption also face death.

It did not use to be this way. Though journalists were sometimes targeted because of their reporting on organized crime or drugs, the assassination of a journalist was relatively rare and was met by public outcry. Journalists were primarily at physical risk in war zones. Now, in our age of globalization, the entire world can be a war zone. Numerous forces compete for wealth and power, within and across borders, including governments, state militias, paramilitary groups, political parties, drug cartels, religious organizations, insurgents, corporations, terrorists, and others. All these groups can be threatened by the work of a crusading reporter. All have targeted reporters. Globalization has made the world a harrowing place for journalists.

Media are subject to other pressures in this age of high-tech persuasion, manipulation, and propaganda. Economic, political, and personal pressures shape the news around the globe. For years in international communication studies, scholars pursued what was called 'the CNN effect'. According to the CNN effect, foreign policy – especially the actions of the US government – seemed to be driven by dominant stories appearing on CNN and other 24-hour news networks (Bahador, 2007). Media appeared to be driving foreign policy. The

concept seemed logical and attracted some interest. But eventually, other scholars pursued the CNN effect in earnest, testing and retesting its hypothesis. For them, the concept did not hold up to scrutiny. Policymaking, they found, was driven by numerous factors, and the news was not often of primary importance or consequence to the decision making of policymakers (Robinson, 2002).

In fact, in an age of political globalization, the opposite hypothesis appears to be true: governments shape and manipulate the news. It is another key feature of media and political globalization. Officials around the world are extremely successful at influencing and molding the news so that it builds support for their domestic and foreign policies. All of humankind's considerable persuasive techniques – from cajoling to coddling to conniving to coercing – are put into play so that news media report favorably on government actions and initiatives.

Journalists must bear some of the responsibility for lax coverage of government and society. Bribery of journalists, for example, remains a fact of life in many countries. In a report, 'Cash for Coverage: Bribery of Journalists around the World', the Center for Media Assistance calls bribes 'the dark part of journalism'. According to the report, 'Not only do journalists accept bribes and media houses accept paid material disguised as news stories, but all too often, reporters and editors are the perpetrators, extorting money either for publishing favorable stories – or for not publishing damaging ones' (Ristow, 2010). In Africa, the practice has a name: 'brown envelope journalism'.

In many other places, however, the influence and inducements are subtler. Stories are produced or not produced so that journalists might maintain good relations with government and corporate officials or so that they might attain or maintain status, perks, and prestige. In a now-classic treatise, Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky (1988) charge the news media with being complicit in 'manufacturing consent'. The authors challenge the standard conception of Western journalists as 'watchdogs' on the powerful. Outright bribes seldom influence Western coverage, Herman and Chomsky say. Instead, structural factors shape reporting: the media's ownership by, or close relationship with, corporations; the drive for profits from circulations, ratings, and advertising revenue; and journalists' close relationships with biased or involved sources in government and business. These forces, the authors say, can lead to the routine publishing and promoting of news shaped by governments and corporations. Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model shows 'the routes by which money and power are able to filter out the news fit to print, marginalize dissent, and allow the government and dominant private interests to get their messages across to the public' (Herman and Chomsky, 1988: 2).

Some scholars have suggested that new media – digital media, such as computers, tablets, and cell phones – have the potential to invigorate and transform political life in the modern world. They feel that new media can allow alternative voices within and across borders. They hope that new media will enlarge the public sphere. They feel that new media can offer the opportunity for more people to be involved with the political action and civil society.

New media do indeed complicate politics. These new media have characteristics – mobile, interactive, discursive, and participatory – with dramatic political implications. Because of the low cost and ease of posting text, photos, video, music, and other material online, digital media allow for the possibility of multiple, varied voices and views that can challenge and question those in power (Shirky, 2008). Citizens worldwide can post photos and dispatches from breaking news events via cell phones, computers, and webcams. Activists around the globe can exchange information online and coordinate plans. Bloggers and online newspapers can find new outlets and audiences to challenge government and authority.

Yet, too often in discussions of political globalization and media, the promise of new media is overstated. Too often, unfortunately, new media voices can all too easily be silenced. Some governments own the Internet service provider and can simply shut down the Internet to prevent organizing through Facebook and other social media. Indeed, governments can use Facebook and other social media to spy upon or track down and arrest protest leaders. New media can also be silenced in more primitive ways – by threatening people, by arresting them, and by killing them. Such circumstances show the political possibilities – and obstacles –facing new media in modern civil society. Though sometimes slow at first to recognize the possibility – and threat – posed by new media, established political and economic forces have moved quickly to assert control. Globalization complicates but does not lessen political intimidation and control of media.

Media and Cultural Globalization

The media, on one level, are the primary carriers of culture. Through newspapers, magazines, movies, advertisements, television, radio, the Internet, and other forms, the media production and display cultural products, from pop songs to top films. They also generate numerous and ongoing interactions among cultures, such as when American hip-hop music is heard by Cuban youth. Yet, the media are much more than technology, more than mechanical conveyors of culture, more than simple carriers of editorial cartoons or McDonalds' advertisements. The media are people. These people are active economic agents and aggressive political lobbyists on matters of culture. They market brands aggressively. They seek out new markets worldwide for their cultural products. They actively bring about interactions of culture for beauty, power, and profit.

In some ways, these interactions are like cultural laboratory experiments. They sometimes result in startling and stunning hybrid creations. But other times they result in combustible and explosive mixtures. Many scholars have considered the varied outcomes that can come from the commingling of media, culture, and globalization. In his wise book, Globalization and Culture: Global Mélange, Jan Nederveen Pieterse (2004: 41–58) argues that there are actually three, and only three, outcomes with which to consider the influence of globalization on culture.

Cultural differentialism suggests that cultures are different, strong, and resilient. Distinctive cultures will endure, this outcome suggests, despite globalization and the global reach of American or Western cultural forms. For some, this outcome is ominous for our era of globalization. It can suggest that cultures are destined to clash with globalization continually brings them together. US political scientist Samuel Huntington's classic though contested work, The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order, argues, for example, that the West and Islam will be locked in conflict (Huntington, 1996).

Cultural convergence suggests that globalization will bring about a growing sameness of cultures. A global culture, likely American culture, some fear, will overtake many local cultures, which will lose their distinctive characteristics. For some, this outcome can suggest ‘cultural imperialism’, in which the cultures of more developed nations ‘invade’ and take over the cultures of less developed nations. The result, under this outcome, will be a worldwide, homogenized, Westernized culture (Tomlinson, 1991).

Cultural hybridity suggests that globalization will bring about an increasing blending or mixture of cultures. This mélange will lead to the creation of new and surprising cultural forms, from music to food to fashion. For Pieterse – the subtitle of his book is Global Mélange – this outcome is common, desirable, occurs throughout history, and will occur more so in an era of globalization.

The three outcomes do a splendid job of organizing what could be thousands of distinct examples of the meeting of global and local culture. In reality, all three outcomes occur regularly. The worldwide violence surrounding the publication of Danish editorial cartoons that mocked Mohammed can be understood as cultural differentialism. The disappearance of hundreds of languages, as a few languages become dominant, can be seen as cultural convergence. Jazz is an archetypal example of cultural hybridity.

As globalization has increased the frequency of contact among cultures, the world has been given another awkward term – glocalization. In this perspective, the media and globalization are facts of life in local cultures. But local culture is not static and fixed. Local culture is not pliable and weak, awaiting or fearing contact from the outside. Local culture is instead created and produced daily, drawing from, adopting, adapting, succumbing to, satirizing, rejecting, or otherwise negotiating with the facts, global and local, of the day. The local is built and understood anew each day in a globalized world.

Sometimes the media can be sites of glocalization. For example, the British television show, Pop Idol, spawned the hit American show, American Idol, which inspired other Idol shows worldwide. The global takes local form. Other times, the media are agents of glocalization. Cuban youths excitedly listened to black popular music from Miami radio and television shows during the 1970s later learned of the emerging US rap and hip-hop scene,

and eventually developed their own style of Cuban hip-hop. In and through media, from music to video games to film to advertising and more, local people adapt global culture to everyday life.
Our very understanding of local culture actually benefits from the long, historical lens of globalization. Local culture is likely the historical product of countless previous interactions with other cultures. That is, local culture in our time is a product of negotiation between local and global cultures of previous times. Country to country, city to city, neighborhood to neighborhood, the negotiation of local culture and other cultures has taken place and will take place daily over time. Rather than being fixed and static, local culture is continually produced and reproduced every day.

The daily 'negotiation' between local culture and other cultures is key to understanding globalization, media, and culture. Globalization allows the intersections of cultures in ways and amounts unknown to other eras. Western culture, carried by global media, is a potent force and is powered by vast political and economic engines looking for influence and markets. But the local culture has its own traditions, strengths, resources, and resistance on which to draw. Finally, the emphasis on the negotiation of cultural forms at the local level is of theoretical but also of methodological importance. Scholars and writers who wish to write about globalization and culture need to be grounded – literally. Cultures converge not in the abstract but in newsrooms, cabarets, churches, mosques, movie theaters, and living rooms –as well as in chat rooms and McDonalds' restaurants.

Dark Contours of the Global Village

Globalization and media have done wondrous deeds. They have succeeded in bringing the world closer together. They have removed the shackles of time and space. They have given us the ability to truly imagine the world as a global village. When McLuhan first conceived the term, he had the highest hopes and, even today, the term global village still evokes community, kinship, cooperation, and fraternity. But Lewis Mumford was not fooled. His cold, clear vision of human weakness saw emerging the dark contours of the global village. He saw media technology used not to better the world but to exploit the world in pursuit of property, profit, and power.

Our discussion here shows globalization and media too often have fulfilled Mumford's worst fears. They have built a village with large tracts of economic injustice, political repression, and cultural conflict. They have sewn seeds of bitter and deadly discord between nations, classes, political parties, ethnic groups, religions, and neighbors. They have pit humans against nature. They have despoiled the very globe they encircle. We should expect better.

Discussion Questions:
1. Has McLuhan's ideal of a 'global village' become reality?
2. To what extent do global media serve as guardian of free speech, democracy, and justice?
3. What is the 'message' of new social media?

Reference:
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