WK 20 – Media and globalization

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Core points

- Globalizations’ inequalities and “alternative forms” of hybridity
Readings for week 20

**Required text:**

**Additional:**
Globalization as “time space compression” (Baudrillard, 1983; Harvey, 1989; Giddens, 1990)

• According to various globalization theorists (i.e. Giddens, 1990; Harvey, 1989), “globalization refers to the widening, deepening and speeding up of global interconnectedness. It has been defined as “accelerating inter-dependence”, ‘action at a distance’ and ‘time space compression’.

• As Harvey (1989) points out, throughout the latter half of the 19th century, there was a radical readjustment in time space compression in economic, political and cultural life. The result was that the old Enlightenment certainty of “absolute space and place” collapsed in the face of insecurity of “relative space and place”.

• Baudrillard (1983) links postmodernism with globalization – reality has been replaced by a “media-generated, hyper-reality”. Consumption here is seen to play the critical role in defining peoples’ identities and consciousness, superseding the old class-consciousness
Globalization and its inequalities (in Matos, 2012; Harvey, 1989; Baudrillard, 1983)

- Globalization is driven by communication technologies, as well as by the fact that expanding internationalism is producing more awareness about the similarities and differences between cultures and political systems.
- Globalization, as it is currently practiced, has in overall not contributed to reduce inequalities both within and between countries.
- Globalization can be understood as a deepening and extension of past exploitative class relations into areas previously outside capitalist production (Petras, 1999).
- Critical of globalization, Petras (1999: 84) has argued that “the current expansion of capital, goods and technology via unequal relations in the contemporary period is a continuation of the imperialistic relations of the past (in Matos, 2012).
Globalization and its inequalities (in Matos, 2012)

• Critics have defended a pursuit of “alternative forms of globalization” (i.e. Matos, 2012), or a striving towards **more equitable power relations between countries**.

• Nederveen Pieterse (2009) criticises what he sees as a conservative view of globalization, which reinforces Eurocentric thinking, the adoption of a narrow window to look at the world and the marginalization of the role of power relationships in understanding global inequalities.

• He conceives of **globalization in the plural**, stressing the fact that there are many models of globalization, as there are of globalizing dynamics. Globalization can thus be understood as being as much a process of *Westernization* as it is of *Easternization*.

• Robertson (1992) emphasises the extent to which people are living in the world as one place. Life everywhere is shaped by global events.
Mass media and globalization (in Matos, 2012)

• Before the 1990s, most mainstream media were national in scope, since then most communication media have become increasingly global.

• “International flows of information have been assisted by the development of global capitalism, new technologies and the increasing commercialization of global television, and which have occurred as a consequence of the deregulation policies adopted by various countries in Europe and US, paving the way for the proliferation of cable and satellite channels.…”

• Rapid expansion of global communications can be traced back to the mechanical advancements of technologies during the 18th/19th centuries, which began with the invention of the telegraph in 1837, and included the growth in postal services, cross-border telephone and radio communications, and the creation of a modern mass circulation press in Europe.”
How did the globalization of communications advance? - “this was facilitated through the evolution of technologies capable of transmitting messages via electromagnetic news that marked a turning point in advancing the globalization of communications”.

“Emergence of international news agencies such as Reuters in the 19th century paved the way for the beginning of a global system of codification”

“It was not until the 1960s with the launch of the first geo-stationary communication satellites that communication by electromagnetic transmission became fully global, thus making the globalization of communications a distinctive phenomena of the 20th century” (Thompson, 1995: 156).

“Globalization is thus seen as having consequences for the distribution of power and wealth within and between countries. The core critique of the imperialism theses was that the developing countries had established a relationship of subordination…”
News agencies and international news flows (in Matos, 2012)

• **News agencies are seen as central to the globalization thesis** – they are closely tied to the modernization of the West and the expansion of communication media since their emergence in the mid-19th century.

• **Role of news agencies in globalization** – “International news agencies such as Reuters, AP, United Press International and Agence France-Presse (AFP) have been assigned a role by media scholars of having contributed to spreading a global agenda and creating….perceptions of the South as being a place of “corruption, coup and disaster” for Western audiences”.

• “News agencies came under attack during the NWICO debates, with Western dominance in news broadcasting seen as reproducing the prejudices of colonialism.”

• “These **four agencies** have remained key players who dominate the global dissemination of news and information, with many newspapers and other media organizations across the world depending on them for international news”.
Cultural globalization versus cultural imperialism (Matos, 2012)

• “There are two main camps regarding the question of a unified global culture: one is the *cultural homogenisation* and the other is *cultural hybridisation*. The former equates globalisation with the homogenising of culture, the dismissal of local cultures and the Westernisation of the globe (Schirato and Webb, 2003: 155).

• Cultural globalization theorists highlight the need to recognise the blending of local cultures with global foreign influences, seeing global culture as being grounded in a process of hybridisation, not simply as the cultural diffusion of American values or homogenisation.”

• **Progressive aspects of cultural globalization** -

• “…the complexities of reverse flows, the blending of foreign and local influences as well as audiences’ diverse forms of interpretation of media texts…..can contribute to add a progressive dimension to cultural globalization.” (Matos, 2012)
Cultural globalization versus cultural imperialism (Matos, 2012; Tomlinson, 1997)

• “The 1990s saw a shift away from the neo-Marxist cultural imperialism theses of the 1970s towards a more sophisticated analysis and approach to “multidirectional flows” across countries.”

• **Towards the notion of cultural globalization** -
  
  This perspective acknowledged the emergence of regional markets, the resistance of media audiences to American culture and diversity in forms of engagement with media texts.”

• **Cultural globalization and hybridity** - “Global culture should be understood less as homogenization, and more as hybridization, which is more suited to understanding the complexity of flows and the “cultural mixing” of current globalization processes.”

• Credit should be given to American popular culture and, given its formation as an immigrant country, it has managed to blend different cultures into the “American” format
“Nederveen Pieterse (2004) sees hybridity as being part of this certain “postmodern sensibility”, a contemporary reaction to racial priority and tight nation border controls and a liberation from the West’s historical legacy of Eurocentric thinking and colonialism.”

Nederveen Pieterse (2004) associates his perspective on globalizations in the plural as “cultural differentialism”, seeing this as a process based on a policy of closure, with outsiders being semi-included and communities mixing in the marketplace.

Cultural convergence versus “cultural mixing” - Cultural convergence is understood as assimilation with the dominant group and culture mixing…..refers to the politics of integration without losing one’s cultural identity.

Cultures should be seen as hybrid in every country of the world.
Hybridity and globalizations (Nederveen Pieterse, 2004; Matos, 2012)

• Global culture does not lead to the elimination of the local – “hybrid styles are in essence a result of the combination of modern techniques or American influences with national and political traditions or regional identities.” (in Matos, 2012)

• Criticisms to the notion of cultural hybridity – “…that it shows a reluctance to look at economic power and the impact of giant media corporations in directing cultural preference” (Curran, 2000).

• People are acquiring multiple and complex identities (hybrids)

• The exploitation of the “exotic” is not a sign of genuine appreciation of difference - “……the blending of the global with the national does not constitute “authentic” culture practice, but rather the intelligent appropriation of the ‘exotic’ by capitalist media corporations which can sell these “multicultural products” in a global market. This can include the consumption of world music, or Bollywood films, or tourism paraphernalia obtained during trips to “exotic” countries. Difference….is explored by global capitalism to make profit.” (Matos, 2012)
“Global elites” and inequalities created by globalization (Matos, 2012; Nederveen Pieterse, 2004)

- Limits to participate in globalization are closely connected to economic and cultural capital
- Globalization has also produced a group of “globalized elites” – who travel, shop, go to conferences, speak English and more than one language, are “cosmopolitan or global citizens”.
- As Nederveen Pieterse (2004:99) states however, it is not possible to assume that all hybrids and cosmopolitans are members of elite groups, for mankind has had a history of immigration and exchange of cultures that has affected all classes, including the working-classes.
- Globalization has also put Western people in more contact with the postcolonial “Other”, resulting in mixed feelings, including the rising of nationalistic sentiment, racism, and fear of foreigners.
- Cultural globalization on the other hand is assisting in the wider exchange of knowledge between countries, creating in the public a cosmopolitan sensibility or cultural cosmopolitanism (Matos, 2012).
Globalization and new technologies (in Matos, 2012)

- New technologies have permitted a reduction in cost of communications – computerised technology, satellite TV and the Internet all have contributed to the reduction of costs, encouraging home made productions (“everyone can publish content on the Internet)

- There has been a growing body of research on the impact of new media technologies on society. Scholars like Mattelart and Castells have examined for instance the process of globalization by questioning the impact of technological developments on the ways in which societies, cultures and individuals function and understand themselves.

- McLuhan (1911-1980) argued that the rise of new communication technologies would culminate in the creation of a “global village”, one capable of enhancing initial understanding between people and forging new communities.
Globalization and access to new technologies: the “digital divide” debate (Golding, 1996; Matos, 2012)

• Castells (2000) has argued how the Internet has revolutionised international information exchange due to its ability to move data across borders.

• Internet expansion has been rapid – “there were more than 20 million users in 1995 and 400 million by the year 2000”. (Matos, 2012)

• By 2006, the Internet was considered a global medium, with usage jumping from just 3% …..to 15% by 2005. This represented nearly 1 billion people living in the developed countries, with North America, Europe and Asia-Pacific each having a penetration rate of 30% (Thussu, 2006: 208 in Matos, 2012).

• The “global village” has its inequalities. As columnist David Kline (Hotwired magazine) stated, “the future may become a wonderland of opportunity only for the minority among us who are affluent, mobile, and highly educated. And it may at the same time, become a digital dark age for the majority of citizens – the poor, the non-college educated and the so-called unnecessary“(Golding, 1996)
The digital divide debate

• Pessimistic versus utopian theories surrounding the Internet – One strand believes that the Internet will only intensify inequalities, the other that it can contribute to reduce them.

• “Various theories have explored the numerous advantages of the web, including its assistance in globalisation and its capacity to increase interconnectedness, permitting rapid transmission of global events, the creation of global citizens and the formation of a global civil society united in favour of particular political causes.”

• How do you include larger segments of the world population in the “information society”?

• “Norris (2001: 107) asserts that the type of political organisations found on the internet are closely linked to the process of democratisation of a given country.” (in Matos, 2012, 186)

• Both Norris (2001) and Nederveen Pieterse (2010) see the digital divide debate less about providing computers in schools in developing countries, and more about creating the means for wider education in IT skills and literacy levels.
The Internet and anti-globalization movements (Golding, 1996; Matos, 2012)

- Thus there are inequalities in the distribution of new technologies
- Rising inequalities of income since the 1980s worldwide - some 70 of the world’s income is produced and consumed by 15% of the world’s population. This has implications for communications (Golding, 1996)
- “In 1994 Europe and North America accounted for 69% of global telecommunications revenues, Africa for just 1%…..The reality is that there are more telephone lines in Manhattan. New York, than in Sub-Saharan Africa. The Internet Society estimate that in 1994 there were 0.0002 Internet users per 1.000 inhabitants in India, compared to 48.9 in Sweden…” (Golding, 1996)
- Internet as a counter-public sphere and political role – “…has had a significant political role in facilitating the communication between groups, assisting the activities of social movements in organizing “anti-globalization” protests and the mobilization of NGOs, political parties, civil society groups and voters. (Matos, 2012)
Developments of news agencies since the 19th century (in Thussu, 2006)

- The **printing revolution** helped lay the basis for the Reformation and the **foundations of the nation-state** and of modern capitalism
- **Main British undersea cables** (1870-1905)
  - “The British cable of 1874 was joined in 1879 by a new French cable across the North Atlantic….and by a German cable…on the African coast, and from there to Recife.”
  - “The major European agencies were based in imperial capitals. Their expansion outside Europe was intentionally associated with the territorial colonialism of the late 19th century”
- “The European news agencies, French Havas Agency (ancestor of AFP), the German Wolff and Reuters, all of which were subsidised by their respective governments, controlled information markets in Europe and were looking beyond the continent to expand their operation” (Thussu, 2006, 10)
- US agencies began to enter the competition after the 1930s
Developments of news agencies since the 19th century (in Thussu, 2006)

• The expansion of trade in the 19th century lead to a growth in the demand for news.
• According to Thussu (2006), the establishment of the news agency was the most important development in the newspaper industry of the 19th century. The demand for commercial information ensured that the news agencies grew in power.
• I.e. the fortunes of the news agency Reuters can be seen as running parallel to that of the British Empire. Reuters telegrams were essential reading for the latest news form various corners of the British Empire. Reuters had also a close relation with the British foreign and colonial administrations.
• The British Empire had a great technological advantage since the Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company of GB dominated global telegraph traffic and had a monopoly on telegraph exchanges.
News agencies and the globalization of news (Boyd-Barrett and Rantanen, 1998)

• Authors see the news agencies as **agents of globalization**. They underline a connection between news agencies, national formation and globalization.

• “The links between modernity, capitalism, news, news agencies and globalization are an outstanding but neglected feature of the past 150 years.

• News agencies are pointed as being the first international or global media organisations, and are among the first of the world’s transnational or multinational corporations.

• “News represented the reformulation of ‘information’ as a commodity gathered and distributed for the three purposes of political communication, trade and pleasure and directed in its generic form by technology (i.e. telegraph), scientism….and the development of mass media markets.

• **News agencies as a topic** was dependent on the NWICO debates.
News agencies and the globalization of news (Boyd-Barrett and Rantanen, 1998)

• News agencies and “soft power” during the 1970s – the agencies were among the range of institutions which new nation states came to feel they had to establish in order to be seen to be credible as nations and in order to project or to control the dissemination of their “national image” in the global market.

• Recent developments in the news agency market have included the emergence of global television news, led by CNN and BBC Worldwide Television. They have their own channels, distributed by satellite or by cable, or provide news to terrestrial broadcasters and through the Internet.

• News agencies have been seen differently throughout history: as powerful vehicles of propaganda during war periods or as neutral, professional, almost “dull” provider of “a journalism of information” to newspapers, media industries, finance, businesses and private individuals.
Globalization and the mass media
Media imperialism and the colonization of communication space” (Boyd-Barrett, 1977, 1998)

- “The process by which the…ownership, structure, distribution or content of the media in any one country are singly or together subject to substantial external pressures from the media interests of any country or countries without ….reciprocalation of influence by the country so affected” (Boyd-Barrett, 1977).

- Earlier concept also ignored the capacity of the US to be a liberating influence on certain parts of the world. Reformulates the concept of media imperialism, incorporating aspects of globalization theory, including hybridity, and the weakening of nation-states.

- Cannot relax the critique of what he calls the colonization of communication space, in other words, to look at communication space as a site of struggle and resistance (Matos, 2012)

- Relevance of the concept – it called attention to inequalities in the global media market, as well as focusing attention on the structure and organization of media industries as matters of cultural…..and political communication (1998, 166)
International television flows and reverse flows (in Matos, 2012 et al)

• “Unevenness of flows reflects the historical relations of colonialism and imperialism, in spite of the existence of multiple flows or reverse flows from the First to Third Worlds.”

• **Globalization and new forms of dependency** – Thompson (1995: 169) has emphasised how the appropriation of globalized media products interacts with localized practices which can either serve new to consolidate relations of power or create new forms of dependency.”

• “Schiller has also updated his work, acknowledging that the power structures of the 1960s has changed, but understanding that cultural domination remained American in form and content while the economic basis had become internationalized.”

• **Reverse flows** – Seen by many as a form of reverse type of colonization, i.e. such as the exportation of Brazilian *telenovelas* to Portugal, as well as the emergence of regional media markets and cultural production and distribution centres in developing countries, such as the Bollywood film industry in India.”
Global media companies and convergence (Matos, 2012; Herman and McChesney, 2004)

• “Expansion of technologies has had a major role in the globalization of communications, with cable and satellite facilitating the capacity for transmission of electronic information and the latter for long-distance communications, combined with an increase in use of digital methods of information processing.”

• “Digitalization of information and the development of electronic technologies has increased the capacity to store information, permitting the convergence of information….”

• Authors understand globalization as a process driven from “above” by giant media corporations supported by deregulation policies….

• They see the global media market as one where an oligopolistic market competition predominates. This is linked to the rise of the global capitalist economic system, encouraged by new digital technologies and by the institutions of global capitalism (World Bank)
Global media companies and convergence (Matos, 2012; Herman and McChesney, 2004)

- **Global media market** has come to be dominated by nine or ten TNCs. Herman and McChesney (2004) argue that global media is still dominated by US interests…..and mainly by a handful of companies: Time Warner, Disney, Bertelsman, Viacom, Telecommunications INC, News Corporation, Sony, Seagram, General Electric and Philips.

- “These firms all have global distribution networks and have major interests in more than one…..media sectors. The global media market is rounded out by a second tier of some three or four dozen firms that are national or regional powerhouses, or which have strong holds over niche markets…..About one-half of these second-tier firms come from North America, and most of the rest come from Western Europe and Japan.”

- These fifty or sixty firms control most of the media – book, magazine publishing……film production, newspaper publishing – in the world.

- Herman and McChesney (2004) advocate wider *media democratization* from “below”
Global media companies and convergence (Herman and McChesney, 2004)

- Close connection between the rise of the global media system and the global capitalist economy - the global media system is a direct result of deregulation policies, which has seen the expansion of cable and satellite channels in national markets worldwide.
- The advertising agency business has also consolidated dramatically on a global basis since the 1990s.
- “Media corporations have been heavily investing in the convergence between the Internet and TV and in communication strategies that operate across platforms. American Online and Time Warner merged in 2000 to create an Internet-based media giant which brought together the old and new media. Giant web portals have emerged and are contributing to concentrate information, access and profits, with ‘Google’ revolutionizing’ the way information is processed and used across the world.” (Matos, 2012)
Television and globalization (in Matos, 2012)

• “Globalisation is seen as having changed the nature of the relationship that existed between the media and the state. Global media are no longer tied to national boundaries but span the world and pursue audiences whose consumption patterns converge”.

• “The expansion of cable and satellite television has placed pressure not only on public service broadcasting but on also content and programming due to the economic drive to reduce costs, maximise profits and fund the development of expensive technologies”.

• “Internationalisation can be a progressive as well as a repressive force. The impact of cultural exchange flows, such as Western models, values and cultures on one hand on less developed nations, as well as the influences of Bollywood films and of the ideas of developing countries on the developed world, can be forces for positive influences on a given country.”

• Empire- Media Wars – Part I (Al Jazeera English) - Programme aims to investigate what the real purpose behind new national news channels is

• (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hWjCDLkGDX4)
Conclusions and further questions for research

• Cultural imperialism theses lost ground to more sophisticated understandings of globalization and its cultural dimensions, including the notion of *multiple flows*, the recognition that audiences are critical of media texts and programming; that current global communications is not dominated only by American companies; and that many countries and people *blend* global influences with national specifications.

• Globalization in its current form has in overall produced more inequalities than benefits, including the reproduction of past exploitative colonial relationships between the developed and “underdeveloped” world.

• Some of these inequalities include the access to new technologies and to the Internet (i.e. digital divide), and address also the extent to which most citizens of the world participate in the benefits of globalization (i.e. social geographical mobility, participation as a global citizen, information and communication rights, etc).
Seminar activities and questions

• cultural hybridity  hat ay d it hl

• 2) Making reference to Matos’ and Boyd Barrett’s texts, discuss the

contributing to create a “cosmopolitan sensibility” in the public?

• accelerating interconnectedness and contributing to a “shrinking world” and to the formation of a “global civil society”.

• “anti globalization” organisations?
Readings for week 21

- **Set reading:**

- **Additional:**