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Thinking Globally
From Media Imperialism to Media Capital

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It is difficult to think globally about media industry studies simply because most research focuses on media industries in the United States. This bias is no doubt due to our fascination with the power and influence of these media, but it also stems from the fact that American media produce a tremendous amount of information about themselves. Critical scholars in the US (who are well-funded compared to their peers abroad) then mine this data and publish their studies with presses that prefer subjects that attract wealthy English-language audiences. Canada, Australia, and the UK have received some attention for similar reasons, but research on these media industries is often motivated by concern about the negative impact of Hollywood on their national cultures. Outside of this Anglo orbit of scholars, the pickings have been slim. It was not until 1999 that the first major study of media industries in Latin America was published. No comparable volume exists for African or Eastern European media. Arabic, Indian, and Chinese media began to generate more attention during the 1990s, but it is only recently that we are beginning to see systematic and comprehensive studies of these industries.[1] As a result, it is difficult to think globally about media industries when so much of what we know is derived from American contexts.

It is also difficult to think globally because research keeps circling back to national policy and aesthetics. The conventional frame for studying cinema around the world is the national cinemas approach. Television is likewise examined as discrete national systems and much of the debate revolves around national policy issues. Media industries themselves tend to function as self-consciously national institutions as well. To the extent that they operate internationally, the business of film and television is conducted country-by-country under regulation and licensing arrangements that conspicuously observe national borders. Consequently, national frameworks and biases prevail in media industry studies and operations, and yet, as we know, the world is changing. Media imagery today flows across borders far more fluidly than ever before and popular artists embrace opportunities that allow them to reach broader and more diverse audiences. Likewise, the most successful media enterprises today attempt to extend their influence abroad. This not only includes Time Warner and Sony but also Globo, Media Asia, and Zee TV as well. So although the residual influence of national frameworks remains strong, the media industries are changing and media studies must change with them.

What then would it mean to think globally about media industries? Certainly it would mean that we should extend our perspective beyond Anglo-American media and it would encourage us to consider the world as a whole. But how can we do this without seeing global media as the sum of their parts, as simply a collection of discrete units? Or conversely, how can we do this without seeing media institutions around the world as pale reflections of the dominant American media system? That is, how can we shift our perspective so that we take into account both the general and the particular, both the forest and the trees? How can we escape an Anglo-American bias? Which principles shape the development and interactions of media enterprises worldwide? Which tendencies present themselves regardless of the many contexts in which media operate? And how do the production, circulation, and consumption of media help to engender spatial relations and patterns that shape our lives?

These are not entirely new questions. Indeed, they can be traced back to the pioneering work of Harold Innis (1950; 1951). Yet it was not until the late 1960s that lively debates began to emerge about international media relations, and it was not until the 1990s that we began to discuss media industries with respect to globalization. In the first section of this chapter, I provide a brief overview of international media industries research. I then follow with a discussion of the recent literature on globalization, which provides a context for explaining key principles that help us to think globally about media industries today.

From Imperialism to Globalization

In the late 1960s, Thomas Guback (1969) and Herbert Schiller (1969) published pioneering studies of American media influence around the world. Both describe self-conscious collaboration between industry executives and government officials seeking cultural, commercial, and strategic influence abroad. Kaarle Nordenstreng and Tapio Varis (1974) soon followed with potent empirical evidence of US domination in the international TV market, showing that exports from America comprised a substantial portion of television imports in many countries around the world. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s the *media imperialism* thesis flourished, asserting that the US and its European allies controlled the international flow of images and information, imposing media texts and industrial practices on unwilling nations and susceptible audiences around the world. According to this view, western media hegemony diminishes indigenous production capacity and undermines the expressive potential of national cultures, imposing foreign values and contributing to cultural homogenization worldwide.

The basic unit of analysis for media imperialism researchers was the modern nation-state, which meant that domination was usually figured as a relationship between countries, with powerful states imposing their will on subordinate ones, especially in news reporting, cinematic entertainment, and television programming. Based initially on data gathered in the 1960s and 1970s, when American media had few international competitors, media imperialism's founding scholars anticipated enduring relations of domination, presuming that the US would be able to perpetuate its structural advantages. So influential was this critique that it helped to inspire an energetic reform movement among less developed nations that called for a New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO). This campaign crested in the 1980s with a set of United Nations reform proposals that would have sailed through the General Assembly if not for the fierce opposition of the Reagan and Thatcher governments, both champions of "free flow" of information over the reformers' demands for "fair and balanced flow" (MacBride 1980). This Anglo-American alliance thoroughly undermined the momentum behind NWICO; furthermore it led to a counteroffensive aimed at promoting the commercialization of media institutions around the world.

While these political struggles were raging, researchers began to critically reexamine some of the essential tenets of the media imperialism thesis. One of the first and most telling critiques was posed by Chin-Chuan Lee (1979), a young scholar from Taiwan who interrogated the theoretical consistency and empirical validity of the media imperialism hypothesis by considering case studies of media in Canada, Taiwan, and the People's Republic of China. Lee argued that foundational assumptions, such as a correspondence between economic domination and media domination, did not hold up under close scrutiny. Canada, a wealthy developed nation, was thoroughly saturated by Hollywood media, while Taiwan, an economically dependent and less developed nation, had established a relatively independent media system that nevertheless failed to nurture "authentic" local culture, preferring instead commercial, hybrid forms of mass culture. The PRC, although the least developed of the three, was even more removed from Hollywood domination but thoroughly authoritarian, making it the most elitist and least popular media system at the time. Supporting neither the free flow doctrine nor the media imperialism critique, Lee argued for middle-range theory and regulatory policies that would be sensitive to the complexities of specific local circumstances.

Scholars in cultural studies and postcolonial studies also began to question media imperialism, especially the presumption that commercial media have clear and uniform effects on audiences. Might audiences read Hollywood's dominant texts "against the grain," they wondered? Might they be more strongly influenced by family, education, and peer groups than by foreign media? Critics also challenged the presumption that all foreign values have deleterious effects, noting that the emphasis on aspiration and agency found in many Hollywood narratives might actually have positive effects among audiences living in social systems burdened by oppressive forms of hierarchy and/or patriarchy (Fejes 1981; Liebes & Katz 1990; Ang 1991; Lull 1991). Moreover, critics pointed to the media imperialism school's troubling assumption that *national* values were generally positive and relatively uncontested, arguing for example that during the twentieth century Indian national media tended to cater to Hindu elites at the expense of populations from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, such as Tamil and Telegu (Chakravarty 1993; Mitra 1993). Finally, they pointed out that cultures are rarely pure, autonomous entities, since most societies throughout history have interacted with other societies, creating hybrid cultural forms that often reenergize a society by encouraging dynamic adaptations (Appadurai 1996; Clifford 1997). According to these critics, media imperialism's notion of a singular, enduring, and authentic national culture simply overlooks the many divisions within modern nation-states, especially in countries whose borders were imposed by colonial masters, such as Indonesia and Nigeria. Overall, cultural studies scholars pointed out that media imperialism's privileging of "indigenous culture," tends to obscure the complex dynamics of cultural interaction and exchange.

Empirical research data also began to suggest that western media dominance might be diminishing. As television industries around the world matured, audiences increasingly showed a preference for national and regional productions, especially in news, talk, and variety formats but also in drama and comedy. In Latin America, for example, Peruvian TV audiences tend to prefer Mexican or Venezuelan telenovelas as opposed to Hollywood soap operas (Tracey 1988; Straubhaar 1991; Reeves 1993; Sinclair et al. 1996; Sinclair 1999). New media technologies further complicated consumption patterns, as VCRs and satellites began to expand the range and quantity of available films and television programming in the 1980s, a trend that was amplified by digital media in the 1990s. As the range of viewer choice expanded, researchers found that US media comprised a relatively small part of overall media consumption in many parts of the world. Researchers also suggested that the revolution in communication technologies seemed to be facilitating a wave of cultural and political transformations, such as the fall of the Berlin Wall and demonstrations at Tiananmen (Lull 1991; O'Neill 1993; Wark 1994). Coupling these communication trends with dramatic changes in shipping and transportation, as well as the continuing march of neoliberal free-trade policies, popular and scholarly critics began to contemplate a seismic shift from the existing state-based international system to a nascent global order, one that was more open, more hybrid, and more thoroughly interconnected than its predecessor.

Within this context, media industries have undergone significant changes since the 1980s, as the number of media producers, distributors, and consumers has grown dramatically, first in Europe and then in Asia, with China and India adding almost two billion new viewers during this period. Although powerful global media conglomerates were active contributors to these trends, local, national, and regional media firms expanded rapidly as well. For example, Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation entered Asia with hopes of transmitting satellite TV programs to audiences across the continent on its Star TV platform. Using films and television programs from his Fox studios, Murdoch programmed Star for a pan-Asian, English-speaking, elite audience and used the technology of satellite delivery to gain entry to markets that previously had been protected by national broadcasting regulations. At first Star succeeded, drawing the attention of middle-class viewers and forcing governments to liberalize their media regulations. Yet liberalization cut both ways. Star gained access to new markets, but so too did dozens of new services organized by Asian companies, most of them telecasting in local languages. Star helped to pry open national media markets, but it soon found that it had to adapt its services to conditions within those markets. Instead of transmitting four channels across the continent, Star now delivers more than 60 television services, each of them targeted at specific geographical regions of Asia and each fashioned for the distinctive cultures, languages, and markets in which they operate (Curtin 1999; Kumar 2005; Curtin 2007; McMillin 2007).

Such developments challenged media imperialism's structural notions of center and periphery, as it became clear that even the world's most powerful media corporations were having a difficult time imposing their agendas in many parts of the world. Instead, companies like Star TV were avidly localizing their programming and institutional practices, so as to adapt to competitive forces in places like India, Indonesia, and Taiwan. Though Star's original intention was to penetrate and dominate Asian markets with western technology and Hollywood programming, it soon found itself pulled into lively competition with new creative enterprises in diverse locales. Conversely, as Star localized its operations, Asian media institutions became more globalized in their perspectives and practices, adapting many of the creative and marketing strategies of their foreign competitors. Rather than exhibiting concrete patterns of domination and subordination, Asian media institutions at a variety of levels seemed to be responding to the push–pull of globalization, as increasing connectivity inspired significant changes in textual and institutional practices at a variety of levels.

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 translocally, interactively, and dynamically at a variety of levels: economic, institutional, technological, and ideological. As John Tomlinson (1991) observes, globalization "happens as the result of economic and cultural practices which do not, of themselves, aim at global integration, but which nonetheless produce it. More importantly, the effects of globalization are to weaken the cultural coherence of all nation-states, including the economically powerful ones – the 'imperialist powers' of a previous era" (75). In other words, unlike theories of media imperialism that emphasize the self-conscious extension of centralized power, globalization theories suggest that the world's increasingly interconnected media environment is the outcome of messy and complicated interactions across space. The challenge for media industry studies is to come up with theories and approaches that identify the most significant forces driving these interactions and to explain why some places become centers of cultural production and therefore tend to be more influential in shaping the emerging global system.

Although US media are no longer perceived as a singular cultural force worldwide, issues of power and influence are nevertheless matters of ongoing concern, only now the emphasis has shifted from nations to cities. Increasingly we find that cities such as Beirut, Mumbai, and Miami function less as centers of national media than as central nodes in the transnational flow of culture, talent, and resources. Rather than asking about relations among and between nations, we should explore the ways in which media industries based in particular cities are participating in the restructuring of spatial and cultural relations worldwide. In an effort to clarify the spatial dynamics of media industries in the global era, this essay examines three principles of *media capital* that have shaped film and broadcasting throughout their histories. It shows that despite the many changes that have taken place over the past few decades, media industries are fundamentally driven by 1) a logic of accumulation, 2) trajectories of creative migration, and 3) forces of sociocultural variation. The character and balance among these principles has undergone a dramatic transition since the 1980s, but the principles themselves remain the same and therefore provide a firm foundation for thinking about practices and performance of media industries. For example, they encourage us to think about capitalism as a social process that shapes the spatial contours of media, bearing only contingent or "not necessary" relation to the nation-state. These principles also direct our attention to the fundamental role that creative labor plays in the spatial deployment of media resources. And they invite us to reflect on the particularities of culture and politics both as boundary markers and as creative resources. In all, the principles of media capital encourage us to develop spatially complex and historically specific accounts of media globalization.

The Logic of Accumulation

The logic of accumulation is not unique to media industries, since all capitalist enterprises exhibit innately dynamic and expansionist tendencies. As David Harvey (2001) points out, most firms seek efficiencies through the concentration of productive resources and through the extension of markets in hopes of realizing the greatest possible return on investment in the shortest amount of time. For example, companies reorganize the spatial layout of their factories to increase productive efficiency or they use new modes of transportation to expand their market reach. These *centripetal* tendencies in the sphere of production and *centrifugal* tendencies in distribution were observed by Karl Marx (1973) more than a century ago when he trenchantly explained that capital must "annihilate space with time" if it is to overcome barriers to accumulation (539).

As applied to contemporary media, this insight suggests that even though a film or TV company may be founded with the aim of serving a particular national culture or a local market, over time it must redeploy its creative resources and reshape its terrain of operations if it is to survive competition and enhance profitability. Implicit in this logic of accumulation is the contributing influence of the "managerial revolution" that accompanied the rise of industrial capitalism (Chandler 1977). For over a century, modern managers have sought to apply scientific techniques and technologies of surveillance to the refinement of corporate operations. During the twentieth century capitalism became more than a mode of accumulation, it also became a disposition toward surveillance and adaptation, as it continually reorganized and integrated manufacturing and marketing processes.

The history of the American cinema – the world's most commercial and most intensively studied media industry – provides an instructive example of these core tendencies. During the first decade of the twentieth century, US movie exhibitors depended on small, collaborative filmmaking crews to service demand for filmed entertainment. Yet as theater chains emerged, as distribution grew more sophisticated, and as competition intensified, movie companies began to centralize creative labor in large factory-like studios with an eye toward improving quality, reducing costs, and increasing output. By refiguring the spatial relations of production, managers concentrated the creative labor force in a single location where it could be deployed among a diverse menu of projects under the guidance of each studio's central production office. The major film companies furthermore separated the domains of planning and execution, creating a blueprint (or script) for each film that guided the work of specialized craftspeople in lighting, makeup, and dozens of other departments deployed across the studio lot. As American cinema entered this factory phase during the 1910s, the intensification of production accelerated output and yielded cost efficiencies, providing theater operators around the country with a dependable flow of quality products (Bordwell et al. 1985; Bowser 1990; Scott 2005).

Similar patterns emerged in the Indian commercial film industry with major studios emerging in Bombay and Calcutta by the 1930s. Although the studio system would fall by the wayside for a number of reasons, the concentration of productive resources would intensify, allowing Bombay to emerge as the center of a South Asian film industry that would distribute movies across the subcontinent (Prasad 1998; Pendakur 2003; Rajadhyaksha 2003). In Chinese cinema, transnational theater circuits were firmly in place by the 1930s, but the mode of production was initially more dispersed for a variety of reasons. During the post-World War II era as prosperity returned to the industry, both Cathay and Shaw Brothers established integrated production operations in Hong Kong that rivaled the scope and productivity of their American counterparts (Bordwell 2000; Fu 2003; Curtin 2007; Fu 2007). The capital-intensive factory model prevailed with major movie companies around the world. Nevertheless it is important to note that unlike the auto or steel industries, film-making employees were creating distinctive *prototypes* rather than redundant batches of products with interchangeable parts. Each commodity was relatively unique, even if production routines grew increasingly standardized and even if the films were intended for mass audiences (Bordwell et al. 1985).

Not only was film production distinctive from other forms of industrialized manufacturing but so too was film distribution, since movies are what economists refer to as public goods (Kepley 1990; Hesmondhalgh 2002). That is, each feature film is a commodity that can be consumed without diminishing its availability to other customers. And given the relatively low cost of reproducing and circulating a film print when compared to the cost of creating the prototype, it behooves the manufacturer to circulate each artifact as widely as possible. Unlike other cultural institutions that needed to be close to live audiences or patrons (e.g., vaudeville and opera), and unlike industrial manufacturers that incurred substantial shipping costs for their finished products (e.g., automobiles and washing machines), movie studios could dispatch their feature films expansively and economically. The key aim of the distribution apparatus was therefore to stimulate audience demand and ensure access to theaters in far-flung locales. They achieved the latter by establishing theater chains or by collaboration with major exhibitors, both nationally and internationally (Thompson 1985; Gomery 1986; Balio 1993; Pendakur 2003; Curtin 2007).

Trajectories of Creative Migration

The second principle of media capital emphasizes trajectories of creative migration, since audiovisual industries are especially reliant on creativity as a core resource. Recurring demand for new prototypes requires a workforce that is self-consciously motivated by aesthetic innovation as well as market considerations. Indeed, attracting and managing talent is one of the most difficult challenges that screen producers confront. At the level of the firm this involves offering attractive compensation and favorable working conditions, but at a broader level it also requires maintaining access to reservoirs of specialized labor that replenish themselves on a regular basis. This is one of the main reasons why media companies tend to cluster in particular cities.[2]

Nevertheless as a longer historical perspective would seem to indicate, it is rare for such centers of creativity to emerge strictly as a response to market forces. During the pre-modern era, for example, artists and craftspeople congregated at sites where sovereigns and clergy erected grand edifices or regularly commissioned devotional works of art. Patronage drew artists to specific locales and often kept them in place for much of their working lives, and they in turn passed their skills along to succeeding generations and to newly arrived migrants. Rather than market forces, one might imagine that spiritual inspiration and feudal relations of patronage significantly influenced trajectories of creative migration during this period, but it is also important to acknowledge the tendency of artists to seek out others of their kind. Artists are drawn to co-locate with their peers due to the mutual learning effects engendered by such proximity. That is, artists improved their skills and enhanced their vision through their ongoing association with other artists.

As the bourgeoisie rose to prominence in the early modern era, commercial cities became new centers of artistic production and exhibition, even though pre-existing centers retained residual prestige among the cognoscenti (DiMaggio 1986). Industrialists built performance venues, established galleries, and subsidized educational institutions, all of which attracted fresh talent to cities such as Berlin, New York, and Shanghai. Popular culture was layered over this topography of creative labor flows in the fine arts. Outside the major cultural institutions, popular artists and performers found it difficult to subsist in any one locale since they lacked access to

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the wealth of powerful patrons. Instead, they established circuits of recurring migration, playing to crowds in diverse towns and villages. These circuits were formalized in the nineteenth century by booking agents who rationalized the scheduling of talent across regional chains of performance venues. By concentrating creative laborers into performance troupes and then circulating them around a circuit, vaudeville made it possible for performers to earn a living and to learn new techniques from their fellow artists (Gilbert 1940; McLean 1965; Allen 1980). As vaudeville flourished, it attracted fresh talent from among enthusiastic audiences in diverse locales, bringing them into the circuit of production. Film industries would draw from the talent reservoirs of popular theater and they would cultivate new talent of their own. However, they would also anchor creative talent to particular locations where the capital-intensive studios were located. Despite their success, reversals in the American (1950s), Indian (1940s), and Chinese (1970s) film industries brought an end to the studio system of production. Artists and laborers consequently found themselves shifting from the security of long-term employment to the uncertainties of casual labor at a growing number of independent production houses.

Why then did Hollywood, Bombay, and Hong Kong continue to act as magnets for cultural labor? One might suggest that like prior transitions, the residual aura of these cities helped to sustain their status as centers of creative endeavor, but geographers Michael Storper and Susan Christopherson (1987) contend that more importantly, a disintegrated (or flexible or post-Fordist) mode of production in the movie industry actually encourages and sustains the agglomeration of creative labor due to the fact that constant changes in product output require frequent transactions between contractors, subcontractors, and creative talent. Their study of Hollywood shows that the number of inter-firm transactions in the movie business has grown dramatically over the past 50 years. At the same time, the scale of transactions has diminished, indicating that many small subcontractors now provide the studios with crucial services, such as wardrobe, set construction, and lighting, as well as key talent. Storper and Christopherson argue that although the production system went through a period of disintegration, the spatial concentration of labor persisted. That is, film producers today subcontract hundreds of tasks, but most contracts go to *local* companies because it is easier to oversee their work and suggest changes as the project progresses. As for the workers, they cluster around Hollywood where studios and subcontracting firms are based, since it helps them "offset the instability of short-term contractual work by remaining close to the largest pool of employment opportunities."[3]

Geographer Allen J. Scott extends this principle of talent agglomeration to industries as diverse as jewelry, furniture, and fashion apparel, arguing that manufacturers of *cultural* goods tend to locate where subcontractors and skilled laborers form dense transactional networks. Besides apparent managerial and cost efficiencies, Scott points to the mutual learning effects that stem from a clustering of interrelated producers. Whether through informal learning – such as sharing ideas and techniques while collaborating on a particular project – or via more formal transfers of knowledge – craft schools, trade associations, and awards ceremonies – clustering enhances product quality and fuels innovation. "Place-based communities such as these are not just foci of cultural labor in the narrow sense," observes Scott (2000), "but also are active hubs of social reproduction in which crucial cultural competencies are maintained and circulated" (33).

The centripetal agglomeration of labor encourages path-dependent evolution such that small chance events or innovations may spark the appearance of a culture industry in a particular location, but clustering engenders a growth spiral, as creative labor migrates to the region in search of work, further enhancing its attraction to other talent. Locales that fail to make an early start in such industries are subject to "lock-out," since it is difficult to lure talent away from an existing media capital, even with massive government subsidies. Scott suggests that the only way a new cluster might arise is if its producers offer an appreciably distinctive product line.

In general, we can conclude that cultural production is especially reliant upon mutual learning effects and trajectories of creative migration, and that particular locations inevitably emerge as centers of creativity. These principles have operated throughout history under various regimes of accumulation, but the modern era is distinctive because the centripetal logic of capitalist production has been married to the centripetal trajectories of creative migration, engendering the rise of powerful transnational media production centers. One might imagine that in today's world of increasing commercial flows and diminishing trade barriers we might be approaching a time when one city would become a dominant global center attracting talent from around the world and producing a majority of the world's popular screen narratives. Yet the complexities of distribution undermine such pretensions to singular dominance, especially when media products rub up against counterparts in distant cultural domains often served, even if minimally, by competing media capitals that are centers of creative migration in their own right. Such complexities therefore direct our attention to the third principle of media capital.

Forces of Sociocultural Variation

Cities such as Hollywood, Mumbai, and Hong Kong lie across significant cultural divides from each other, which helps to explain why producers in these cities have been able to sustain distinctive product lines and survive the onslaught of distant competitors. These media capitals are furthermore supported by intervening factors that modify and complicate the spatial tendencies outlined above. Consequently, the forces of sociocultural variation direct our attention to the fact that national and local institutions have been and remain significant actors despite the centripetal biases of production and creativity, and the centrifugal bias of distribution. Indeed, the early years of cinema were exceptional in large part because the logic of media capital unfolded relatively unimpeded by national regulation, but as the popularity of Hollywood narratives increased, many countries established cultural policies to address the growing influence of this new commodity form.

Motion pictures presented governments with a unique policy challenge since they were distributed even more widely than newspapers, magazines, or books, the circulation of which was limited to literate consumers within shared linguistic spheres. By comparison, silent era cinema overcame these barriers and challenged class, gender, and racial boundaries as well. Hollywood movies circulated widely, swelling the size of audiences dramatically and fueling the growth of large-scale enterprises. According to Thompson (1985), US movie companies became dominant exporters by the mid-1910s, a trend that contributed to a further concentration of resources and talent in the Los Angeles area. By the 1920s, however, opinion leaders and politicians abroad grew wary and cultural critics began to clamor for regulation. Many countries imposed import quotas and content regulations on Hollywood films and some set up national film boards to subsidize cinema productions with national themes and talent (Higson 1989; Jarvie 1992; Crofts 1993; O'Regan 2002).

Most importantly, however, national governments embraced the new technology of radio broadcasting, which in almost every country outside the western hemisphere was established as a public service system intended as a bulwark against cultural invasion from Hollywood. Britain, which would serve as a model to others, explicitly charged the British Broadcasting Corporation with responsibility to clear a space for the circulation of British values, culture, and information (Scannell & Cardiff 1991; Hilmes 2003). Radio seemed an especially appropriate medium for intervention, since many of its characteristics helped to insulate national systems from foreign competition. Technologically, radio signals traveled only 30 to 60 miles from any given transmitter. As in Britain, one could interconnect a chain of transmitters that would blanket the countryside, but the only way for foreign competitors to reach one's domestic audiences was via shortwave radio, a temperamental technology that was comparatively inaccessible to the masses. Such insulation was furthermore ensured by an international regulatory regime that allocated radio frequencies on a national basis, minimizing technical as well as cultural interference between countries. Language provided another bulwark, since radio relied on aural competence in the state's official language, helping to distinguish national radio productions that played in one's parlor from Hollywood "talkies" that played at the cinema. Finally, public service radio systems were bolstered by indigenous cultural resources, since literary and theatrical works were commonly appropriated to the new medium, as were folk tales and music. State ceremonies and eventually sporting events also filled the airwaves, as the medium participated in self-conscious efforts to foster a common national culture.

Radio also promoted a shared temporality among audiences. Its predecessor, the nineteenth-century newspaper, pioneered this transformation by directing readers to stories that the editors considered significant and by encouraging them to absorb these stories at a synchronous daily pace (Anderson 1983). Radio extended the daily ritual of newspaper consumption to nonliterate groups, which expanded the horizon of synchronization, such that program schedules began to shape daily household routines and create a national calendar of social and cultural events. Radio insinuated itself into the household, interlacing public and private spheres, and situating national culture in the everyday world of its listeners (Scannell & Cardiff 1991; Hilmes 1997; Morley 2000). Even though radio systems were founded under the guiding hand of politicians, educators, and cultural bureaucrats, radio would over time open itself up to audience participation, employing yet another distinctive cultural resource as part of its programming repertoire: the voice of the people. In each of these ways public service radio accentuated national contours of difference in opposition to media capital's desire to operate on a smooth plane of market relations worldwide.

Although the BBC served as a template for public service radio, national radio systems were diverse and their success varied. All India Radio was exceptionally elitist and therefore relatively unpopular. It was not until the incursions of foreign satellite competitors that Indian radio and television were forced to compete for the favor of audiences (Jeffrey 2006). India was not the only country to experience the negative effects of state monopoly. Nigerian broadcasting was rife with political favoritism and censorship until it found itself competing in the 1990s with popular Nigerian video films (Haynes & Okome 1998; Adesanya 2000; Haynes 2000; Larkin 2004; McCall 2004). Despite such problems, regulation of the airwaves provided an effective way for governments to refigure the centripetal and centrifugal tendencies of media capital. It allowed them to staunch the flow of culture from abroad and to cultivate domestic talent and resources. Regulation provided a defensive response to the spatially expansive tendencies of commercial media industries.

Regulation also has acted as an influential enabler of commercial media industries. Intellectual property laws are especially compelling examples in this regard, as are media licensing regimes.[4] The commercial development of broadcasting in the US was facilitated by regulations that in effect made it possible to "sell the airwaves" to corporate operators. In so doing, the government created a market-driven system out of an intangible public resource, enabling a national program distribution system that stimulated the growth of national advertising and concentrated creative resources in a handful of urban centers (Streeter 1996). Just as the British system became a model for public service systems around the world, the commercial licensing regime of American broadcasting became the standard for satellite regulation, which in turn pressured governments around the world to adapt to commercial models during the 1990s.

As we can see, the boundaries and contours of markets are subject to political interventions that enable, shape, and attenuate the dynamics of media industries. Concepts such as "free flow" and "market forces" are in fact meaningless without self-conscious state interventions to fashion a terrain for commercial operations. Markets are made, not given. And the logic of accumulation must therefore be interrogated in relation to specific and complex mixtures of sociocultural forces.

Finally, it should also be pointed out that self-conscious state policies are not the only actors that organize and exploit the forces of sociocultural variation. Media industries in Mumbai, Cairo, and Hong Kong have themselves taken advantage of social and cultural differences in their production and distribution practices. Operating across cultural divides from Hollywood and from other powerful exporters, they have employed creative talent and cultural forms that resonate distinctively with their audiences. These industries have furthermore made use of social networks and insider information to secure market advantages, and they invoke cultural and national pride in their promotional campaigns. Forces of sociocultural variation can therefore provide resources for carving out market niches that are beyond the reach of foreign competitors.

Conclusion

Media capital is a concept that at once acknowledges the *spatial* logics of capital, creativity, culture, and polity without privileging one among them. Just as the logic of capital provides a fundamental structuring influence, so too do trajectories of creative migration and forces of sociocultural variation shape the diverse contexts in which media are made and consumed. The concept of media capital encourages us to provide dynamic and historicized accounts that delineate the operations of capital and the migrations of talent, while at the same time directing our attention to forces and contingencies that give shape to spheres of cultural exchange. Media capital invites us to think in terms of global Chinese media, not simply PRC, Taiwanese, or Singaporean media. It encourages us to consider the dramatic growth of Indian film audiences and satellite subscribers in Europe and North America. And it prompts us to wonder at the complex and expansive channels of Nigerian video film distribution in sub-Saharan Africa and even worldwide.

The principles of media capital help us clarify our understanding of culture industries during the global era. They also encourage us to acknowledge the continuing importance of media policy. Market dynamics and talent migrations increasingly privilege a small number of global media capitals. Therefore policymakers must be willing to intervene where the market comes up short. In many cases, governments will need to prioritize and even subsidize media institutions because they provide vital resources for local, national, and alternative cultures. Like public parks and libraries, media play a vital role in making particular places worth living in. They foster identity, enhance social cohesion, serve local businesses, enhance property values, and provide spaces for public discourse. Some of these functions will be supported by the market, but others will not. The principles of media capital suggest that the only way to attenuate or redirect the spatial tendencies of media industries is through exertions of public will. As we have seen, media policies can establish barriers but just as importantly they can act as enablers, helping to nurture and sustain spaces for local voices in a global era.

Notes

1 An exception is Jarvie's (1977) exemplary study of the Chinese movie industry.

2 Although it does not address media industries specifically, an extensive literature discusses the impact of human capital on the clustering of business firms in particular locations (Jacobs 1984; Porter 1998; Florida 2005).

3 Despite the development of new communication technologies that allow creative collaborations across vast expanses, creative labor still needs to congregate so as to build relationships of trust and familiarity that can enable and sustain long-distance collaborations. Giddens' (1990) discussion of facework and Bourdieu's (1986) notion of social capital both point to the importance of physical proximity.

4 In the US, court rulings during the 1910s provided movie studios with intellectual property rights so that they – rather than their employees – might claim protection for the films they "authored." Although copyright laws originally aimed to foster creative endeavor by *individuals*, the courts allowed movie factories to claim artistic inspiration as well. Interestingly, they furthermore ruled that waged and salaried laborers at the major studios were neither creators nor authors but were rather "work for hire." In this way, the American legal system profoundly transformed copyright law, facilitating the industrialization of cinematic production and providing expansive legal protection for movie distributors (Bordwell et al. 1985).

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