International Communication

Continuity and Change

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Approaches to Theorizing International Communication

Theories have their own history and reflect the concerns of the time in which they were developed. This chapter examines some that offer ways of approaching the subject of international communication and assesses how useful their explanations are in terms of an understanding of the processes involved. This is by no means a comprehensive account of theories of communication (see Mattelart and Mattelart, 1998; Scannell, 2007; McQuail, 2010), nor does it set out an all-embracing theorization of the subject, but it looks at the key theories and their proponents that, together with the preceding chapter on the historical aspects of international communication, should help to contextualize the analysis of contemporary global communication systems in subsequent chapters.

It is not surprising that theories of communication began to emerge in parallel with the rapid social and economic changes of the Industrial Revolution in Europe, reflecting the significance of the role of communications in the growth of capitalism and empire, and drawing also on advances in science and the understanding of the natural world. One of the first concepts of communication, developed by the French philosopher Claude Henri de Saint-Simon (1760–1825), used the analogy of the living organism, proposing that the development of a system of communication routes (roads, canals and railways) and a credit system (banks) was vital for an industrializing society and that the circulation of money, for example, was equivalent to that of blood for the human heart (Mattelart and Mattelart, 1998).

The metaphor of the organism was also fundamental for British philosopher, Herbert Spencer (1820–1903), who argued that industrial society was the embodiment of an 'organic society', an increasingly coherent, integrated system, in which functions become more and more specified and parts more interdependent. Communication was seen as a basic component in a system of distribution and regulation. Like the vascular system, the physical network of roads, canals and railways ensured the distribution of nutrition, while the channels of information (the press, telegraph and postal service) functioned as the equivalent of the nervous system, making it possible for the centre to 'propagate its influence' to its outermost parts. Dispatches are compared to 'nervous discharges that communicate movement from an inhabitant of one city to that of another' (Spencer, quoted in Mattelart and Mattelart, 1998: 9). At the same time, contemporary commentators were anxious about the social and cultural impact of the

speed and reach of the new forms of communication and the rise of a mass society fuelled and sustained by them.

In the twentieth century, theories of international communication evolved into a discrete discipline within the new social sciences and, in each era, reflected contemporary concerns about political, economic and technological changes and their impact on society and culture. In the early twentieth century, during and after the First World War, a debate arose about the role of communication in propagating the competitive economic and military objectives of the imperial powers, exemplified in the work of Walter Lippmann on 'public opinion' (1922) and Harold Lasswell on wartime propaganda (1927). Lippmann's concerns were mainly about the manipulation of public opinion by powerful state institutions, while Lasswell, a political scientist, undertook pioneering systematic analysis of propaganda activities.

After the Second World War, theories of communication multiplied in response to new developments in technology and media – first radio and then television – in the context of an increasingly integrated international economic and political system. Two broad but often interrelated approaches to theorizing communication can be seen: the political-economy approach, which was concerned with the underlying structures of economic and political power relations, and that of Cultural Studies, which focused more on the role of communication and media in creating and maintaining shared values, identities and meanings (Golding and Murdock, 1997; Durham and Kellner, 2006; Ryan, 2008; Cowhey and Aronson, 2009; Mosco, 2009; Wasko, Murdock and Sousa, 2011; Winseck and Jin, 2012).

The political-economy approach has its roots in the critique of capitalism produced by the German philosopher, Karl Marx (1818–83), but it has evolved over the years to incorporate a wide range of critical thinkers. Central to a Marxian interpretation of international communication is the question of power, which ultimately is seen as an instrument of control by the ruling classes. In his seminal text, *German Ideology*, Marx described the relationship between economic, political and cultural power thus:

> The class which has the means of material production has control at the same time over the means of mental production so that, thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it . . . Insofar, therefore, as they rule as a class and determine the extent and compass of an epoch, it is self-evident that they . . . among other things . . . regulate the production and distribution of the ideas of their age: thus their ideas are the ruling ideas of the epoch. (cited in Murdock and Golding, 1977: 12–13)

Much of the critical research on international communication has been an examination of the pattern of ownership and production in the media and communication industries, analysing these within the overall context of social and economic power relations, based on national and transnational class interests. Researchers working within the Marxist tradition were concerned, for example, with the commodification of communication hardware and software and inequalities of access to media technologies (see essays in Wasko, Murdock and Sousa, 2011).

By the late twentieth century, the Cultural Studies approach had become increasingly influential in the field of international communication. Social-science analyses of mass communication were enriched by concepts from the study of literature and the humanities. Cultural Studies, which started in Britain in the 1970s with the study of popular and mass culture and their role in the reproduction of social hegemony and inequality, has been generally concerned with how media texts work to create meaning (on the basis of analysis of the texts themselves), and how culturally situated individuals work to gather meaning from texts (increasingly based on observation of media consumers). Cultural Studies' discovery of polysemic texts (the potential for readers to generate their own meanings) fitted well with a politically conservative era and the re-invigoration of liberal capitalism which accompanied it. In such an environment discourses about identity – based on race, ethnicity, religion or nationality – (Brinkerhoff, 2009; Aronczyk, 2013; Mellor and Rinnawi, 2016), as well as issues surrounding gender inequality (UNESCO, 2012; Wilkins, 2015; Ross and Padovani, 2016) also received prominence in international communications studies.

'Free flow of information'

After the Second World War and the establishment of the bipolar world of free-market capitalism and state socialism, theories of international communication became part of the new Cold War discourse. For the supporters of capitalism, the primary function of international communication was to promote democracy, freedom of expression and markets, while the Marxists argued for greater state regulation on communication and media outlets.

The concept of the 'free flow of information' reflected Western, and specifically US, antipathy to the state regulation and censorship of the media by its communist opponents and its use for propaganda. The 'free flow' doctrine was essentially a part of the liberal, free-market discourse that championed the rights of media proprietors to sell wherever and whatever they wished. As most of the world's media resources and media-related capital, then as now, were concentrated in the West, it was the media proprietors in Western countries, their governments and national business communities that had most to gain.

The concept of 'free flow' therefore served both economic and political purposes. Media organizations of the media-rich countries could hope to dissuade others from erecting trade barriers to their products or from making it difficult to gather news or make programmes on their territories. Their argument drew on premises of democracy, freedom of expression, the media's role as 'public watchdog' and their assumed global relevance. For their compatriot businessmen, 'free flow' assisted them in advertising and marketing their goods and services in foreign markets, through media vehicles whose information and entertainment products championed the Western way of life and its values of capitalism and individualism.

For Western governments, 'free flow' helped to ensure the continuing and unreciprocated influence of Western media on global markets, strengthening the West in its ideological battle with the Soviet Union. The doctrine also contributed to

providing, in generally subtle rather than direct ways, vehicles for communication of US government points of view to international audience (UNESCO, 1982; Mowlana, 1997; Mosco, 2009).

Modernization theory

Complementary to the doctrine of 'free flow' in the post-war years was the view that international communication was the key to the process of modernization and development for the so-called 'Third World'. Modernization theory arose from the notion that communications research on what came to be known as 'modernization' or 'development theory' was based on the belief that international mass communication could be used to spread the message of modernity and transfer the economic and political models of the West to the newly independent countries of the South. This pro-media bias was very influential and received support from international organizations such as UNESCO and by the governments in developing countries.

One of the earliest exponents of this theory was Daniel Lerner, a political science professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, whose classic work in the field, *The Passing of Traditional Society* (1958) – the product of research conducted in the early 1950s in Turkey, Lebanon, Egypt, Syria, Jordan and Iran – examined the degree to which people in the Middle East were exposed to national and international media, especially radio. In this first major comparative survey, Lerner proposed that contact with the media helped the process of transition from a 'traditional' to a 'modernized' state, characterizing the mass media as a 'mobility multiplier', which enables individuals to experience events in far-off places, forcing them to reassess their traditional way of life. Exposure to the media, Lerner argued, made traditional societies less bound by traditions and made them aspire to a new and modern way of life.

The Western path of 'development' was presented as the most effective way to shake off traditional 'backwardness'. According to Lerner,

> [The] Western model of modernization, exhibits certain components and sequences whose relevance is global. Everywhere, for example, increasing urbanization has tended to raise literacy; rising literacy has tended to increase media exposure; increasing media exposure has 'gone with' wider economic participation (per capita income) and political participation. (Lerner, 1958: 46)

Western society, Lerner argued, provided 'the most developed model of societal attributes (power, wealth, skill, rationality)', and 'from the West came the stimuli which undermined traditional society that will operate efficiently in the world today' (p. 47).

Another key modernization theorist Wilbur Schramm, whose influential book, *Mass Media and National Development*, was published in 1964 in conjunction with UNESCO, saw the mass media as a 'bridge to a wider world', as the vehicle for transferring new ideas and models from the North to the South and, within the South, from urban to rural areas. Schramm, at the time Director of the Institute for Communication Research at Stanford University, California, noted that,

> the task of the mass media of information and the 'new media' of education is to speed and ease the long, slow social transformation required for economic development, and, in particular, to speed and smooth the task of modernising human resources behind the national effort. (Schramm, 1964: 27)

Schramm endorsed Lerner's view that mass media can raise the aspirations of the peoples in developing countries. The mass media in the South, he wrote, 'face the need to rouse their people from fatalism and a fear of change. They need to encourage both personal and national aspirations. Individuals must come to desire a better life than they have and to be willing to work for it' (p. 130).

The timing of Schramm's book was significant. The UN had proclaimed the 1960s as 'the Decade of Development' and UN agencies and Western governments, led by the US, were generously funding research, often in conjunction with private companies, through universities and development bureaucracy, notably the newly established United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the United States Information Agency (USIA) and the Peace Corps, to harness the power of the mass media to 'modernize' the newly independent countries of the South.

In the 1970s, modernization theorists started to use the level of media development as an indicator of general societal development. Leading theorists of the 'development as modernization' school, such as Everett Rogers, saw a key role for the mass media in international communication and development (Rogers, 1962; Pye, 1963). Such research benefited from the surveys undertaken by various US-government-funded agencies and educational foundations, especially in Asia and Latin America for what Rogers (1962) called 'disseminating innovations'.

This top-down approach to communications, a one-way flow of information from government or international development agencies via the mass media to Southern peasantry at the bottom, was generally seen as a panacea for the development of the newly independent countries of Asia and Africa. But it was predicated on a definition of development that followed the model of Western industrialization and 'modernization', measured primarily by the rate of economic growth of output or Gross National Product (GNP). It failed to recognize that the creation of wealth on its own was insufficient: the improvement of life for the majority of the populations depended on the equitable distribution of that wealth and its use for the public good. It also failed to ask questions about development for whom and who would gain or lose, ignoring any discussion of the political, social, or cultural dimensions of development. In many Southern countries, income disparities in fact increased over the succeeding fifty years – despite a growth in GNP.

Moreover, the mass media were assumed to be a neutral force in the process of development, ignoring how the media are themselves products of social, political, economic and cultural conditions. In many developing countries, economic and political power was and remains restricted to a tiny, often unrepresentative, elite, and the mass media play a key role in legitimizing the political establishment. Since the media had, and continue to have, close proximity to the ruling elites, they tend to reflect this view of development in the news. The international communication research inspired by the modernization thesis was very influential, shaping university

communication programmes and research centres globally. Though such research provided a huge amount of data on the behaviour, attitudes and values of the people in the South, it tended to work within the positivist tradition of what sociologist Paul Lazarsfeld (1941) had long identified as 'administrative' research, often failing to analyse the political and cultural context of international communication. However, the outcomes of this type of research in international communication can be useful in analysing the relationship of media growth to economic development, measured in terms of such indicators as sales of communication hardware and gross national product. They are also useful in international promotion of advertising and marketing.

It is important to understand the Cold War context in which modernization theory emerged, a time when it was politically expedient for the West to use the notion of modernization to bring the newly independent nations of Asia, the Middle East and Africa into the sphere of capitalism. As Vincent Mosco comments, 'The theory of modernization meant a reconstruction of the international division of labour amalgamating the non-Western world into the emerging international structural hierarchy' (1996: 121). It is now being accepted that some of modernization research was politically motivated. It has been pointed out that Lerner's seminal study was a spin-off from a large and clandestine government-funded audience research project, conducted for the Voice of America by the Bureau of Applied Social Research (Samarajiva, 1985).

Despite its enormous influence in the field of international communication, Lerner's research had more to do with the East–West ideological contest of those days of Cold War, when in the Middle East radical voices were demanding decolonization – Iran had nationalized its oil industry in 1951, leading to the CIA-backed coup, two years later, which removed the democratically elected Prime Minister, Muhammad Musaddiq. Given the prominence of radio propaganda during the 1950s, this research could also be seen as an investigation of radio-listening behaviour in a region bordering the Soviet Union. In this context it is interesting to note that Lerner had worked for the Psychological Warfare Division of the US Army during the Second World War.

One major shortcoming of the early modernization theorists was their assumption that the modern and the traditional lifestyles were mutually exclusive, and their dismissive view of the culture of the 'indigent natives' led them to believe in the desirability and inevitability of a shift from the traditional to the modern. The dominant cultural and religious force in the region – Islam – and a sense of collective pan-Islamic identity were seen as 'sentimental sorties into the symbolism of a majestic past'. The elites in the region had to choose between 'Mecca or mechanization'. The crux of the matter, Lerner argued, was 'not whether, but how one should move from traditional ways toward modern life-styles. The symbols of race and ritual fade into irrelevance when they impede living desires for bread and enlightenment' (Lerner, 1958: 405). What modernizers such as Lerner failed to comprehend was that the dichotomy of modern versus traditional was not inevitable. Despite all the West's efforts at media modernization, Islamic traditions continue to define the Muslim world, and indeed have become stronger in parts of the Middle East. In addition, these traditional cultures can also deploy modern communication methods to put their case across. In the 1979

Islamic Revolution in Iran, for example, radical groups produced printed material and audio cassettes and distributed them through informal networks to promote an anti-Western ideology based on a particular Islamic view of the world (Mohammadi and Sreberny-Mohammadi, 1994). In the twenty-first century, militant Islamists have used satellite television as well as the internet to propagate their ideology (Howard, 2010; Howard and Hussain, 2013; Mellor and Rinnawi, 2016).

In Latin America, most communication research, often funded by the US government, was led by proponents of the modernization thesis. However, since the gap between the rich and poor was growing, as elsewhere in the developing world, critics started to question the validity of the developmentalist project and raised questions about what it left out – the relationship between communication, power and knowledge and the ideological role of international organizational and institutional structures. This led to a critique of modernization in Latin America, most notably from Brazil's Paulo Freire, whose *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) had a major influence on international development discourse, though how far his views were adopted in devising international communication strategies remains an open question.

Southern scholars, especially those from Latin America, argued that the chief beneficiaries of modernization programmes were not the 'traditional' rural poor in the South but Western media and communication companies, which had expanded into the Third World, ostensibly in the name of modernization and development but, in fact, in search of new consumers for their products. They argued that modernization programmes were exacerbating the already deep social and economic inequalities in the developing countries and making them dependent on Western models of communication development.

Partly as a result of the work of Latin American scholars, the proponents of modernization in the West acknowledged that the theory needed reformulation. Despite decades of 'modernization', the vast majority of the people in the South continued to live in poverty, and by the mid-1970s the talk was of the 'passing of the dominant paradigm' (Rogers, 1976). In a revised version of modernization theory, a shift has been detectable from support for the mass media to an almost blind faith in the potential of the new information and communication technologies – in what has been called 'a neo-developmentalist view' (Mosco, 1996: 130). Also noticeable is the acceptance of a greater role for local elites in the modernization process. However, the importance of Western technology remains crucial in the revised version too. According to this view, modernization requires advanced telecommunication and computer infrastructure, preferably through the 'efficient' private corporations, thus integrating the South into a globalized information economy. Some scholars have suggested broadening the analytical categories of developmental communication. Mohan Dutta has argued for a 'culture-centred approach', drawing on the foundation of post-colonial and subaltern studies theories, to understand communication and social change which offers 'resistive possibilities of subaltern and marginalized groups. In such formulation, social change is 'conceptualized in the context of the structures of the goals of communicative processes, strategies and tactics, directed at changing the structures in contemporary globalization that are primarily driven by the neoliberal logic' (Dutta, 2011: 3).

Dependency theory

Dependency theory emerged in Latin America in the late 1960s and 1970s, partly as a consequence of the political situation in the continent, with increasing US support for right-wing authoritarian governments, and partly with the realization among the educated elite that the developmentalist approach to international communication had failed to deliver. The establishment in 1976 in Mexico City of the *Instituto Latinoamericano de Estudios* (ILET), whose principal research interest was the study of transnational media business, gave an impetus to a critique of the 'modernization' thesis, documenting its negative consequences in the continent. The impact of ILET was also evident in international policy debates about NWICO, particularly through the work of Juan Somavia, a member of the MacBride Commission.

Though grounded in the neo-Marxist political-economy approach (Baran, 1957; Gunder Frank, 1969; Amin, 1976), dependency theorists aimed to provide an alternative framework to analyse international communication. Central to dependency theory was the view that transnational corporations (TNCs), mostly based in the North, exercise control with the support of their respective governments over the developing countries, by setting the terms for global trade – dominating markets, resources, production, and labour. Development for these countries was shaped in a way to strengthen the dominance of the developed nations and to maintain the 'peripheral' nations in a position of dependence – in other words, to make conditions suitable for 'dependent development'. In its most extreme form the outcome of such relationship was 'the development of underdevelopment' (Gunder Frank, 1969). This neo-colonial relationship in which the TNCs controlled both the terms of exchange and the structure of global markets, it was argued, had contributed to the widening and deepening of inequality in the South while the TNCs had strengthened their control over the world's natural and human resources (Baran, 1957; Mattelart, 1979).

The cultural aspects of dependency theory, examined by scholars interested in the production, distribution and consumption of media and cultural products, were particularly relevant to the study of international communication. The dependency theorists aimed to show the links between discourses of 'modernization' and the policies of transnational media and communication corporations and their backers among Western governments. Dependency theorists both benefited from, and contributed to, research on cultural aspects of imperialism being undertaken at the time in the United States. The idea of cultural imperialism is most clearly identified with the work of Herbert Schiller, who was based at the University of California (1969–92). Working within the neo-Marxist critical tradition, Schiller analysed the global power structures in the international communication industries and the links between transnational business and the dominant states.

At the heart of Schiller's argument was the analysis of how, in pursuit of commercial interests, huge US-based TNCs, often in league with Western (predominantly United States) military and political interests, were undermining the cultural autonomy of the countries of the South and creating a dependency on both the hardware and software

of communication and media in the developing countries. Schiller defined cultural imperialism as

> the sum of the processes by which a society is brought into the modern world system and how its dominating stratum is attracted, pressured, forced, and sometimes bribed into shaping social institutions to correspond to, or even to promote, the values and structures of the dominant centre of the system. (1976: 9)

Schiller argued that the declining European colonial empires – mainly British, French and Dutch – were being replaced by a new emergent American empire, based on US economic, military and informational power. According to Schiller, the US-based TNCs have continued to grow and dominate the global economy. This economic growth has been underpinned with communications know-how, enabling US business and military organizations to take leading roles in the development and control of new electronically based global communication systems.

Such domination had both military and cultural implications. Schiller's seminal work, *Mass Communications and American Empire* (1969/1992), examined the role of the US government, a major user of communication services, in developing global electronic media systems, initially for military purposes to counter the perceived, and often exaggerated, Soviet security threat. By controlling global satellite communications, the United States had the most effective surveillance system in operation – a crucial element in the Cold War years. Such communication hardware could also be used to propagate the US model of commercial broadcasting, dominated by large networks and funded primarily by advertising revenue, as Schiller noted,

> Nothing less than the viability of the American industrial economy itself is involved in the movement toward international commercialization of broadcasting. The private yet managed economy depends on advertising. Remove the excitation and the manipulation of consumer demand and industrial slowdown threatens. (1969: 95)

According to Schiller, dependence on US communications technology and investment, coupled with the new demand for media products, necessitated large-scale imports of US media products, notably television programmes. Since media exports are ultimately dependent on sponsors for advertising, they endeavour not only to advertise Western goods and services but also to promote, albeit indirectly, a capitalist 'American way of life', through mediated consumer lifestyles. The result was an 'electronic invasion', especially in the Global South, which threatened to undermine traditional cultures and emphasize consumerism at the expense of community values.

In the revised edition of the book, published in 1992, Schiller argued that US dominance of global communication increased with the end of the Cold War and the failure of the UNESCO-supported demands for NWICO. The economic basis of US dominance, however, had changed, with TNCs acquiring an increasingly important

role in international relations, transforming US cultural imperialism into 'transnational corporate cultural domination' (Schiller, 1992: 39).

In a review of the US role in international communication during the past half-century, Schiller saw the United States still playing a decisive role in promoting the ever-expanding communication sector, a central pillar of the US economy. In US support for the promotion of electronic-based media and communication hardware and software in the new information age of the twenty-first century, Schiller found 'historical continuities in its quest for systemic power and control' of global communication (1998: 23).

Other notable works using the 'cultural imperialism' thesis have examined various aspects of US cultural and media dominance as Hollywood's relationship with the European movie market (Guback, 1969); US television exports and influences in Latin America (Wells, 1972); the contribution of Disney comics in promoting capitalist values (Dorfman and Mattelart, 1975) and the role of the advertising industry as an ideological instrument (Ewen, 1976; Mattelart, 1991). Internationally, some of the most widely cited work has been the UNESCO-supported research on international flow in television programmes (Nordenstreng and Varis, 1974; Varis, 1985).

One prominent aspect of dependency in international communication was identified in the 1970s by Oliver Boyd-Barrett as 'media imperialism', examining information and media inequalities between nations and how these reflect broader issues of dependency, and analysing the hegemonic power of mainly US-dominated international media – notably news agencies, magazines, films, radio and television. Boyd-Barrett defined media imperialism as follows:

> The process whereby 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 other country or countries, without proportionate reciprocation of influence by the country so affected. (1977: 117)

For its critics, dependency literature was 'notable for an absence of clear definitions of fundamental terms like imperialism and an almost total lack of empirical evidence to support the arguments' (Stevenson, 1988: 38). Others argued that it ignored the question of media form and content as well as the role of the audience. Those deploying a Cultural Studies approach to the analysis of international communication argued that, like other cultural artefacts, media 'texts' could be polysemic and were amenable to different interpretations by audiences who were not merely passive consumers but 'active' participants in the process of negotiating meaning (Fiske, 1987). It was also pointed out that the 'totalistic' cultural imperialism thesis did not adequately take on board such issues as how global media texts worked in national contexts, ignoring local patterns of media consumption.

Quantifying the volume of US cultural products distributed around the world was not a sufficient explanation, it was also important to examine its effects. There was also a view that the cultural imperialism thesis assumed a 'hypodermic-needle model' of media effects and ignored the complexities of 'Third World' cultures (Sreberny-Mohammadi, 1991, 1997). It was argued that Western scholars lacked

deep understanding of Third World cultures, seeing them as homogeneous and not being adequately aware of the regional and intra-national diversities of race, ethnicity, language, gender and class. There have so far been few systematic studies of the cultural and ideological effects of Western media products on audiences in the South, especially from Southern scholars.

Despite its critics (Tomlinson, 1991; Thompson, 1995), the cultural imperialism thesis was very influential in international communication research in the 1970s and 1980s. It was particularly important during the heated NWICO debates in UNESCO and other international fora in the 1970s. However, even a critic such as John Thompson, while rejecting the main thesis, has conceded that such research is 'probably the only systematic and moderately plausible attempt to think about the globalization of communications and its impact on the modern world' (Thompson, 1995: 173). Others have argued for the need to take into account regional and geocultural markets. Joseph Straubhaar observes,

> while the structural context, problems, and constraints for much of the world's media that dependency theory pointed out should be analyzed, consideration must also be given to the development of cultural industries that show increasing aspects of interdependence by creating more cultural products, adapting and changing cultural product models, and exporting both. (2007: 22)

However, defenders of the cultural imperialism thesis found the 1990s' debates criticizing it 'lacking even the most elementary epistemological precaution and sometimes actually bordering on intellectual dishonesty', arguing that the critics of this theory have often 'taken the notion out of context, abstracting it from the concrete historical conditions that produced it: the political struggles and commitments of the 1960s and 1970s' (Mattelart and Mattelart, 1998: 137–8).

With changes in debates on international communication reflecting the rhetoric of privatization and liberalization in the 1990s, theories of media and cultural dependency have become less prominent, though their relevance should not be underestimated (Hackett and Zhao, 2005; Thussu, 2007a; Boyd-Barrett, 2014). Boyd-Barrett has argued that while media imperialism theory in its original formulation did not take into account intra-national media relations, gender and ethnic issues, it is still a useful analytical tool to make sense of what he terms as the 'colonization of communications space' (Boyd-Barrett, 1998: 157). In a book-length exposition of the notion of media imperialism, Boyd-Barrett has analysed both the hardware and software of global media and communication, noting that 'digital technology and the infrastructures that enable it (including cable, satellite and wireless networks) massively enhance communications activity across local, national, regional, international and even global markets, and compel us to understand the term "media" as encompassing all technology-enabled forms of communication, irrespective of time or space' (Boyd-Barrett, 2014: 4). He suggests that the term 'media imperialism', therefore, 'should not be thought of as a single theory but as a field of study which incorporates different theories about the relationships between media and empire, as well as theories that address the exercise of forms of imperial power by media institutions themselves' (p. 14).

One of the limits of the cultural and media imperialism approach is that it did not fully take into account the role of the national elites, especially in the developing world. However, though its influence has dwindled, the theory of structural imperialism developed by the Norwegian sociologist Johan Galtung, also offers an explanation of the role of international communication in maintaining structures of economic and political power.

Structural imperialism

Galtung argued that the world consists of developed 'centre' states and underdeveloped 'periphery' states. In turn, each centre and periphery state possesses a highly developed 'core' and a less developed 'periphery'. He defines structural imperialism as a 'sophisticated type of dominance relation which cuts across nations basing itself on a bridgehead which the centre of the centre nation establishes in the centre of the periphery nation for the joint benefit of both'. For Galtung, there is a harmony of interest between the core of the centre nation and the centre in the periphery nation, less harmony of interest within the periphery nation than within the centre nation and a disharmony of interest between the periphery of the centre nation and the periphery of the periphery nation (Galtung, 1971: 83). In other words, there exists in the countries of the South a dominant elite whose interests coincide with the interests of the elite in the developed world. This 'core' not only provides a bridgehead by which the centre nation can maintain its economic and political domination over the periphery nation but is also supported by the centre in maintaining dominance over its own internal periphery. In terms of values and attitudes, the elite group is closer to other elites in the developed world than with groups in their own country.

Galtung defines five types of imperialism that depend upon the type of exchange between centre and periphery nations: economic, political, military, communication and cultural. The five types form a syndrome of imperialism, and interact, albeit through different channels, to reinforce the dominance relationship of centre over periphery. Communication imperialism is intimately related to cultural imperialism and news is a combination of cultural and communication exchange (Galtung, 1971: 93). Periphery–centre relationships are maintained and reinforced by information flows and through the reproduction of economic activities. These create institutional links that serve the interests of the dominant groups, both in the centre and within the periphery. Institutions in the centre of the periphery often mirror those of the developed world and thus recreate and promote the latter's value systems.

According to Galtung, the basic mechanism of structural imperialism revolves around two forms of interaction, 'vertical' and 'feudal'. The 'vertical' interaction principle maintains that relationships are asymmetrical; that the flow of power is from the more developed state to the less developed state, while the benefits of the system flow upwards from the less developed states to the centre states. The 'feudal' interaction principle states that there 'is interaction along the spokes, from the periphery to the centre hub; but not along the rim, from one periphery nation to another' (Galtung, 1971: 89).

Galtung's theory is particularly relevant in understanding global news flow: news flows from the centre and the core to the periphery via transnational news agencies. The effect of this feudal structure is that Southern nations know virtually nothing about events in neighbouring countries that has not been filtered through the lenses of the developed media systems at the centre. The theory argues that the core's definition of news will be reflected in the news in the peripheral nation. This has been called the 'agenda-setting function' of the international media. Information is transferred to the Southern elite in such a way that primary importance is attached to the same issues the developed world sees as important. The identity of interests between the centre of the centre and the centre of the periphery greatly influences the acceptance of an international agenda.

A striking similarity can be found in Galtung's theory of structural imperialism with Schiller's definition of cultural imperialism. Both maintain that the structure of political and economic domination exercised by the centre over the periphery results in the re-creation of certain aspects of the centre's value system in the periphery. There is also evidence of a dependency relationship in the field of media and communication research in Southern countries. As British media analyst James Halloran noted,

> Wherever we look in international communication research – exports and imports of textbooks, articles and journals; citations, references and footnotes; employment of experts (even in international agencies); and the funding, planning and execution of research – we are essentially looking at a dependency situation. This is a situation which is characterized by a one-way flow of values, ideas, models, methods and resources from North to South. It may even be more specifically as a flow from the Anglo-Saxon language fraternity to the rest of the world. (1997: 39)

Dependency theory has enjoyed widespread influence and equally widespread criticism. It was criticized for concentrating on the impact of transnational business and the role of other external forces on social and economic development to the neglect of internal class, gender, ethnic and power relations. Theorists such as Galtung responded by examining the roles of the often unrepresentative elites in the South in maintaining and indeed benefiting from the dependency syndrome. While the globalization of new information and communication technologies and the resultant wiring up of the globe, and the emphasis on cultural hybridization rather than cultural imperialism, have made dependency theories less fashionable, the structural inequalities in international communication continue to render them relevant.

Another concern for scholars working within the political economy approach has been to analyse the close relationship between media and foreign policy. The role of the mass media as an instrument of propaganda for corporate and state power has been an important area of inquiry among critical scholars (Herman and Chomsky, [1988] 1994). In their 'propaganda model', US economist, Edward Herman and the renowned linguist, Noam Chomsky examine through a range of detailed case studies, how news in mainstream US media system passes through several 'filters', including the size, ownership and profit orientation of media firms; their heavy reliance on advertising and dependence on business and governmental sources for information;

and the overall dominant ideology within which they operate. These elements, write Herman and Chomsky, 'interact with and reinforce one another and set the premises of discourse and interpretation, and the definition of what is newsworthy' (1994: 2). For Herman and Chomsky, a propaganda approach to media coverage suggests

> a systematic and highly political dichotomisation in news coverage based on serviceability to important domestic power interests. This should be observable in dichotomised choices of story and in the volume and quality of coverage . . . such dichotomisation in the mass media is massive and systematic: not only are choices for publicity and suppression comprehensible in terms of system advantage, but the modes of handling favoured and inconvenient materials (placement, tone, context, fullness of treatment) differ in ways that serve political interests. (p. 35)

Despite meticulously researched case studies – ranging from the US media's coverage of the war in Vietnam in the 1960s and 1970s, to its treatment of US involvement in subversive activities in Central America during the 1980s – the propaganda model has received more than its fair share of criticism, especially in the West. Internationally, however, *Manufacturing Consent*, a title borrowed from a phrase used by Lippmann in a 1922 publication, has had a profound influence. Though criticized for its 'polemical' style, the book remains one of the few systematic and detailed studies of the politics of mass media in the United States.

Hegemony

By arguing that the propaganda model succeeds because there is no significant overt coercion from the state, in some ways Herman and Chomsky were following European analyses of the role of ideology and state power in a capitalist society, articulated by, among others, the French Marxist, Louis Althusser, who called the media, 'ideological state apparatus' (1971). Another major influence on critical theorists as well as on cultural critics in the study of ideology is the writings of Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci (1891–1937). The impact of the ideas of Gramsci, who died in prison under the Fascist regime, has been widespread in critical studies of international communication. However, it was not until the translation into English of his most famous work, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* in 1971, that Gramsci's ideas became a major influence in the Anglo-Saxon world.

Gramsci's conception of hegemony is rooted in the notion that the dominant social group in a society has the capacity to exercise intellectual and moral direction over society at large and to build a new system of social alliances to support its aims. Gramsci argued that military force was not necessarily the best instrument to retain power for the ruling classes but that a more effective way of wielding power was to build consent by ideological control of cultural production and distribution. According to Gramsci, such a system exists when a dominant social class exerts moral and intellectual leadership over both 'allied' and 'subordinate classes' through its control of such institutions as schools, religious bodies and the mass media. Social

and intellectual authority is exercised by the government 'with the consent of the governed': this consent is 'organized' and those consenting are 'educated' to do so, in such a way that its right to govern is rarely challenged (Gramsci, 1971).

One of the most important functions of the state, Gramsci wrote in his *Prison Notebooks*, 'is to raise the great mass of the population to a particular cultural and moral level, a level (or type) which corresponds to the . . . interests of the ruling classes'. Schools, courts and a multitude of 'initiatives and activities . . . form the apparatus of the political and cultural hegemony of the ruling classes' (Gramsci, 1971: 258–9). This, he argued, was in contrast with a situation in which the dominant class merely rules, that is, coercively imposes its will on subordinate classes. This manufactured consent, however, cannot simply be assumed or guaranteed and has to be renewed, indicating that hegemony is more of a process that has to be continually reproduced, rather than an achieved state of affairs.

In international communication, the notion of hegemony is widely used to explain the political function of the mass media in propagating and maintaining the dominant ideology. This ideology also shapes the process of media and communication production, particularly news and entertainment (Hallin, 1994; Thussu, 2007b). Thus, it is argued that, although the media in the West are notionally free from direct government control, they nevertheless act as instruments to legitimize the dominant ideology. In more recent years, there has been increasing use of Gramsci's ideas in international relations literature (see essays in Ayers, 2008) as well as postcolonial readings of his work (Srivastava and Bhattacharya, 2012).

Critical theory

Among the substantial body of research undertaken by the Frankfurt School theorists, the concept of the 'culture industry', first used by Adorno and Horkheimer in a book entitled *Dialectic of Enlightenment* written in 1944 and published in 1947, has received the widest international attention. Identified with the staff of the Institute for Social Research, founded in 1923 and affiliated with the University of Frankfurt, its key members included Max Horkheimer (1895–1973), Theodor Adorno (1903–69) and Herbert Marcuse (1898–1979).

Analysing the industrial production of cultural goods – films, radio programmes, music and magazines, and so on – as a global movement, they identified a trend in capitalist societies towards producing culture as a commodity (Adorno, 1991). Adorno and Horkheimer believed that cultural products manifested the same kind of management practices, technological rationality and organizational schemes, as mass-produced industrial goods such as cars. This 'assembly-line character', they argued, could be observed in 'the synthetic, planned method of turning out its products (factory-like not only in the studio but, more or less, in the compilation of cheap biographies, pseudo-documentary novels, and hit songs)' (Adorno and Horkheimer, [1947] 1979: 163).

Such industrial production led to standardization, resulting in a mass culture made up of a series of objects bearing the stamp of the culture industry. This industrially produced and commodified culture, it was argued, led to a deterioration

of the philosophical role of culture. Instead, this mediated culture contributed to the incorporation of the working classes into the structures of advanced capitalism and to limiting their horizons to political and economic goals that could be realized within the capitalist system without challenging it. The critical theorists argued that the development of the 'culture industry' and its ability to ideologically inoculate the masses against socialist ideas benefited the ruling classes.

Marrying the psychoanalytical theories of Sigmund Freud with Marxian economic analysis, the critical theorists borrowed the notion of commodification from Marx, who had argued that objects are commodified by acquiring an exchange value instead of their intrinsic value. In their analysis of cultural products, they argued that in a capitalist economy, cultural products are produced and sold in media markets as commodities and the consumers buy them not just because of their intrinsic worth but in exchange for entertainment or to fulfil their psychological needs.

The concentration of ownership of cultural production in a few producers had resulted in a standardized commercial commodity, contributing to what they called a 'mass culture' – influenced by the mass media and thriving on the market rules of supply and demand. In their view, such a process undermined the critical engagement of masses with important sociopolitical issues and ensured a politically passive social behaviour and the subordination of the working classes to the ruling elite.

Marcuse, who migrated to the United States, where he had a huge influence on the labour movement, argued that technological rationality or instrumental reason had reduced speech and thought to a single dimension, establishing what he called a 'one-dimensional society' which had abolished the distance required for critical thought. One of the most incisive chapters of Marcuse's book *One-Dimensional Man* (1964) discusses 'one-dimensional language' and frequently refers to media discourse.

In an international context the idea of 'mass culture' and media and cultural industries has influenced debates about the flow of information between countries. The issue of the commodification of culture is present in many analyses of the operation of book publishing, film and popular music industries. One example of this was the 1982 UNESCO report which argued that the cultural industries in the world were greatly influenced by the major media and communication companies and were being continually corporatized. The expansion of mainly Western-based cultural products globally had resulted, it argued, in the gradual 'marginalization of cultural messages that do not take the form of goods, primarily of values as marketable commodities' (UNESCO, 1982: 10).

This emphasis on ownership and control of the means of cultural production and the argument that it directly shapes the activities of artists has been contested by several writers, arguing that creativity and cultural consumption can be independent of production cycles and that the production process itself is not as organized or rigidly standardized as stated by the Frankfurt School theorists.

The public sphere

A natural heir to the critical theorists, the German sociologist Jürgen Habermas (born 1929) also lamented the standardization, massification and atomization of the public.

Habermas developed the concept of the public sphere in one of his earliest books, though it was twenty-seven years before it appeared in English translation as *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, in 1989. He defined the public sphere as

> an arena, independent of government (even if in receipt of state funds) and also enjoying autonomy from partisan economic forces, which is dedicated to rational debate (i.e. to debate and discussion which is not 'interests', 'disguised' or 'manipulated') and which is both accessible to entry and open to inspection by the citizenry. It is here, in this public sphere, that public opinion is formed. (quoted in Holub, 1991: 2–8)

Habermas argued that the 'bourgeois public sphere' emerged in an expanding capitalist society exemplified by eighteenth-century Britain, where entrepreneurs were becoming powerful enough to achieve autonomy from state and church and increasingly demanding wider and more effective political representation to facilitate expansion of their businesses. In his formulation of a public sphere, Habermas gave prominence to the role of information, as, at this time, a greater freedom of the press was fought for and achieved with parliamentary reform. The wider availability of printing facilities and the resultant reduction in production costs of newspapers stimulated debate contributing to what Habermas calls 'rational-acceptable policies', which led by the mid-nineteenth century to the creation of a 'bourgeois public sphere'.

This idealized version of a public space was characterized by a greater accessibility of information, a more open debate within the bourgeoisie, a space independent of both business interests and state apparatus. However, as capitalism expanded and attained dominance, the call for reform of the state was replaced by an effort to take it over to further business interests. As commercial interests became prominent in politics and started exerting their influence – for example, by lobbying parliament, funding political parties and cultural institutions – the autonomy of the public sphere was severely reduced.

According to Habermas, the growing power of information management and manipulation through public relations and lobbying firms in the twentieth century has contributed to contemporary debates becoming a 'faked version' of a genuine public sphere (Habermas, 1989: 195). In this 're-feudalization' of the public sphere, public affairs have become occasions for 'displays' of power in the style of medieval feudal courts rather than a space for debate on socio-economic issues.

Habermas also detected re-feudalization in the changes within the mass media systems, which have become monopoly capitalist organizations, promoting capitalist interests, and thus affecting their role as disseminators of information for the public sphere. In a market-driven environment, the overriding concern for media corporations is to produce an artefact which will appeal to the widest possible variety of audiences and thus generate maximum advertising revenue. It is essential, therefore, that the product is diluted in content to meet the lowest common denominator – sex, scandal, celebrity lifestyles, action adventure and sensationalism. Despite their negligible

informational quality such media products reinforce the audience's acceptance of 'the soft compulsion of constant consumption training' (Habermas, 1989: 192).

Though the notion of the public sphere has been criticized for its very male, Eurocentric and bourgeois limitations (Fraser, 1990; Calhoun, 1992; Garnham, 2007), it provides a useful concept in understanding democratic potential for communication processes (Dahlgren, 2003, 2009; Gripsrud et al., 2010). Among certain academics, especially in Europe, the concept retains its vitality with many scholars using this as a framework for analysis of political communication within the European Union, with a notion of a European public sphere (see contributions in Fossum and Schlesinger, 2007; Koopmans and Statham, 2010, among others). The 'transnationalization' of the public sphere is another trope (Wessler et al., 2008; Fraser, 2014). With growing globalization of media and communication, there has been talk about the evolution of a 'global public sphere' where issues of international significance – environment, human rights, gender and ethnic equality – can be articulated through the mass media, though the validity of such a concept is also contested (Sparks, 1998). Castells has suggested possibilities of 'a global public sphere around the global networks of communication, from which the public debate could inform the emergence of a new form of consensual global governance' (Castells, 2008: 91). More recently, Volkmer has argued that a 'global public sphere' does exist and contributes significantly to public communication (Volkmer, 2014).

Cultural Studies perspectives on international communication

While much of the debate on international communication post-1945 and during the Cold War emphasized a structural analysis of its role in political and economic power relationships, there has been a discernible shift in research emphasis during the 1990s, in parallel with the 'depoliticization' of politics, towards the cultural dimensions of communication and media. The cultural analysis of communication also has a well-established theoretical tradition to draw upon, from Gramsci's theory of hegemony to the works of the critical theorists of the Frankfurt School.

One group of scholars who adapted Gramsci's notions of hegemony was based at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham in Britain. Led by the Caribbean-born scholar Stuart Hall, 'the Birmingham School', as it came to be known in the 1970s, did pioneering work on exploring the textual analysis of media, especially television, and ethnographic research. Particularly influential was Hall's model of 'encoding-decoding media discourse' which theorized about how media texts are given 'preferred readings' by producers and how they may be interpreted in different ways – from accepting the dominant meaning; negotiating with the encoded message, or taking an oppositional view (Hall, 1980).

The model was widely adopted by scholars interested in the study of the ideological role of the mass media. However, the research focus of the Birmingham School was largely British, and more often than not, its perceptions of the 'global' were based on

the ethnographic studies of migrant populations – their television-viewing habits, consumption of music and other leisure activities. The undue emphasis on ethnic and racial identity and 'multiculturalism', tended to limit their research perspectives, exposing them to the danger, for example, of confusing 'British Asian cultural identity' with the diverse cultures and subcultures of the South Asian region, with its multiplicity of languages, religions and ethnicities.

The dominant Western view of the Global South is profoundly influenced by Eurocentricism, defined by the Egyptian theorist Samir Amin as constituting 'one dimension of the culture and ideology of the modern capitalist world' (Amin, 1988: vii). Many other scholars from the developing world have argued that contemporary representations of the Global South are affected by the way the Orient has been historically constructed in Western thinking, for example, through travel writing (Kabbani, 1986), literature (Said, 1978, 1993) and films (Shohat and Stam, 1994; Bâ and Higbee, 2012), contributing to the continuing subordination of non-European peoples in the Western imagination. The US-based Palestinian scholar Edward Said has explored how dominant culture participated in the expansion and consolidation of nineteenth-century imperialism. Taking the Gramscian view of culture, Said wrote,

> Western cultural forms can be taken out of the autonomous enclosures in which they have been protected, and placed instead in the dynamic global environment created by imperialism, itself revised as an ongoing contest between North and South, metropolis and periphery, white and native. (1993: 59)

Though the Cultural Studies approach professes to give voice to such issues – race, ethnicity, gender and sexuality remain its key concerns – it has generally rendered less importance to class-based analysis, despite the fact that championing the 'popular' has been a major achievement of this tradition. The Cultural Studies approach to communication has become increasingly important, with its interest in the 'global popular', the trend is towards the internationalization of Cultural Studies (Abbas and Erni, 2005, Chen and Chua, 2007; Sabry, 2012; Dávila and Rivero, 2014; Willems and Mano, 2017).

Theories of the information society

Spectacular innovations in information and communication technologies, especially computing and digitization, and their rapid global expansion have created the age of the information society. Breakthroughs in the speed, volume and cost of information processing, storage and transmission have contributed to the power of information technology to shape many aspects of Western, and increasingly, global society. The convergence of telecommunications and computing technologies and the continued reductions in the costs of computing and international telephony have made the case for the existence of the information society even stronger.

According to its proponents, an international information society is being created via the internet, which can digitally link every home, office and business in

a networked society based on what has been termed as the 'knowledge economy'. These networks are the information superhighways, providing the infrastructure for a global information society (Negroponte, 1995; Kahin and Nesson, 1997; Wu, 2010). However, critics have objected to this view of society, arguing that these changes are technologically determined and ignore the social, economic and political dimensions of technological innovation. Webster, for example, is unsure that 'the allegation that a quantifiable increase in information heralds a qualitative change in society and social arrangements (an information society)' (Webster, 2006: 273).

The technologically determinist view of communication was promoted by Canadian media theorist Marshall McLuhan (1911–80), one of the first thinkers to analyse the social impact of media technology. Arguing that, 'the medium is the message', he maintained that, seen in an historical context, media technology had more social effect on different societies and cultures than media content (McLuhan, 1964). McLuhan, a professor at the University of Toronto, was working within the tradition of what came to be known as 'the Toronto School' of thought, identified with the research of economic historian Harold Innis ([1950] 1972). McLuhan argued that printing technology, for example, contributed to nationalism, industrialism and universal literacy. Though at the time he was writing, electronic media, especially television, were confined to few Northern nations, McLuhan foresaw the impact of international television, suggesting that new communication and information technologies would help create, what he called a 'global village'. The rapid changes in international communications, spurred on by the expansion of direct satellite broadcasting in the 1980s and the internet in the 1990s, seem to have made the world shrink, generating renewed interest in McLuhan's concept of the 'global village' (McLuhan, 1964; Levinson, 1999).

The term 'information society' originated in Japan (Ito, 1981), but it was in the United States that the concept received its most ardent intellectual support. In the United States, even in the early 1960s the 'economics of information' was being considered as an important area of research activity, as set out in Fritz Machlup's 1962 work, *The Production and Distribution of Knowledge in the United States*, one of the first attempts to analyse information in economic terms. Changes in industrial production and their effect on Western societies informed the work of sociologist Daniel Bell, who became an internationally known exponent of the idea of a 'post-industrial' society – one in which the service industries employ more workers than manufacturing.

In his influential book *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*, published in 1973, Bell argued that US society had moved from an industrial to a post-industrial society, characterized by the domination of information and information-related industries. Bell contended that not only was more information being used but a qualitatively different type of information was also available. Bell's ideas were keenly adopted by the scholars who wanted to pronounce the arrival of 'the information age'. Another key figure, Alvin Toffler, though more populist than Bell, was very influential in propagating the idea of an information society, calling it the third wave – after the agricultural and industrial eras – of human civilization (Toffler, 1980). The 'third wave' was characterized by increasing 'interconnectedness', contributing to the 'evolution of a universal interconnected network of audio, video and electronic text communication',

which, some argue, will promote intellectual pluralism and personalized control over communication (Neuman, 1991: 21).

In this version of the information society, the democratic potential of new technologies is constantly stressed (as is the capacity of new technologies to create cultures of sharing and creativity) (Shirky, 2010; Levinson, 2012; Howard and Hussain, 2013, among many others). Others have argued that the transnationalization of media and communication industries has been greatly facilitated by expansion of new international communication networks, for example, among non-governmental organizations and transnational political activists (Earl and Kimport, 2011). The resultant 'time–space compression' is implicated in what has been called, taking up McLuhan's phrase, the phenomenon of 'global villagization' (Harasim, 1994).

With its growing commodification, information has come to occupy a central role as a 'key strategic resource' in the international economy, the distribution, regulation, marketing and management of which are becoming increasingly important. Real-time trading has become a part of contemporary corporate culture, through digital networking, which has made it possible to transmit information on stock markets, patent listings, currency fluctuations, commodity prices, futures, portfolios, at unprecedented speed and volume across the globe. The growing 'informatization' of the economy is facilitating the integration of national and regional economies and creating a global economy, which continues to be dominated by a few megacorporations, increasingly global in the production, distribution and consumption of their goods and services. The growth of internet-based trading and e-commerce (electronic commerce) has given a boost to what has been called 'digital' capitalism (Schiller, 1999).

In the analysis of the emerging global information society, the most significant input came from the Spain-born US-based theorist Manuel Castells. In his trilogy *The Information Age* (2000a, 2000b, 2004), Castells gave an extensively researched and detailed analysis of the emerging trends in global condition. The first volume focused on the new social structures at work in what Castells called the 'network society'; the second volume examined social and political processes within the context of such a society, while the third volume included integration and information-based polarization in the international 'informational economy' in which communication becomes both global and customized.

Informational capitalism, Castells argued, is increasingly operating on a global basis, through exchanges between electronic circuits linking up international information systems. This bypasses the power of the state and creates regional and supranational units. In this 'networked' globe, he contends, flows of electronic images are fundamental to social processes and political activity, which has been progressively affected by mediated reality (Castells, 2000a, 2004, 2009). Though he rejects technological determinism, his ideas are fundamentally shaped by the new technological paradigm. In his 2009 book, *Communication Power*, Castells speaks of 'network power' and 'networked power' in a 'global network society', where interpersonal, mass communication and 'mass self-communication co-exist, interact and complement each other' (Castells, 2009: 54). The 'common culture of the global network society', he writes, 'is a culture of protocols of communication enabling communication between different cultures on the basis not of shared values but of the sharing of the value of communication' (Castells, 2009: 38).

Castells's conception of communication power is premised on the idea that power is multidimensional and constructed around networks programmed in each domain of human activity according to the interests and values of empowered actors. 'Networks of power in various domains of human activity are networked among themselves'; and the 'network of power constructed around the state and the political system does play a fundamental role in the overall networking of power' (Castells, 2009: 426–7).

It has also been claimed that new technologies have contributed to the decline of ideology. A visually based medium such as television, it was argued, shifted ideology from 'conceptual to iconic symbolism' (Gouldner, 1976) and the growing use of computer-mediated communication could further reduce the impact of ideology in daily life, though the empowering potential of internet could, on the other hand, create new forms of transnational ideological alliances. The increasing privatization and democratization of communication have contributed to a private sphere where people interact at local, national and international levels and these private digital spaces 'prepare' people for participating in the public sphere (Dahlgren, 2009). Papacharissi has argued for shifting the emphasis 'away from models of rational deliberations within representative democracy and examine alternative formats of information and opinion exchange through social media in what she describes as the 'digitally equipped private sphere'. The 'geographies proposed by online technologies' she sees as 'hybrid spaces capable of hosting both public and private, commercial and public interest, political and social activities' (Papacharissi, 2010: 20). In these alternative spaces various types of identity and gender-based communication takes place, increasingly in a globalized digital domain, deploying social media.

However, these new communicative spaces are not shared equally by all, as there remains a gaping gap in terms of access to the new technologies, within and between nations. Some critical scholars have focused on the globalized commodification of information within 'digital capitalism' (Schiller, 2011). Others have warned of how the internet – and the resultant ubiquitous connectivity and information overload – is making people 'shallow' (Carr, 2010). James Curran is critical of what he terms as 'Internet-centrism, a belief that the Internet is the alpha and omega of technologies, an agency that overrides all obstacles and has the power to determine outcomes' (Curran, 2012: 3). Robin Mansell, who divides the literature on internet into two main camps – 'celebrants' and 'the sceptics' – cautions against what she calls 'near-mystical qualities' attributed to the internet (Mansell, 2012: 2). Some 'digital heretics' such as Evgeny Morozov have warned of the 'delusion' of network societies in their susceptibility to surveillance and manipulation by powerful corporations and governments (Morozov, 2011). He is critical of what he calls 'solutionism' and 'our mindless pursuit of this silicon Eden' and which 'fail to radically question our infatuation with a set of technologies that are often lumped together under the deceptive label of 'the Internet' (Morozov, 2013: xiv). Such 'totality of vision, its false universalism, and its reductionism', Morozov argues, 'prevents us from a more robust debate about digital technologies' (p. 62).

Concerns have also been raised about the growing commodification of personal information, from database marketing to individually targeted personalized advertising and consumer sales (Turow, 2011; Trottier, 2012). Some scholars have raised issues about exploitation of digital labour (Qiu, 2009; Scholz, 2013; Fuchs, 2014; also see

contributions in Maxwell, 2016). José van Dijck has argued that the growing use of global 'connectivity' media takes place largely on the terms of the hugely powerful digital corporations such as Facebook, as she notes, 'if the world lets Facebook define the norms for sociality online, it will build a world powered by Faceboook' (van Dijck, 2013: 67). In such a globalized networked society there is a danger of what Fuchs has called 'the commodification of everything' (Fuchs, 2008: 109). Robert McChesney does not see the internet giants as a progressive force. 'Their massive profits', he writes, 'are the result of monopoly privileges, network effects, commercialism, exploited labour, and a number of government policies and subsidies' (McChesney, 2013: 223).

With the growing importance of 'data', its mining and trading (Mayer-Schoenberger and Cukier, 2013), some scholars have pointed out the increasing power of unelected corporations dealing with enormous amount of private data and public information – increasingly stored in 'clouds' – 'an enormously powerful metaphor', as Vincent Mosco suggests – 'a place of no place; the home of data stored and processed everywhere and nowhere' (Mosco, 2014: 207). In the rapid expansion of digital communication platforms – such as Google, YouTube and Facebook – Dal Yong Jin sees a new form of capitalism which changes the notions of imperialism, labelling the phenomenon as 'platform imperialism' (Jin, 2015: 11). In his 2014 book *Digital Depression*, Dan Schiller shows that exploitation, commodification and inequality continue to define networked political economy of the digital age in the post-2008 economic crisis (Schiller, 2014). The 'Internet of Things', says Philip Howard, has established a 'pax technica', 'a political, economic and cultural arrangement of institutions and networked devices in which government and industry are tightly bound in mutual defence pacts, design collaborations, standard settings, and data mining' (Howard, 2015, xx).

Some scholars have raised questions about the use of new technologies for personal and political surveillance (Lyon, 1994) and its digitization and mechanization (Lyon, 2007; Gates, 2011; Lyon, 2015). There have also been important feminist interventions into the study of surveillance focusing on class, gender, race and sexuality (see essays in Dubrofsky and Magnet, 2015). US dominance of global military surveillance and intelligence data gathering through spy satellites and advanced computer networks, for political and increasingly trade-related espionage, must also be considered an integral part of the push towards creation of a global information society. The 'control revolution' (Beniger, 1986), though more pronounced in all modern organizations in 'networked societies', is in the process of going global. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 7.

Discourses of globalization

Despite the debate about the usefulness of the term 'globalization' in understanding international communication, there is little doubt that new information and communication technologies made global interconnectivity a reality (Held et al., 1999; Appadurai, 2001; Held and McGrew, 2003, Castells, 2009). It has been argued that 'globalization may be the concept of the 1990s, a key idea by which we understand the transition of human society into the third millennium' (Waters, 1995: 1). The

term has also been used more generally to describe contemporary developments in communication and culture. Wallerstein ([1974] 1980, 2004) saw globalization as a world system, a theory rejected by others on the grounds that his 'mechanisms of geosystematic integration are exclusively economic' (Waters, 1995: 25), while Robertson argued that 'globalization analysis and world-systems analysis are rival perspectives' (Robertson, 1992: 15).

In its most liberal interpretation, globalization has been seen as fostering international economic integration and as a mechanism for promoting global liberal capitalism. For those who saw capitalism as the 'end' of history (Fukuyama, 1992), globalization was to be welcomed for the effect that it had in promoting global markets and liberal democracy. The triumph of democracy was celebrated through increasing emphasis on global governance, 'cosmopolitan democracy' (Archibugi and Held, 1995) and even 'cosmopolitics' (Cheah and Robbins, 1998). The idea of cosmopolitanism has been expanded to emphasize social and cultural life (Breckenridge et al., 2002; Beck, 2006). In this view of globalization, the expansion of information and communication technologies coupled with market-led liberal democracies has contributed to the creation of what has been called a global civil society (Kaldor, 2003; Keane, 2003).

The economic conception of globalization viewed it as denoting a qualitative shift from a largely national to a globalized economy, in which, although national economies continue to predominate within nations, they are often subordinate to transnational processes and transactions (Hirst and Thompson, 1999). The arguments for economic globalization focused on the increasingly internationalized system of manufacture and production, on growing world trade, on the extent of international capital flows and, crucially, on the role of the TNCs. Liberal interpretations of globalization see markets playing the key role at the expense of the states. Japanese business strategist Kenichi Ohmae, who has been included in the category of 'extreme globalization theorists', claimed that, in the globalized economy the nation-state had become irrelevant and market capitalism was producing a 'cross-border civilization' (Ohmae, 1995).

Both Marxists and world-system theorists stress the importance of the rise of global dominance of a capitalist market economy that is penetrating the entire globe – pan-capitalism is how one commentator described the phenomenon (Tehranian, 1999). With the collapse of communism, the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc, seen by many as alternative to capitalism, the shift within Western democracies from public- to private-sector capitalism and the international trend towards liberalization and privatization have contributed to the acceptance of the capitalist market as a global system, however imperfect and unequal: it was argued that many of the indices of globalization were concentrated within the OECD countries, especially between the US–EU–Japan triad, prompting scholars to talk of 'triadization' rather than the globalization of the world economy. It is beyond dispute, however, that in the post-Cold War world, TNCs became extremely powerful actors, dominating the globalized economy. They must compete internationally and will, if necessary, sever the links to the nations where they originally operated, a trend which was described as reflection of the 'global footlooseness of corporate capitalism' (Sassen, 1996: 6).

In sociological interpretations of globalization, the notion of culture is of primary importance. British sociologist Anthony Giddens (1990) saw globalization as the spread of modernity, which he defines as the extension of the nation-state system, the world capitalist economy, the world military order and the international division of labour. Waters (1995: 3–4) argued that globalization was 'the direct consequence of the expansion of European culture across the planet via settlement, colonization and cultural mimesis'.

Enthusiasts talked of a new 'global consciousness' as well as physical compression of the world, in which cultures become 'relativized' to each other, not unified or centralized, asserting that globalization involves 'the development of something like a global culture' (Robertson, 1992). Others were more cautious, arguing that globalizing cultural forces, such as international media and communication networks, produce more complex interactions between different cultures (Appadurai, 1990, 1996). Some have made the case for considering cultural practices as central to the phenomenon of globalization (Tomlinson, 1999).

Global homogenizing forces such as standardized communication networks – both hardware and software, media forms and formats – influence cultural consciousness across the world. However, as the US-based Indian anthropologist Arjun Appadurai argues (1990), these globalizing cultural forces in their encounters with different ideologies and traditions of the world produce 'heterogeneous dialogues'. Appadurai specifies five 'scapes' – ethnoscapes, technoscapes, finanscapes, mediascapes and ideoscapes – to describe the dynamics of contemporary global diversity.

'Ethnoscape' denotes the flow of people – such as tourists, refugees, immigrants, students and professional – from one part of the globe to another. 'Technoscape' includes the transfer of technology across national borders while 'finanscape' deals with international flow of investment. 'Mediascape' refers to global media, especially its electronic version – both its hardware and the images that it produces – while 'ideoscape' suggests ideological contours of culture. Appadurai argues that the five 'scapes' influence culture not by their hegemonic interaction, global diffusion and uniform effects, but by their differences, contradictions and counter-tendencies – their 'disjunctures' (Appadurai, 1990).

Some critics saw globalization as a new version of Western cultural imperialism, given the concentration of international communication hardware and software power among a few dominant actors in the global arena who want an 'open' international order, created by their own national power and by the power of transnational media and communication corporations (Latouche, 1996; Amin, 1997; Herman and McChesney, 1997). A fear of what the US sociologist George Ritzer called the McDonaldization of society was also expressed by scholars (Ritzer, 1999, 2002). Ritzer preferred the term 'Americanization' to globalization, since the latter implies more of a 'multidimensional relationship among many nations' (Ritzer, 1999: 44).

While conceding the pre-eminence of Western media and cultural products in international communication, scholars influenced by post-structuralism have disputed whether the global flow of media and cultural products is necessarily a form of domination or even a strictly one-way traffic, arguing that there is a contraflow from the periphery to the centre and between the 'geo-cultural markets', especially in the area of television and films (Sinclair, Jacka and Cunningham, 1996; Thussu, 2007a). Ulf Hannerz contested the notion that globalization reinforces cultural movement

from the 'centre' (the modern industrial West) to the peripheral 'traditional' world in a largely one-way flow, arguing that centre–periphery interactions are more complex with cultural flows moving in multiple directions, and thus the outcomes are opposite tendencies, both towards what he calls saturation and maturation, for homogenization and heterogenization (Hannerz, 1997).

Scholars broadly following this line of argument also questioned the assumptions about the process of homogenization as a result of the diffusion of the Western media and cultural products globally, arguing that the forces of fragmentation and hybridity are equally strong and they affect all societies. Tomlinson argues that 'the effects of globalization are to weaken cultural coherence in all individual nation-states, including the economically powerful ones – the imperial powers of a previous era' (1991: 175). Others such as anthropologist Nestor Garcia Canclini ([1989] 1995) saw possibilities offered by migration and modernity to broaden cultural territory beyond the nation state. The so-called 'deterritorialization' and the relocation of 'Third World' cultures in the metropolitan centres was considered an enriching experience for the receiving as well as the migratory cultures.

The growth of alternative media and the possibilities opened up by the internet are also seen to be a trend towards the disruption of the one-way flow of information. Robertson adopts the concept of 'glocalization', a term whose origins are in the discipline of marketing, to express the global production of the local and the localization of the global (Robertson, 1995). Straubhaar has noted the complexities associated with the processes of cultural hybridization – 'accelerated in the 20th century with postcolonial migration, increased travel, transnational mass media and economic globalization' (Straubhaar, 2007: 41).

Jan Nederveen Pieterse has mapped out how hegemony is not merely reproduced but 'refigures' in the process of hybridization and cultural mixing (Nederveen Pieterse, 2015: 67). He argues for 'viewing globalization as a process of hybridization that gives rise to a global melange' (p. 67). In this 'globalization of diversity', the 'melange effect' pervades everywhere, from 'heartlands to the extremities and vice versa' (p. 72).

The increased level of transnational information flows, made possible by the new technologies of communication and shifts in the institutional organization – economic, political and legal – on the means of communication, have profoundly affected global media industries. Increasingly, the emphasis has shifted from the traditional approach of considering the role of media in the vertical integration of national societies, to studying information flows which show patterns of transnational horizontal integration of media and communication structures, processes and audiences (Curran and Park, 2000). This has become necessary because of the harmonization of international regulatory and legal frameworks and the globalization of ownership and control in the telecommunication and media sectors – including television, films and online media.

This horizontal communication is facilitating transnational patterns of marketing and political communication, where people are increasingly being addressed across national boundaries on the basis of their purchasing power. Transnational communication is also used by international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) whose politics and actions are being affected by the use of the internet. The increasingly complex relations between local, national, regional and international

production, distribution and consumption of media texts in a global context further complicates the globalization discourse (Thussu, 2007a).

Globalization of media therefore should not be understood 'reductively as cultural homogenization or Western hegemony. Instead, it is part of a larger set of processes that operate trans-locally, interactively, and dynamically in a variety of spheres: economic, institutional, technological, and ideological' (Curtin, 2007: 9).

Accompanying the dramatic expansion of capitalism and new transnational political organization, it has been argued, is a new global culture, emerging as a result of computer and communication technology, a consumer society with a wide range of products and services consumed internationally. Global culture includes the proliferation of media technologies, especially satellite and cable television, that veritably create McLuhan's dream of a global village in which people all over the world watch spectacles like distant conflicts, major sports events, entertainment programmes and advertisements which relentlessly promote free-market capitalism.

With the expansion of internet access, increasingly on mobile digital devices, more and more people are entering into the global computer networks that instantaneously circulate ideas, information and images throughout the world, overcoming boundaries of space and time. What kind of international communication this is generating remains a hotly disputed subject, given that culture is an especially complex and contested terrain as 'modern' culture permeates traditional ones and new configurations emerge (Iwabuchi, 2002; Kraidy, 2005; Rantanen, 2005). Andreas Hepp has suggested the notion of 'transcultural communication', which 'involves processes of communication that transcend individual cultures' (Hepp, 2015: 3). The globalization of media communication, he suggests, denotes 'the global development of mediatized connectivity, hence the increase of technically mediated communicative relationships' (p. 5). The concept of 'mediatization' of communication and culture in advanced societies has also received much recent attention (Hepp, 2013; Hjarvard, 2013; also see essays in Lundby, 2014). Couldry has emphasized the need to analyse 'media culture' referred to as 'collection of sense-making practices whose main resources of meaning are media' (Couldry, 2012: 159).

Some scholars have followed more innovative approaches to understanding globalization in view of the economic rise of Asia (Gunder Frank, 1998; Hobson, 2004; Thussu, 2013b; Duara, 2014). The debates about global culture have been largely ignored by many previous forms of modernization theories that tended towards economic, technological and political determinism. In classical Marxism, culture was sometimes reduced to a crass economic commodity, with scant importance given to local forms of associations – whether based on ethnicity, religion, race or gender. It also did not take on board the issue of cultural diversity, aesthetics and spirituality, being preoccupied with the study of the production and consumption of material culture. For traditional liberalism, the advancement of the modern economy and technology was necessary for creating world markets and consumers.

Both classical Marxists and liberals predicted a borderless world – in the idealized Marxian version the proletariat across the world were to lead international communism that would eliminate nationalism, class exploitation and war, while liberal interpretations saw the market as eroding cultural differences and national and regional

particularities, to produce a global consumer culture. Missing from both models has been an understanding of the complexity of the interaction of class with nationalism, religion, race, ethnicity and feminism to produce local political struggles. Despite claims for the end of ideology and history and the 'peace dividend' since the end of the Cold War, the world has witnessed a rise in ethnic and religious conflict exacerbated by the events of September 2001 and the subsequent open-ended and global 'war on terrorism' (Hardt and Negri, 2004; Hoge and Rose, 2005; Freedman and Thussu, 2012) The intellectual uncertainty that the end of the Cold War produced in the West and the dismantling of the last vestiges of progressive ideology in the former socialist camp are reflected in an increasing blurring of boundaries between various strands of international communication theory. In this postmodern landscape, there appears to be a fragmentation of theories, with an emphasis on the personal and the local, while macro-level issues affecting international communication are often ignored. Postmodernists argue that developments in transnational capitalism are producing a new global historical configuration of post-Fordism, or postmodernism as a new 'cultural logic' of capitalism (Harvey, 1989; Jameson, 1991). Yet the proliferation of difference and the shift to more local discourses and practices define the contemporary scene, and theory, postmodernists argue, should shift from the level of globalization and its often totalizing macro-theories to focus on the micro, the specific and the heterogeneous. A wide range of theories associated with post-structuralism, postmodernism, feminism and multiculturalism and postcolonial studies tend to focus on difference and specificity rather than more global conditions (Lyotard, 1984; Baudrillard, 1994; Bhabha, 1994; Garcia Canclini, 1995; Beck, 2006; Jenkins, Ford and Green, 2013; Ross, 2017).

A critical international communication theory?

In a postmodern theoretical framework in which eclecticism is increasingly replacing essentialism, a critical understanding of the political economy of international communication is essential if one wants to make sense of the expansion, acceleration and consolidation of the US-managed global electronic economy. One significant contemporary themes in international communication research within the critical political economic tradition is the transition from US post-war hegemony to a world communication order led by transnational businesses and supported by their respective national states increasingly linked in continental and global structures. The Italian political philosopher Antonio Negri and his American colleague Michael Hardt used the old word 'Empire' to define the new global form of sovereignty (Hardt and Negri, 2000), and what they termed 'the multitude', as 'living alternative that grows within Empire', a type of transnational network of counter-resistance, having the potential of bringing global democratization. The project of multitude, according to Hardt and Negri, 'not only expresses the desire for a world of equality and freedom, not only demands an open and inclusive democratic global society, but also provides the means for achieving it' (Hardt and Negri, 2004: XI). Some have suggested the need for a 'synthesis of political economy and critical cultural analysis' (Hardy, 2014: 176).

Others have examined the contribution of new media and developmental processes, unleashed by globalization and its impact on the Global South (Sparks, 2007; Slater, 2013; Melkote and Steeves, 2015; Lugo-Ocando and Nguyen, 2017; Heeks, 2018; Wasserman, 2018).

Critical theorists have focused on international organizations such as the World Trade Organization and the International Telecommunication Union, which have played a crucial role in managing the transition to a market-driven International communication environment. They have analysed transnational corporate and state power, with a particular stress on ownership concentration in media and communication industries world-wide – and the growing trends towards vertical integration – companies controlling production in a specific sector – and horizontal integration – across sectors within and outside media and the communication industry (Herman and McChesney, 1997; McChesney, 1999, 2004; Tunstall and Machin, 1999; Bagdikian, 2004; Hardy, 2014). Others have supported movements for greater international information and communication equality, with concerns about incorporating human rights into international communication debates (Hamelink, 1994, 2000; Kaldor, 2003; Shaw, 2012).

Sceptical of the dominant market-based approach, many scholars have defended the public service view of state-regulated media and telecommunication organizations and advanced public interest concerns before government regulatory and policy bodies at national (Garnham, 1990; Zhao, 2008; Thomas, 2010; McChesney, 2013), regional (Schiller and Mosco, 2001) and international levels (Mattelart, 1994; Curran and Park, 2000; Thussu, 2009; Schiller, 2011; Schiller 2014). The role of new technologies, especially the internet, in international communication has also informed the critical research agenda – including conceptualizing diasporic communication (Karim, 2003; Cohen, 2008; Brinkerhoff, 2009; Amrith, 2011), the possibilities of resistance and online activism (Curran and Couldry, 2003; de Jong, Shaw and Stammers, 2005; Castells, 2012; Bennett and Segerberg, 2013; van Dijck, 2013) and security-related concerns (Hardt and Negri, 2004; Berenger, 2013; Franklin, 2013; Singer and Friedman, 2014).

International communication in international politics

With the growing importance of communicative processes in international and interpersonal communication in a 24/7 media environment of instantaneous and globalized communication, there is need for what Seib has called 'real-time diplomacy' (Seib, 2012). As Hanson has noted, 'the empowerment of non-state actors to participate more assertively in world politics has created a new context for foreign policymaking, diplomacy and war' (Hanson, 2008: 232). Reflecting neo-liberal ideology, Monroe Price sees international communication as 'a market for loyalties'.

> The 'sellers' in this market are all those for whom myth and dreams and history can somehow be converted into power and wealth – classically states, governments, interest groups, businesses and others. The 'buyers' are the citizens, subjects,

> nationals, consumers – recipients of the packages of information, propaganda, advertisements, drama and news propounded by the media. (Price, 2002: 32)

In his more recent work, Price uses this framework to analyse a new 'strategic communication' in a globalized era where the 'capacity of the state to exercise authority in a world in which large-scale strategic communication of others (including other states) becomes a defining factor in establishing a state's legitimacy. And these also include the stress that the continuing burst of trans-border information flows places on the logic of freedom of expression' (Price, 2015: 19). The management of the market yields what Price calls 'narratives of legitimacy' – the collection of ideas and narratives employed by a dominant group or coalition to maintain power. 'This market for loyalties approach has powerful explanatory force in a transnational form. Globalization involves, specifically, the desire by external strategic communicators to break or reinforce local cartels (depending on interest)' (p. 13).

One way to safeguard or to promote strategic communication is via 'soft power', the discourse of which is associated with the work of Harvard political scientist Joseph Nye. The phrase was first used by Nye in an article published in 1990 in the journal *Foreign Policy*, where he contrasted the 'co-optive power', 'which occurs when one country gets other countries to want what it wants', to 'the hard or command power of ordering others to do what it wants' (Nye, 1990: 166). In his most widely cited book *Soft Power*, suggested three key sources for a country's soft power: 'its culture (in places where it is attractive to others), its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad), and its foreign policies (when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority)' (Nye 2004a: 11).

Given the primacy of the United States, the idea of soft power has been adopted and adapted by countries around the world as a key component of foreign-policy and communication strategy (Snow and Taylor, 2008; Li, 2009; Lee and Melissen, 2011; Lai and Lu, 2012; Otmazgin, 2012; Sherr, 2012; Thussu, 2013a). Many countries have set up 'public diplomacy' divisions within their ministries of foreign affairs and sought the services of Western public relations and lobbying firms to coordinate their 'nation-branding initiatives' (Anholt, 2007; Kaneva, 2011; Aronczyk, 2013). In the globalizing marketplace, the need to communicate a favourable image of a country is vital, in an era of digital global flows, involving both state and non-state actors and networks. As a persuasive instrument of foreign policy, soft power is unlike propaganda, which continues to have a negative connotation and is more often than not identified with authoritarian governments. In an era when communities 'cooperate and co-create' communication networks, some have suggested the potential for 'a genuinely collaborative public diplomacy' (Fisher and Lucas, 2011).

In his 2011 book *The Future of Power*, Nye explored the nature and shift in global power structures from state to non-state actors. In an age when, as he suggests, 'public diplomacy is done more *by* publics', governments have to use 'smart power', making use of formal and informal networks and drawing on 'cyber power', an arena where the United States has huge advantage. The term 'public diplomacy' was first used in 1965 by Edmund Gullion of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University in the United States with the establishment at Fletcher of the Edward Murrow Center for Public Diplomacy. According to a US government definition, 'Public Diplomacy refers to government-sponsored programs intended to inform or influence public opinion in other countries; its chief instruments are publications, motion pictures, cultural exchanges, radio and television' (US Government, 1987: 85). Nicholas Cull refers to public diplomacy as 'an international actor's attempt to manage the international environment through engagement with a foreign public' (Cull, 2009b: 6), while Melissen describes it as 'the relationship between diplomats and the foreign publics with whom they work' (Melissen, 2005: xvii). Soft power plays an integral role in a country's public diplomacy, where states interact with other states and exercise cultural and media power in particular contexts to achieve foreign policy aims, often in collaboration with private corporations and civil society groups. There is growing appreciation of the importance of soft power in a digitally connected and globalized media and communication environment.

Castells has suggested that public diplomacy 'seeks to build a public sphere in which diverse voices can be heard in spite of their various origins, distinct values, and often contradictory interests' and recommends using it for developing 'a global public sphere around the global networks of communication, from which the public debate could inform the emergence of a new form of consensual global governance' (Castells, 2008: 91). Such trends demonstrate the importance of culture and communication in international interactions as Ugandan scholar Ali Mazrui has argued that 'culture is at the heart of the nature of *power* in international relations' (Mazrui, 1990: 8, emphasis in original), seeing 'culture as a mode of communication', which, apart from language, 'can take other forms, including music, the performing arts, and the wider world of ideas' (Mazrui, 1990: 7). The interplay between transnational culture and globalized communication is also emphasized by more recent work, including post-colonial approaches (Lebow, 2009; Norris and Inglehart, 2009; Seth, 2012, among others). A 'cultural turn' to international relations has emerged, as editors of a special issue on the theme of 'International Relations and the Challenges of Global Communication' of the British journal *Review of International Studies* noted:

> The conventional approach within IR has been, until recently, an attitude that 'we' know all that there is – or is needed – to know about global communication, and therefore that there is no need to situate IR within the emerging dynamics of communication elsewhere. (Constantinou, Richmond and Watson, 2008: 7)

Though understandably dominant, the US model of soft power takes a rather restrictive view of what constitutes culture and how cultural power can be exercised in a rapidly changing multicultural and multilingual world. There is no doubt that, as Nye has reminded us, US culture 'from Hollywood to Harvard – has greater global reach than any other' (Nye, 2004b: 7). Apart from being the world's biggest economic and military power, the United States is also the biggest exporter of global information and entertainment; home to the world's highest-ranking corporations – including digital conglomerates – best-known think tanks, top non-governmental organizations and Ivy League universities, with an innovative research record unmatched by any other nation.

It has been argued that Nye's evaluation of soft power stems from the American experience, including his own as a top-ranking and influential US government official serving two presidents, Jimmy Carter (between 1977 and 1979) and Bill Clinton (between 1993 and 1995). Not surprising then that comparative studies of soft power tend to be dominated by American and British research (Parmar and Cox, 2010), although some work bringing perspectives from other countries such as China and Australia (Snow and Taylor, 2008) has recently emerged. Hayden's study of the United States, Japan, China and Venezuela, questions the US-centricity of the concept of soft power, detecting element of localization, with each country applying its own version of strategic communication and persuasion to promote its interests (Hayden, 2012). Examining the global imprint of such civilizational powers as India and China, the need to historicize and 'de-Americanize' the discourse on soft power has been emphasized (Thussu, 2013a).

Internationalizing international communication theory

What applies to soft power debates is equally valid for building a more inclusive theory of international communication that takes on board the extraordinary changes in large countries with long histories and rising economic and cultural power. The 'peaceful rise' of China and economic growth of India– the two ancient civilizations with huge potential to influence the emerging global 'knowledge society' – is likely to affect the way international communication is conceived and conducted (Hobson, 2004, Thussu, 2013b). The Chinese version of media marketization – where the state has played a central role in globalization – offers interesting areas for future communication research. China's substantial and growing aid for many developing countries – 'aid without strings' – has had a major influence in Africa, especially in such areas as telecommunications and may contribute to formulating a Chinese version of development discourse. Since 2006, China has been the largest holder of foreign-currency reserves, estimated in 2017 to be at more than $3 trillion. On the basis of purchasing power parity (PPP), China's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) surpassed that of the United States in 2014, making it the world's largest economy, according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF, 2017). When the country opened up to global businesses in the late 1980s, its presence in the international corporate world was negligible, but, by 2016, China had 109 companies in the *Fortune Global 500*, just behind the United States (132), while three of the top ten global corporations were Chinese (*Fortune*, 2017). China is a key member of BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), whose annual summits since 2009 have increasingly been noticed outside the five countries, which together account for 20 per cent of the world's GDP. In 2015, they set up a BRICS Bank to fund developmental projects, to potentially rival the Western-dominated Bretton Woods Institutions, such as the World Bank and the IMF (Nordenstreng and Thussu, 2015). China, which is the driving force behind this idea, has been able to transform itself from a largely agricultural self-sufficient society to the world's largest consumer market. Much of this has been achieved without major social or economic upheavals. China's success story has many admirers, especially

in many developing countries, and there has been talk of replacing the 'Washington consensus' with what has been termed the 'Beijing consensus' (Halper, 2010).

Though India's economic growth is no match to China's, on the basis of PPP, it was the world's third-largest economy in 2014 (IMF, 2017). Bilateral trade between India and Africa has escalated from $961 million in 1991 to $70 billion in 2013, projected to climb to $100 billion by 2019. With its rising global profile, India has also emerged as an important investor in Africa, with cumulative investment of nearly $50 billion (Sullivan, 2015).

Almost parallel to the contentious border dispute and competition for resources to meet their rapidly escalating energy needs, the two Asian giants also economically collaborate: Trade between China and India – negligible at the beginning of 1990s, had reached more than $70 billion by 2017, making India's large eastern neighbour its largest trading partner. Jairam Ramesh, India's former Rural Development Minister, is credited with coining the term 'Chindia', to encapsulate this phenomenon (Ramesh, 2005). Any meaningful discussion of global communication ought to take into account – this 'other globalization' outside the Western radar (See special themed issue on Chindia and global communication of the journal *Global Media and Communication*, 2010; Thussu, 2013b). Writing in 2010, a leading economist noted: 'In 1820 these two countries contributed nearly half of world income; in 1950 their share was less than one tenth; currently it is about one fifth, and the projection is that in 2025 it will be about one third' (Bardhan, 2010: 1). Such economic flows represent a significant trend as noted by the UNDP Human Development Report titled *The Rise of the South*:

> Economic exchanges are expanding faster 'horizontally' – on a South-South basis – than on the traditional North-South axis. People are sharing ideas and experiences through new communications channels and seeking greater accountability from governments and international institutions alike. The South as a whole is driving global economic growth and societal change for the first time in centuries. (UNDP, 2013: 123)

As Fareed Zakaria, in his widely cited book *The Post-American World*, notes,

> On every dimension other than military power – industrial, financial, social, cultural – the distribution of power is shifting, moving away from US dominance. That does not mean we are entering an anti-American world. But we are moving into a post-American world, one defined and directed from many places and by many people. (Zakaria, 2008: 4–5)

Others have suggested possibilities of a 'post-Western', 'sustainable modernity', based on Asian histories and cultures (Duara, 2014).

Like in many other fields, the 'rise' of China and India, coinciding with cracks within the neo-liberal model of US-led Western capitalism, is likely to challenge traditional thinking and research paradigms for international media and communication as power begins to shift away from the West. As one commentator notes: 'A seismic shift

in the balance of global economic and political power is currently underway as the rise of China and India has increased not only their regional but also their global influence and leverage' (Sharma, 2009: 9). Some have argued that the rise of Asia must be viewed as 're-emergence' or, as Kishore Mahbubani has noted, 'the return' of the continent to global prominence (Mahbubani, 2008). Taking a long view of history, as Maddison has shown, in 1500, Asia produced 65 per cent of the world GDP, in 1820, 59 per cent, suggesting that by 2030, Asia is likely to produce 53 per cent of the global GDP – 'much bigger than the share of the Western world' (Maddison, 2007: 3). Jack Goody has observed, 'the Western domination of the world of knowledge and of world culture persists in some respects but has been significantly loosened. Globalization is no longer exclusively Westernization.' (Goody, 2010: 125). The media and communication in these countries are also expanding exponentially, as we will discuss in Chapter 4. Tunstall has argued that the US media are in decline and a vast majority of people in large-population countries such as China and India, prefer 'local' content in the media – whether it is news, sports or entertainment. Globally, he has pointed out, the 'American media play a much smaller role than national media' (Tunstall, 2008: xiv).

Will the combined economic and cultural impact of China and India, aided by their extensive global diasporas – more than 35 million and about 25 million, respectively – contribute to a globalization with an Asian flavour? What impact would it have on international communication theory? Given the power of Western or more specifically US academia, the American model of mass communication studies, with its health, development, interpersonal and organizational variants, has received the widest global currency (Scannell, 2007). During the Cold War years, in much of what was then called the Third World, media and communication research was profoundly influenced by the American tradition of research. A dependency relationship in the field of research developed between the West and the South – evident in the setting up of courses and syllabi, import of textbooks, journals, citations, employment of experts as well as the funding of research projects (Sparks, 2007; Thussu, 2009).

International communication research like other social sciences, is affected by what might be called epistemological essentialism, rooted as it is, within an Euro-Atlantic intellectual tradition (Thussu, 2009). The dominance of English as the language of global communication has contributed to the primacy of English-language scholarship in international communication: the majority of textbook and journal publishing continues to emanate from the United States, closely followed by Britain (although they may be produced/edited and printed in countries such as India).

Theoretical frameworks that were developed during the Cold War years, epitomized by such works as *The Four Theories of the Press* (Siebert et al., 1956), have provided the dominant paradigm in the study of communication. They failed to take into account large countries such as China and India which did not quite fit the bipolar construction of the Cold War world. The end of the Cold War and the disintegration of the Soviet Union transformed the media landscape in Europe and globally, prompting scholars such as John Downing to offer reflections on the transitional state of the media in the former communist countries of the Eastern bloc. Downing argued for 'the necessity for communication theorizing to develop itself comparatively, acknowledging in particular that to extrapolate theoretically from such relatively unrepresentative

nations as Britain and the United States, is both conceptually impoverishing and a peculiarly restricted version of even Eurocentrecism' (Downing, 1996: xi). This was followed by belated recognition for the need to 'de-westernize' media studies, part of 'a growing reaction against the self-absorption and parochialism of much Western media theory' (Curran and Park, 2000: 3).

Regardless of this progress in theory, endeavours at providing comparative models of media systems have ignored work beyond the Euro-American arena, despite the extraordinary expansion of the media, especially in Asia (Hallin and Mancini, 2004). Daniel Hallin and Paolo Mancini's 2012 edited collection *Comparing Media Systems Beyond the Western World* – does not include any discussion of India (one of the largest and most complex media systems 'beyond the Western world').

Similar absences can be seen in 'comparative' studies of global journalists (Weaver, 1998), journalism history (Muhlmann, 2008) and journalism research (Löffelholz and Weaver, 2008), which exclude, as these books do, journalism in a country of the size and complexity of India. In more recent years, greater importance has been given to comparative research in journalism (Hanitzsch, 2013), audience discourses (Butsch and Livingstone, 2014) and communication research more generally (Esser and Hanitzsch, 2012; Christians and Nordenstreng, 2014). Couldry has counselled the need to grasp the '*types* of significant differences in media cultures to which a genuinely internationalize media research must be sensitized' (Couldry, 2012: 179, emphasis in original). Others have adopted a 'cultural political economy' approach which is 'predisciplinary in inspiration, trans-disciplinary in practice, and post-disciplinary in its aspirations' and which combines 'concepts from critical, historically sensitive, semiotic analyses and from critical evolutionary and institutional political economy' (Sum and Jessop, 2013: ix and 1).

To further 'internationalize' international communication research (Lee, 2015), a re-evaluation of pedagogic parameters, as well as research agendas and methods is warranted. One area that needs particular attention, given the revival of religious communication – both militant and moderate – is to further explore the dynamics between religion and communication – a largely ignored area of research, especially among critical scholars.

The importance of culture has been emphasized by scholars who advocate a 'transcultural political economy' framework that enables us 'to integrate institutional and cultural analyses' (Chakravartty and Zhao, 2008: 10). Such endeavours would entail what has been called the 'deparochialization of the research ethic – the idea of research itself' (Appadurai, 2001: 15). As Appadurai noted in the era of 'grassroots globalization', the relationship between 'the knowledge of globalization and the globalization of knowledge' needs to be reappraised (Appadurai, 2001: 14). Others have advocated 'transnational interdisciplinarity' which encourages researchers to 'engage in, and try to connect to, knowledge formations and vocabularies that reside in other modernities and other temporalities that are either refused recognition, or are not adequately translated, in machines of knowledge production' (Shome, 2006: 3).

Many scholars have questioned the adequacy – both theoretical and empirical – of dominant strands of international communication research to comprehend the complexity of a new globalization in increasingly mobile, globally networked

multivocal and digitized world (Thussu, 2009; Chen, 2010; Curtin and Shah, 2010; Wang, 2011; Esser and Hanitzsch, 2012; Christians and Nordenstreng, 2014; Iwabuchi, 2014; Lee, 2015).

As digital communication becomes more intensive and extensive, a New World Information and Communication Order – a NWICO 2.0 – is emerging, driven by the exponential growth of media in countries such as China and India (which account for more than a third of the planet's population, with the two biggest internet populations in the world) (Thussu, 2015). This boom has the potential to reorder the cultural contours of international communication, if not its economic character. This would entail a pressing need for innovative, inclusive and cosmopolitan research dialogue, one that cuts across disciplinary and intellectual boundaries to address the emerging landscape of global communication in a polycentric world.

3

Creating a Global Communication Infrastructure

Since the 1980s, there have been fundamental ideological changes in the global political arena, which have led to the creation of pro-market, international trade regimes, with a huge impact on international communication. The processes of liberalization, deregulation and privatization in the communications and media industries, combined with new digital information and communication technologies (ICTs), have enabled a quantum leap in international communication. The resulting globalization of telecommunications has revolutionized international communication, as the convergence of the telecommunications, computer and media industries has enabled more information to travel more swiftly around a digitally linked globe than ever before in human history. In the past three decades, the global triumvirate of powerful institutions – the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) – have played a crucial role in privatization of global economy (Chwieroth, 2010; Stone, 2011). A study based on the analysis of a large number of IMF lending arrangements concluded that 'when the economic beliefs of a policy team are close to the beliefs of the IMF, loans are larger, conditionality is weaker, and enforcement is less rigid. In other words, policy teams composed of fellow travellers receive special treatment by the IMF' (Nelson, 2014: 324).

The new ICTs have helped to create a global communication infrastructure based on regional and global cable and satellite networks, which are being used for telecommunications, broadcasting and electronic commerce. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines infrastructure as 'a collective term for the subordinate parts of an undertaking; substructure, foundation'. The communication infrastructure provides the hardware for internet-driven global communication. At the same time, there has been a change from state to private control and from a state-centric view of communication to one governed by the rules of the free market, reflecting policy shifts among major powers and multilateral organizations, such as the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) (Mansell, 2012; Franklin, 2013; Hill, 2014).

Analysis of international communication in the past was concerned primarily with government-to-government activities, where a few powerful states dictated the communication agenda, but now an understanding of the world's commercial satellite industry – the hardware of international communication – and its impact on global communication is increasingly important. This liberalization and privatization of international communication has particularly benefitted transnational corporations.